

The Commoner.

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Remarkable Vindication

The democratic platform for 1908 contained the following plank:

"We favor an income tax as part of our revenue system, and we urge the submission of a constitutional amendment specifically authorizing congress to levy and collect tax upon individual and corporate incomes, to the end that wealth may bear its proportionate share of the burdens of the federal government."

Mr. Bryan indorsed this plank and urged the necessity of a constitutional amendment. President Taft, in his acceptance speech, insisted that an amendment was not necessary. For years the republican leaders have opposed an income tax and denounced the democrats for advocating it. But behold the change!

President Taft sends a message to congress proposing the submission of an income tax amendment and it passes the senate by A UNANIMOUS VOTE—77 ayes; nays, none. And it will undoubtedly pass the house. Was vindication ever more complete?

Democratic governors in states having democratic legislatures ought to call extra sessions at once and secure immediate ratification of the amendment. Income tax clubs ought to be formed immediately in every county—non-partisan clubs to pledge members of the various legislatures to vote for ratification. Now is the time to act. The dollars have been enjoying an exemption denied to man. As the law is now the government in time of war can take the husband from the wife, the son from the mother and the father from his children, and stand them up in front of an enemy's guns, but it can not, even in the hour of peril, compel wealth to bear its share of the expenses of the government. The income tax amendment ought to be ratified at the earliest possible moment. Let democrats get to work in every community and invite republicans to join them. Now for the amendment specifically authorizing an income tax.

THE NEW GLADIATOR

The recent automobile race at Crown Point, Ind., with its excitement, its dare-devil driving and its many accidents recalls the days of the gladiators. To be sure, the automobilists did not try to kill each other and yet each man who participated was in constant danger of killing or being killed. When a machine is being run at so high a rate of speed the risk is very great to all concerned—it is the great risk, in fact, that lends excitement to the race. It is thrill-

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TO PRESIDENT TAFT

Now that the states are going to vote on the ratification of the amendment specifically authorizing an income tax why not give them a chance to vote an amendment providing for the election of United States senators by popular vote? In your speech of acceptance you said that you were personally inclined to favor such a change in the constitution. Would this not be an opportune time to present the subject to congress? Two constitutional amendments—one authorizing an income tax and the other providing for the popular election of senators would make your administration memorable—and I pledge you whatever assistance I can render in securing the ratification of these amendments. With great respect, I am

Yours truly,
W. J. BRYAN.

ling to watch two great cars, rushing along the course like demons, and to know that at any moment a break in the machinery may hurl the occupants into eternity, but is the gain so great as to justify this indifference to life? Is it not possible to test machines and men some other way? And, if not, is the test worth the possible loss of life? It is not a sufficient answer to say that men can be found who will voluntarily take the risk; men can be found to take the risks of the prize ring and the bull fight, just as they were willing to take the risks of the arena in the days of Rome's decay.

And what is the effect on the spectators? What is the physical, mental and moral state of those who have to have such thrills periodically to make life endurable. It is a sad commentary on the fashionable life of our cities that men and women desire such excitement. Carl Hilty, the Swiss statesman, in his little book on Happiness says that to be happy one must have something to do that occupies the time, employs the mind and satisfies the conscience. One can get more solid comfort out of useful service than out of the thrills of an exciting race.

WHO ARE "CONSTITUENTS?"

Mr. Dooley ought to write a play on "Our Constituents." He would find plenty of material in the speeches which have been made in Washington in favor of protection. The republican leaders say that the policy of "protection" must be preserved but who is protected?

The manufacturers insist upon protection but they are a small per cent of any community. A senator can secure protection for a few manufacturers in his state, but what about the rest of his constituents? They have to pay the tax.

Some of the democrats voted for a tariff on lumber—that will help Mr. Weyerhaeuser and a few timber owners—but what about the people who pay the tax? Are they not constituents also?

What percentage of the constituents in any district own iron ore?

What percentage of the constituents in any district raise wool or profit by the duty on hides?

Is it not about time that somebody represented that large majority—the constituents who get no benefit out of protection, but bear the burden of all tariff taxes?

And is it not about time that these constituents looked around for representatives who will not forget them? ALL the voters are constituents, but most of them are UNREPRESENTED and they will remain UNREPRESENTED until they make it their business to select senators and members of congress who can not be controlled by the FEW constituents who demand special privileges and favors.

A New Party? No

The Commoner receives a letter occasionally from some reader who suggests the formation of a new party, and the idea sometimes appears in the newspapers which are dissatisfied with the proceedings at Washington. The new party suggestion is more easily made than carried out. To plan a new party is easy; to organize one of any considerable size is very difficult. There is a certain attractiveness about a new party; if one can get a few congenial spirits together and organize a party on a definite platform and pledge it to a definite reform, he can have the consolation that comes from association with companions in agreement with him, but if his party becomes very large, differences of opinion will manifest themselves, and these differences will become more numerous as the party increases in strength. All do not think alike on any subject, and few think alike on all subjects. The question that the reformer has to decide is not whether he would find a new party more congenial, but whether he can better advance reforms in a new party than in one of the existing parties. The Commoner stands for reforms—reforms definite, specific and important, and it believes that these reforms can better be accomplished through the democratic party than through any new party that could be organized under present conditions. The reform element in the democratic party is large enough to control the party, and if the reform element were not large enough to control the party, it would not be large enough to contribute materially to the formation of a new party. For many more democrats will enlist under the banner of reform within the party than would leave the party and join a new one. The same can be said of the republican party—a great many more republicans will attempt to reform the republican party than would leave it and form a new party. Mr. Cleveland and his friends controlled nearly one third of the national convention in 1896 but he and they could not form a new party.

The advocates of a new party suggest that the reform element of the democratic party and the reform element of the republican party "join together" in the formation of a new party. That is not practicable at the present time. The reformer, if he is a real reformer, wants to see his reforms carried out—he is so much interested in seeing them carried out that he will work in the party where he thinks he can work to the best advantage. There are a great many republican reformers, and it will be easier to get republican reformers to act with democratic reformers in the democratic party than it would be to get republican reformers to join with democratic reformers in organizing a new party, for the republican reformers know that they can do more to secure reforms by acting with the democratic party than they can by acting through an independent party. And so more democratic reformers would be willing to join with the republican reformers to carry out reforms through the republican party than would be willing to join with the republican reformers in the organization of a new party.

Let the democratic reformers fight for the control of their party, and let the republican reformers fight for the control of the republican party. If the democratic reformers control the democratic party, and the republican reformers fail to control the republican party, then let democrats appeal to republican reformers to cross the party line and put reforms above party. The appeal will be headed by a multitude of republicans. If, on the contrary, the republican reformers secure control of their party and the democratic reformers lose control of theirs, there is no doubt that the republicans could count on the support of many democrats. At present the only hope of reform seems to be through one of the old parties, and The Commoner be-