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ENGLAND'S GREAT STRUGGLE

For the next six weeks the eyes of the civilized world will be fixed on the political struggle going on in Great Britain. The house of lords has rejected the budget and the house of commons, declaring that it is a violation of the constitution, appeals to the country. It is more than a parliamentary battle—it involves two issues, one between popular government and hereditary privilege and the other between landlordism and the disinherited classes. Either issue would invest the contest with vast interest, both together make it of world wide importance.

If an hereditary body like the house of lords can veto the acts of a representative body like the house of commons, government by the consent of the governed becomes a farce. And to aggravate the controversy landlordism, with all of its oppressiveness, steps in and becomes sponsor for the assumption of power by the house of lords—in fact it is an attempt by the landlord peers to use the house of lords to resist just taxation of their estates.

The people of Great Britain may decide to hit, if not kill, two birds with one stone—landlordism and hereditary government. It remains to be seen whether the masses are ready for a victory. That a victory will come sooner or later is sure. We shall know within two months whether democracy wins now or whether it must wait for a more convenient season—but win it will some day EVERYWHERE.

"WAITING"

The Philadelphia North American, that simple minded old republican sheet, is waiting—not hopefully, of course, but waiting nevertheless—for Mr. Taft to do something to show his antagonism to the special interests. Commenting upon his message the Philadelphia North American says:

"In other words, this message leaves the American people exactly where they have been for nine weary months in their fruitless endeavor to discover what sort of president they elected in November, 1908. Once more they are asked to 'suspend judgment.' But even the patience of friends has a limit. The people still have those 'special messages' to hope for. But hope too long deferred not only 'maketh the heart sick,' but has a tendency to transform disappointment into disgust. Not for much longer will there be suspension of judgment of the president who put forth the spineless message, the best commentary on which is that it has the unqualified approval of Speaker Cannon and the members of the New York stock exchange."

SENATOR CULBERSON'S STATEMENT

The protectionist democrats of Texas who have been misled into believing that there is a "higher law" for the official than the platform upon which he was elected will not get any comfort from the statement issued by Senator Culberson when he reached home. The statement, as printed in the Houston Chronicle, will be found on another page. On the subject of platform pledges, he says:

"My views of the binding force of party platforms on matters of policy were formed early in my official career. In my two inaugural addresses as governor and in several messages the subject was emphasized, and so obligatory did I regard the platform pledges that extra sessions of the legislature were called to meet and redeem them. I have followed this course in the senate, and am, therefore, thoroughly committed to it."

No one will hereafter quote the senator as a supporter of the bunco game theory that a candidate can use a platform to secure votes and then discard it after election and "conscientiously," of course, misrepresent his constituents.

Senator Culberson also delivers a staggering blow to those who have been advocating the tax on iron ore. We ought to hear no more of that nonsense in Texas. The facts presented by Senator Culberson in his statement were presented by him in the senate, and no democrat can be excused for not understanding the subject. Those who are anxious to have a debate between democrats have a good chance here to secure an interesting discussion. Let them find someone who is willing to defend the steel trust's right to a tariff on iron ore and put him up against Senator Culberson.

On the subject of raw material also the senator gives very little consolation to the men who have been trying to secure local protection under the guise of advocating the revenue tariff. While he endorses the Texas platform of 1896—the more's the pity—his endorsement contains a qualification that reconciles his position with the position taken by the advocates of free raw material. He admits that there are exceptions to the rule, and as he states his position, it is that "raw material shall not be put on the free list IN ORDER to maintain a protective duty on manufactured goods."

That is entirely different from the doctrine now advanced by the protectionist democrats, that there must be a tariff on raw material AS LONG AS THERE IS A TARIFF ON THE FINISHED PRODUCT. Free raw material is demanded NOT "in order to maintain a protective tariff on manufactured products" but THAT DUTIES ON MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS MAY BE LARGELY REDUCED. The doctrine of taxed raw material is firmly imbedded in the Aldrich bill, and Mr. Aldrich is not an exponent of democratic doctrine. Senator Culberson can consistently favor every plank in the platform proposed by Mr. Bryan at Dallas.

To whom will the advocates of the doctrine that raw material should be PROTECTED turn now? The more they study the question, the more clearly will it appear to them that the attempt to put a tax on raw material is merely an attempt to spread protection among a larger number and that the only hope of tariff reform is to be found in opposing the protective principle wherever it appears.

TARIFF AND TRUSTS FURNISH THE ANSWER

When President Taft cites the increased prices of farm products to prove that high tariff is not responsible for any considerable share of the increased cost of living, let him turn to James J. Hill for his answer.

There is a reason, a natural reason, for the mounting prices of food products. That reason is given by Mr. Hill clearly, cogently, convincingly. But there is no sufficient reason for the enormous prices of manufactured products, except as it is found in such artificial causes as a protective tariff which eliminates competition from abroad, and trust agreements which eliminate domestic competition.

Food products are rising in value because, as Mr. Hill graphically shows, consumption and population are increasing so much faster than production. The demand is rapidly increasing, while the supply, relatively, is diminishing at an alarming rate. And the prices are fixed, in an open market, by the law of supply and demand. In this case, since population is bound to go on increasing, and with it the demand, the remedy lies in increasing the supply. Mr. Hill is the John the Baptist of that remedy, crying his religion in the wilderness. And he is

rendering the whole American people an inestimable service in his preaching of this gospel.

But conditions are radically different in the industrial field. Our manufactures are not decreasing, relatively, as farm products are. They are increasing, relatively as well as actually. While farm exports are falling off, factory exports are climbing at an amazing rate. In manufactures, in a word, supply is increasing faster than demand, and the energies of our business world, and of our federal government, are incessantly devoted to finding and developing foreign markets for the surplus products. When the same condition prevailed as to farm products, when not only this country but the world was glutted with wheat and corn and other products of the soil, prices fell to near the vanishing point.

Why does not this same natural, logical tendency manifest itself now, in the case of the output of our mills and factories?

There is still another reason why factory products should be cheaper, aside from that found in a relatively increased supply. That other reason is a lower cost of production. Most of the processes of manufacture, formerly done by hand, are now done by machinery, at only a fraction of the old cost. One man, in numberless instances, does today the work that a dozen or a score or a hundred men were required to do a generation or two past. Science and invention, every day of the year, are bringing forward improvements all calculated to improve and cheapen and expedite manufacturing processes. This is quite the contrary of the condition that governs the production of food. As Mr. Hill shows, in ten states there is a less production of wheat per acre than there was ten years ago. The same labor, the same or better machinery, costing more money, applied to land that costs more money, produce less wheat rather than more wheat. Naturally, wheat rises. But the same labor, and improved machinery, brings forth more factory output than was possible ten years ago. Why, then, do not manufactures fall in price, or at least remain stable? Why, instead of falling, have they actually risen, an average of about 50 per cent?

Tariff and trusts furnish the answer.

In conformity to natural law farm products are rising, and must continue at their high level, until the remedy invoked by Mr. Hill is applied. And in defiance of natural law factory products are rising, and will continue to rise, as long as the tariff is used to make the American consumer helpless while the trusts tie him hand and foot and go through his pockets.

Why is the steel trust paying fat dividends on \$600,000,000 or more of water?

Why is Standard Oil earning from 40 to 50 per cent on its capitalization?

Why are the New England cotton and woolen mills earning as high as 67 per cent annually?

Why are scores upon scores of trusts increasing their wealth so rapidly that multi-millionaires have become common as flies in August?

It is because, while American genius, invention, industry, favorable conditions of all kinds, enable them to produce a constantly increasing supply, at a cheaper cost, tariff and trust grafting enable them to dispose of their bigger and cheaper supply at a higher cost.

There is the difference between rising farm prices and rising factory prices.

James J. Hill has effectively answered William H. Taft.—Omaha World-Herald.

DEPENDS, OF COURSE

Theodore N. Vail, president of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, testified recently before a New York legislative committee. When he was asked concerning the advisability of government regulation of telegraphs and telephones, state or national, Mr. Vail replied simply: "That depends on the regulation."

To be sure. Doubtless they would be satisfied with a "regulation" devised by the party deriving its campaign funds from telephone and telegraph trusts. It is a matter of common knowledge, too, that the tariff barons are entirely satisfied with the "tariff revision" provided by the political party to which the barons made liberal contribution in the way of campaign funds.

J. M. Cussons, Stewartville, Minn.—Are there no telephones in coal mines? I have not seen any account of any. If there is not that way of communicating, why not? I think it would be well for The Commoner to investigate for some protection against a repetition of the latest horror.