

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

VOL. 9, NO. 30

Lincoln, Nebraska, August 6, 1909

Whole Number 446

Texas and the Tariff

The Fort Worth (Texas) Record presents very clearly the issue that has arisen between the protectionist democrats and those who believe in tariff reform. Referring to The Commoner's editorial on free raw material the Record says:

"The south is a producing section. Its chief resources are raw material, and it will never consent to compete in the markets of the world on what it sells and be confined to the American market for what it buys. It will object to selling its wool, hides, rough rice, raw sugar, ore and other products on a free trade basis and buying its clothing, shoes, dressed rice, refined sugar and hardware on a protective basis."

Some of the southern representatives have insisted that they favored a tariff on raw material as a REVENUE tariff, but the Record is more frank; it wants PROTECTION for southern products. Is there any magic by which protection is purged of its selfishness when it crosses the Mason and Dixon line? Is there any difference in principle between the New England republican who wants a tariff on what he makes and a Texas democrat who wants protection on what he raises?

The south is not likely to be led astray by the sophisms of protection. The southern democrat knows that not one farmer in ten in any southern state raises sheep and yet all farmers, as well as all the rest of the population, pay a higher tax on woolen goods, because of the tax on wool. If the taxpayers would only watch their own interests as closely as the beneficiaries of protection watch theirs, the vote would be overwhelmingly for tariff reduction. What is said of wool can be said of all other raw material. A tax on raw material means, first, an increased tax on the finished product and, second, it means that those who want a tax on raw material must enter into partnership with those who want a tariff on the manufactured product, for protectionists must stand together.

If the position taken by the Record is endorsed in Texas it means that Texas will join New England in support of protection for protection's sake, that is, taxation of the many for the benefit of the few.

Texas will not do it. She will not allow a comparatively small portion of her population—her sheep growers, her cattle raisers, her timber barons, her sugar growers and her ore owners to commit the state to a doctrine which would, if adopted, make tariff reform impossible.

What the Texas people need is not to get their hands into other people's pockets but to keep other peoples hands out of their pockets. Free raw material is the key to the situation; it

A GAME OF SWAP AND SWINDLE

The whole tariff discussion has been unspeakably sickening. Time was when the American people thought they were doing a man honor by sending him to congress. If they still retain that superstition, it is another evidence of the triumph of hope over experience. From the start of the tariff debates to their present dragging finish it has been a game of swap and swindle. The first consideration has been to get the greatest possible loot for the favored "interests," the next to keep the greatest possible number of votes in line for the complaisant congressmen; and never yet have the interests of the people, or the plain call of decency received official attention in the tussle. There have been exceptions — brilliant exceptions — the most constant and brilliant of them be- Senator Gore of Oklahoma. But no fraud yet proposed has lacked a majority when the test came, and no decent proposition has been able to do better than rank as a bad second in a fore-doomed race.

And the utter shamelessness of some representatives of the "interests" is appalling.—Denver News.

will bring a reduction in the tariff on finished products—that will be a great gain for the consumer; and then when the producers of raw material no longer profit by a tariff they will join the tariff reformers and help to secure further gradual reductions until the tariff is reduced to a revenue basis.

NO "NEW" RELIGION NECESSARY

Dr. Eliot, ex-president of Harvard, announces that we are to have a "new" religion and he proceeds to give the world an outline of it. Dr. Eliot says:

"It will not be bound by dogma or creed. There will be no supernatural element. It will place no reliance on anything but the laws of nature. It will not be based on authority. It will not teach that character can be changed quickly. It will not deal chiefly with sorrow and death, but with joy and life. It will not attempt to reconcile people to present ills by the promise of future compensation. It will attack all forms of evil. Its priests will strive to improve social and industrial conditions."

It so happens that this new religion is the very religion that Dr. Elliott has practically monopolized for a lifetime. Its good features have been borrowed, without credit, from Christianity and its immaterial features need no copyright to prevent their being appropriated.

Dr. Eliot may be a great educator, but his prophecies are like other uninspired prophecies—half wish and half environment.

It is no new thing to have people resent the existence of a Divine standard of conduct—some regard it as humiliating to confess that a life can be superior to their own or to admit that there are commandments binding upon the conscience, but the Christian religion has grown in influence in spite of Dr. Eliot, and it will continue to exist even when his death withdraws the stimulus furnished by his opposition. If the scholarly ex-president would only include the Bible in his model library and READ it, he would find that it does not present a religion which deals "chiefly with sorrow and death," but that it abounds in "joy and life." He seems to have overlooked the fact that at the birth of the Founder of Christianity angels sang and proclaimed "Peace on earth and good will toward men." The old religion is good enough.

The consumers are now learning what tariff "revision" by "the friends of the tariff" means, but they ought to have understood it last fall.

Conservative Senates

Why is it that state senates, like the United States senate, are as a rule more slow than the house of representatives to respond to the demands for reform? There are several reasons. In the first place, the senate has, as a rule, only about one-third as many members as the house of representatives, and as it is only necessary for the corporations to control one branch of the legislature in order to prevent the legislation to which they object, they naturally make their fight for the control of the senate. A story told upon Jay Gould illustrates this. A member of the lower branch of the New York legislature went to Mr. Gould's hotel and sent in his card, and was informed that Mr. Gould was at dinner. He sent the card in a second time and insisted that he must see Mr. Gould at once, and was again informed that Mr. Gould could not see him until after dinner. A third time he sent for Mr. Gould, this time requesting the messenger to say to Mr. Gould that he had been appointed chairman of the railroad committee of the house and must see him immediately. Mr. Gould responded, "Tell him that we have decided to let the bill pass through the house and beat it in the senate." A survey of the work of legislatures reveals the fact that a great many remedial measures are beaten in the senate, and there is generally no doubt as to the influence that defeats them.

Another explanation of the fact that the senate is generally more friendly than the house to corporations is that a larger percentage of the senators come from the cities. If there is one city in a senatorial district, the senator is likely to come from the city, while at least two of the three representatives will come from smaller towns. Corporate influence is always stronger in the cities. Remedial measures of importance are usually protested against by the larger commercial interests, for the larger commercial interests are generally closely connected with the favor seeking corporations.

A third reason is to be found in the fact that the political methods employed in the cities give greater advantage to the corporate element. The party organization is more potent in the cities than in rural communities, for it can collect larger campaign funds and can use them more effectively. It is harder, therefore, for the rank and file of the party to control the party's policy and the party nominations, and it is likewise more difficult for the rank and file of the party to punish a senator who betrays his trust.

Fourth, in some states the senators serve for a longer period of time than the representatives, and are, therefore, less amenable to public sentiment.

For these and other reasons the voters ought to carefully scrutinize aspirants for the senate and reduce to a minimum the senatorial opposition constantly offered to legislation in the direction of reform.

AS TO PLATFORMS

Senator Bailey says that Mr. Bryan can not complain of the repudiation of the Denver platform because he (Mr. Bryan) repudiated a plank in the platform of 1892. Yes, Mr. Bryan did repudiate the plank demanding the repeal of the tax on the notes of state banks. But he repudiated the plank during the campaign and promised his constituents to oppose the repeal of that tax (the repeal was intended to restore a state bank note circulation).

Mr. Bryan's criticism of Senator Bailey is not that he refuses to be bound by a platform adopted after he was elected (although Texas endorsed the platform on election day) but because he denies the binding force of platforms in general and still more because he advocates a doctrine (a tax on raw materials) which if adopted as a party policy will, in Mr. Bryan's judgment, make tariff reform impossible.

CONTENTS

- TEXAS AND THE TARIFF
- CONSERVATIVE SENATES
- AS TO PLATFORMS
- THE DEMOCRATIC POSITION
- A GAME OF SWAP AND SWINDLE
- NO "NEW" RELIGION NECESSARY
- THE INCOME TAX
- EDUCATIONAL SERIES—LEST WE FORGET
- SUGGESTIONS TO COMMONER READERS
- GALVESTON'S SEA WALL
- THE TARIFF AND CONGRESS
- NEBRASKA PLATFORM
- PRACTICAL TARIFF TALKS
- CURRENT TOPICS
- LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE
- HOME DEPARTMENT
- WHETHER COMMON OR NOT
- NEWS OF THE WEEK