

not accept his advice. His influence as a presidential candidate can not yet be measured, for not a single state has yet instructed for him. There are at least three other presidential candidates, who are likely to have their own states behind them—Knox, of Pennsylvania; Fairbanks, of Indiana; and Cannon, of Illinois. Fairbanks is the president of the senate, Cannon is the speaker of the house, and Knox represents Pennsylvania in the senate. Can he give the pledge of these men that congress will act at once and insure statehood before November, 1908, and, if the other presidential candidates promised it, is there any assurance that the republican members of the senate and house would consent? Even if a majority of both the senate and the house favored statehood, the opposition could talk the measure to death in the senate, where they have no rule for closing the debate. If you are to trade your birthright for a mess of pottage, you ought at least to be sure of receiving the pottage.

But why does he advise you to reject the constitution and postpone statehood? Because he is opposed to some parts of the constitution. He has suggested several amendments which he would like to have adopted. Even if the amendments which he proposed were good amendments and worthy to be adopted, it would not be necessary to reject the constitution in order to adopt them. He speaks of the federal constitution as a model one and praises it in unqualified terms, and yet, when that constitution was adopted, it was so unsatisfactory that ten amendments were adopted immediately afterward. These amendments were all proposed during the discussion which preceded the adoption of the constitution, but the people said "Adopt the constitution now and amend it afterwards," and this advice was followed. The country secured a constitution and a government, and then proceeded to adopt the amendments desired. If Secretary Taft had the confidence he ought to have in your people, he would have given you the same advice that our forefathers followed a century and a quarter ago. The democrats can vote in favor of the constitution because they believe it a good one; the republicans who desire to change it can have as their slogan "Adopt the constitution now, amend it afterwards." It is much safer to postpone amendments to the constitution of Oklahoma than it was to postpone amendments to the federal constitution. First, because it is easier to amend the constitution of Oklahoma. To amend the federal constitution it is necessary to have the amendment ratified by three-fourths of the states, after being proposed by two-thirds of both houses of congress or by a constitutional convention; whereas, the constitution of Oklahoma can be amended by a majority vote of the people, and the amendments can be proposed either by a majority vote of the legislature or by a small percentage of the people acting through petition. The initiative and referendum make amendment so easy that no republican can find an excuse for rejecting the Oklahoma constitution, unless he is really opposed to statehood and prefers to have the territory governed through officials appointed from Washington.

But there is a second reason why it is safer to adopt the Oklahoma constitution than it was the federal constitution; viz., because the amendments suggested by Secretary Taft deal with the property rights, while the amendments adopted to the federal constitution deal with human rights. If you will compare the ten amendments adopted immediately after the adoption of the federal constitution, you will find that they were of vital importance and materially affected the life and liberties of the people, while all amendments proposed by Secretary Taft deal almost entirely with property rights, and those property rights do not concern the property of individuals but the property of corporations. Surely, if our forefathers could adopt a constitution that needed ten amendments, dealing with important questions and difficult to secure, the people of Oklahoma can afford to adopt the splendid constitution that has been submitted, when the amendments proposed by Secretary Taft are not material and, if they were material, could be easily secured by the people.

There is one passage in his speech which I do not understand and which seems to contain a covert threat. He says that he is confident that there would be a new enabling act if this constitution was rejected and that there probably would be "an organization of the organized territory of Indian Territory until you could get ready for joint statehood," and that "you would pass in with a constitution made up

by persons who are not so patriotic and not so full of the desire to exactly ascertain the will of the people." The last part of the sentence may be intended for sarcasm, although it is surprising that a candidate for president should speak sarcastically about an effort to ascertain the will of the people. What can be more important than to find out what the people want and to make government conform to the wishes of the voters? But the covert threat is contained in the earlier part of the sentence, where he suggests that the Indian Territory might be kept out until after the Territory of Oklahoma had adopted a constitution. That construction can be placed upon his language, although the language is so ambiguous that it is not absolutely certain what he does mean. Does he mean to reopen the question of double statehood? Or does he mean that the people living in the Indian Territory are to be denied representation until after the people of Oklahoma have a chance to adopt a constitution? Would he exclude the people of the Indian Territory because they are democratic? Surely, statesmanship has fallen to a low plane if political rights are secure only when the voter votes a particular ticket or connects himself with a particular party.

But what are the objections Secretary Taft finds to the constitution. First, he is opposed to the initiative and the referendum. This to him is a fatal defect, and why? Because the initiative and referendum enable the people to control their own government. Experience has shown that with the growth of corporate wealth an influence has entered into politics which was absent when our government was founded. Corporations desiring municipal franchises have corrupted city councils and secured franchises of enormous value without consulting the people. To prevent this the referendum has been adopted in many of our cities and will ultimately be adopted in all of them. Because railroads and other large corporations have exerted a demoralizing influence over state legislatures, the initiative and referendum have been proposed for the protection of the people of the state, and, because the people of Oklahoma have dared to express more faith in the voters than in those chosen to represent the voters, Secretary Taft would have you postpone statehood. He is on his way to the Pacific coast. According to his published itinerary he will pass through South Dakota; will he rebuke the republicans of South Dakota for having adopted the initiative and referendum in that state? He will also pass through Montana. Will he rebuke the republicans of Montana, who have also adopted the initiative and referendum? He is likely to speak in Oregon, and there, too, the republicans have adopted the initiative and referendum. Will he expend his wrath upon them, or has he so exhausted his energies in denouncing the initiative and referendum in a democratic state as to be speechless when he talks to the republicans of the far west? In the state of Ohio, one branch of the legislature has already endorsed the initiative and referendum and the other branch is pledged to do so when the legislature reconvenes this winter. It is a crime for Oklahoma to do what other states have done and what Ohio is preparing to do, viz., enlarge the power of the people to control their own representatives?

The secretary says that, according to the Oklahoma constitution, the legislature can repeal a law passed by the people and that the people can pass it again and the legislature repeal it again. He ought to commend this rather than condemn it for, if the constitution had provided that a law passed by the people could not be repealed by the legislature, he would have been sure to criticize that, for that would have resulted in the enactment of two kinds of laws, but he forgets that the referendum, as well as the initiative, is provided for by the constitution and that if the legislature attempts to repeal a law passed by the people, they can sit in judgment upon that attempt, as upon other acts of legislature. And why not have the referendum? If a governor can veto a measure passed by a legislature, why deny that power to the people who elect both governor and legislature?

His second objection to the constitution is found in the clause that prevents the consolidation of railroads. This objection will hardly be treated seriously by the public, for surely the people have a right to prevent consolidation if they want to, and if they find that they have injured themselves by preventing consolidation, they can easily amend their constitution so as to permit consolidation. And it will be much easier to secure such an amendment with the aid of the railroads than it would be to secure

an amendment preventing consolidation with the railroads opposing such an amendment.

He is also alarmed lest the railroads will take advantage of the four-mile proposition and compel the county seats to furnish the right of way. His anxiety on this subject also is without foundation, for the county seats can protect themselves by refusing to furnish the right of way if they think they are being held up. But it is amusing to see him objecting to one provision because it favors the railroads and to another because it opposes the railroads. The least he could do would be to pair these two objections and let one offset the other.

His fourth objection, however, is more amusing, it is ludicrous. He says: "Fourthly, and I have to refer to something not in the constitution, I believe, because it was stricken out by amendment, and that is the provision by which foreign corporations would lose the right to do business if they take a suit into federal court." He is certainly driven to an extremity when he has to make his objection to a provision that has been stricken out. He regards the provision as a very bad one, and instead of congratulating the convention upon striking it out, he uses it as an objection to the constitution of which it was formerly a part. I think they ought to have left the provision in, for a state has a right to prescribe the terms upon which foreign corporations do business in the state, and I know of no more reasonable condition than that the foreign corporation shall submit itself to the state courts? This provision did not originate in Oklahoma. More than twenty years ago a similar provision was adopted in the state of Wisconsin, and the supreme court has held that it is a valid provision, and the secretary ought to know that this provision has been adopted in various states because of the manner in which corporations have abused their right to invoke the aid of the United States courts. Litigants have been dragged into courts distant from them and worn out with delays and court expenses, until the people of the states have found it necessary to protect themselves by this kind of a provision. The fact that Secretary Taft finds fault with such a provision is conclusive proof that he looks at such questions from the standpoint of the corporations and not from the standpoint of the people. It shows that his sympathies are with the great aggregations of wealth and not with the God-made man, whose rights have been trampled upon and whose interests have been disregarded.

In presenting his fourth argument he takes occasion to advance the time-worn argument that capital is timid and must be very carefully nursed and pampered. He says: "You know capital can protect itself; it is not obliged to go to one state or the other. All you have to do is to show capital that when it comes to your state it will have a square deal. If you can do that, capital will come. If you can not do that, it will not come." It is the old plea that all laws must be made for capital and none for the protection of the rights of the individual. How different is the secretary's speech from the speeches of Abraham Lincoln, wherein he asserted that, while the republican party believed in both the man and the dollar, it believed in the man before the dollar. Secretary Taft, on the contrary, believes in the dollar first and the man afterward, if at all, and he puts property rights so much above human rights that he would have you delay statehood until you can offer greater inducements to capital. With Lincoln it was "a government of the people, by the people and for the people," that was to be preserved to posterity. With Secretary Taft it is a government of capital, by capital and for capital that is to be fastened on you, or else statehood is not to be desired.

And then he tells you that he is talking business. "Now I am talking practical sense," he says; "I am not talking demagoguery or sentiment, I am talking business." Yes, he uses the terms and phrases of those who regard as statesmen only those whose ears are trained to catch the slightest pulsations of the pocketbook and who regard as demagogues all who attempt to place restrictions upon corporate wealth or defend the right of the masses to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

His next objection to the constitution is that it protects the laboring men from what is known as government by injunction, by insuring them a trial by jury if the contempt complained of is committed outside the presence of the court. A bill to this effect passed the United States senate some twelve years ago, but as soon as the corporations found out about it they strangled the measure in the house. He makes