

Editorials By Commoner Readers

SENTIMENT IN LOUISIANA

Lake Charles, La.—The Commoner's strictures and conclusions concerning the attitude of Louisiana's congressmen are just and correct. The influence of the tariff beneficiaries is now at its height, but since the state has adopted the primary system her voters, being called upon to act for themselves in the disposal of their ballot, are studying the question and there are few of the farmers, wage-earners and business men who will be satisfied with the argument that the major part of the people in Louisiana are benefited by a protective tariff.

That the protective system is iniquitous needs no arguing. In it is concerned the second part of the question of taxation—distribution, and the levying upon one industry or one class to support another is vicious. It is a two-edged sword for it defrauds one and at the same time places the most powerful weapon—money—in hands which often use it to controvert the proper course of a democratic government. I had the opportunity to observe this in some of the manufacturing districts in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio while engaged in the campaign last fall. The man who felt compelled to wear a Taft button in order that he might not displease his employer was almost certain to carry that subversive into the booth with him—especially when he felt that a system of espionage was in use and a betrayal might cost him his position and, notwithstanding the astounding tales of bank accounts, this loss of position meant eviction and hunger.

I do not think that the democratic party will surrender to the power that is ambitious to dominate all parties even though a few men of influence in the party are so counseling, but your instantaneous reply to every criticism, your courage in challenging even your friends when they are for a moment forgetful is timely and inspiring. The attainment of the presidency is nothing. The outward manifestations of victory are empty, but your success has been constant. At times you have fought almost single-handed and have by your faith not only kept the party a democratic party but have made the people see that all that is good in any party is its democracy.

In the crisis now confronting us you have, as I believe, your greatest fight. In all the others you have won—as history will show—and I feel sure that in this you will be the force that will keep us bound to the principles that are the excuse for our existence.

LEON LOCKE.

PRE-ELECTION SPEECHES

Fruitvale, Calif.—Mr. Taft, in his pre-election speeches interpreted his party platform plank on the tariff question as pledging to the people a substantial reduction of the Dingley schedules. The tariff bill as formulated by the present congress, under the leadership of Senator Aldrich, provides for raising the present schedules.

This bill was formulated with the full knowledge and at least, the tacit consent of the president, although there was no official expression from him one way or the other. Had he allowed it to come to him without his having had any hand or voice in its making he could have vetoed it with consistency or have allowed it to become the law without his signature in approval. But he has thrown away such opportunity to be consistent. He has had offered two amendments to the tariff bill which will make him sharer in the making of that bill. This being so, it would be quite as inconsistent, and possibly more unreasonable, for him to veto the measure, as it would have been for him to sign it had it come to him wholly as the work of congress unaffected by any amendment recommended by him.

Thus, as it appears, has Senator Aldrich by accepting the president's amendments to a tariff bill which violates the party's pledge as interpreted by the president, put it out of the power of the president not to be a party to this breach of faith. The president may not be expected to disapprove of his own recommendation.

More, by substituting the president's corporation tax amendment and his amendment providing for amending the constitution permitting imposition of an income tax, Senator Aldrich sidetracks the Cummins graduated income tax amendment.

Evidently the Rhode Island senator has the

better of the president in this barter. For should the president veto a measure containing two provisions which were by him recommended—well, the conclusion by all thinking people would be that Mr. Taft may be an expert at golf, but at the game of politics he is a novice pitted against an expert. The father-in-law of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., now first vice president of the Standard Oil company, has demonstrated his rare adroitness and skill in putting the president in a position which will necessitate his approval of a measure which "unequivocally" violates a pledge "unequivocally" made by as flagrant an act of equivocation as was ever perpetrated.

Evidently, Mr. Taft has no aspirations to a second term. Wonder if this may not be part of the play to put Roosevelt in next time; to keep LaFollette or Cummins or some real democratic democrat out?

JOHN AUBREY JONES.

CELEBRATING JULY 4

St. Louis, Mo.—As a reader of The Commoner, beginning with the first issue, and having noticed the changing conditions of the people for several years, and from time to time considered the principles of government advocated by you relative to the rights of persons and property, permit me to say something about celebrating July 4. Among other things the Declaration of Independence declares:

"That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

"That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

"That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

Granting, because it is self-evident, that all men are born with equal rights to life, liberty and happiness; that these are inalienable rights, they can not, as a matter of right, be taken from us, but should be protected by just laws. Whenever the government aids and protects the few, and not the masses, then there is something wrong, and it is the right and duty of the people to alter or abolish such government, to establish a new one, founded on such principles and powers that will most likely secure life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all. The question, therefore, is, are the social, industrial and political conditions of our people such today that they enjoy life, liberty and happiness within the meaning of the Declaration of Independence? A family with plenty of unencumbered and income property, surrounded with the comforts and some luxuries of life may be satisfied, but how about the family in need of the dire necessities, confronted with poverty and defeat? The discouraging conditions of many in big cities, apparent to any observer, is sometimes alarming. Let us stop and reflect a little. What can we say and do so that our people can share alike in opportunities and prosperity as the founders of the nation intended? If it is true that the protective tariff policy enables the favored few to plunder the many then we are not executing the principles of government as set forth in the Declaration of Independence. They who are favored by such privileges organize private monopolies by force of which they deprive others of an equal chance in the race. The special privilege regime of private monopoly has such a foothold now that outsiders who start in business are soon forced to surrender because they can not successfully compete with organized monopoly.

Justice Brewer, delivering the opinion of the court in a certain case, quoted Justice Mathews who, when speaking of the principles of our constitutional government, wisely observed: "And it is always safe to read the letter of the constitution in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. No duty rests more imperative upon the courts than the enforcement of those constitutional provisions intended to secure that equality of rights which is the foundation of free government." Good, but some of "the captains of industry" are opposed to such an equality of rights, and they are represented in the legislature and on the bench. The courts

will have to do better than some have done and interpret our laws with the judicial wisdom expressed by Justices Mathews and Brewer, and curb the unlawful combinations of predatory wealth, planning by day and by night, to subjugate the common people.

Let us point out the evils of special privileges as being indefensible on the grounds of justice. A real statesman once said: "Our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Later he said: "I see in the near future a crisis arising that unnerves me, and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. As a result of the war, corporations have been enthroned, an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in few hands and the republic is destroyed. I feel at this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of war. God grant that my suspicions may prove groundless."

Fellow citizens, who are the statesmen of today in authority that can see an approaching crisis which causes them to tremble for the safety of their country? Step by step organized monopoly is becoming more arrogant. While ours is a government of, for and by the people on parchment, it is not so in practice, but can be made so by sufficient vigilance if we do not wait too long. It is well, but not enough, for us to express our indebtedness to the heroes of the Revolution. We must deal with actual conditions. In this way we can do something in furtherance of equal rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." On the Fourth of July we should discuss, from the standpoint of righteous citizenship, the means and methods to be employed. Believing that the nation was well founded, and if our civilization is all we claim for it, we should succeed. Let us do our best.

CHARLES J. MAURER.

Lest We Forget

IT'S GOOD, GOOD!

This is an Associated Press dispatch: New York, June 19, 1908.—J. Pierpont Morgan, who arrived from Europe today, expressed his pleasure at the choice of Secretary of War Taft as the republican nominee for the presidency. "It's good, good," Mr. Morgan said. He declined to talk further upon politics or any other subject.

HARRIMAN'S ATTORNEY FOR TAFT

The following is taken from the Chicago Record-Herald, republican, issue of Tuesday, June 16: William Nelson Cromwell of New York, attorney for the Harriman interests, arrived in Chicago last night and announced that he had come to see the stampede for Taft.

"It is all over," said Mr. Cromwell. "I find that the Roosevelt stampede was all talk. I find no such sentiment. It will be a stampede, yes, but it will be a stampede for Taft."

Mr. Cromwell is a close personal friend of Secretary Taft, and has come here direct from Washington, where he met the coming nominee.

WHAT DID IT MEAN?

The public demands light on the tariff question. The republican platform deals in generalities. The language employed may mean anything or nothing, and the speeches of the republican candidate intensifies the gloom that the convention threw over the subject. Let there be light, that the people may know whether the tariff laws are to continue to be made by a few beneficiaries in their own interest, or by the people's representatives for the people's good.—From Mr. Bryan's speech at Denver, October 16, 1908.

THE EXPLANATION

The following is reproduced from an editorial written by Henry Watterson entitled "Peace With the System," and printed in the Louisville Courier-Journal a few days prior to the national election of 1908:

"Flying the flag of Roosevelt the republican leaders have made their peace with the system. From Rockefeller to Carnegie, from Harriman to Corey, every chieftain of wealth and predatory wealth, the honest too often making common cause with the dishonest, is well content with Taft and Sherman. They foretold and imply the old order of special privilege to the few, impositions of every sort to the many; high finance rampant; high tariff, 'revised by its friends,' rampant; the end of Rooseveltism and agitation for the good of business—business only organized capital and licensed monopoly; the same old story, the same old song, the same old crowd slicked over with goose grease from the Roosevelt larder, but meaning four years more of the rascaldom which Roosevelt has unmasked but not downed; which Roosevelt has exposed, but left intact; which, in spite of Roosevelt and all his works, stands today as impudent and as defiant as ever it stood, a gray wolf lording it over the senate, a gray wolf lording it over the house, and two gray wolves, Sherman and Sheldon, 'Sunny Jim' and 'Black George,' giving tone and effect to the ticket. Should any thoughtful democrat, should any patriotic American, should any honest man, balk of his duty before such a layout?"