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Constructive Legislation

One newspaper writer complains that democrats do not advocate any "constructive legislation;" that their energies are devoted to criticism of republican administration. It may be that that depends upon what one calls "constructive legislation." Just now it would seem that the most important service that a political party may render to the people is to aid in the prevention of destructive legislation as contemplated in the republican program. And it may be said that the very prevention of this form of legislation, involving as it does the life of the republic, is the highest form of constructive legislation.

The special interests have, under the republican party, become so thoroughly entrenched in power in this government that the most painstaking, patriotic effort will be required before they are dislodged. Mr. Taft's national incorporation plan would destroy our system of government, leaving the states mere helpless provinces and the people subject to the whims of corporation magnates; the railroad bill with its court of commerce would centralize railroad authority at Washington, making it inconvenient for shippers to make effective protest; the ship subsidy bill would take from the pockets of the many for the benefit of the few; the central bank would vest absolute control over the money of the country in the hands of a coterie of men; the republican party's tariff policy would continue the system of "seeking to tax the people rich" which, in reality, is a tax upon consumption for the benefit of generous contributors to republican campaign funds.

Does the democratic party wage war against federal incorporation, insisting that the rights of state government, as well as the rights surrendered to the federal government, shall be preserved intact? Does it insist that the state's authority over corporations shall be retained for the benefit of the people whom corporations are presumed to serve? Does it object to a system of railroad law that would centralize authority over railroads at a point practically inaccessible to the shipper? Does it object to ship subsidy or any other form of subsidy because "equal rights to all and special privileges to none" provides the rule for the public servant? Does it object to the central bank because to give such an institution life would give its managers a power over the people too great for human beings to have? Does it insist upon a tariff revision made downward for the consumers and by the consumers? Does it fight Aldrichism and Cannonism in the capital building, Taftism in the White House, Ballingerism in the departments? Does it insist that the house of representatives shall be restored to its representative position so that it shall voice, in some degree, the will of the people? Does it insist upon the election of senators by the people rather than by the special interests? Does it demand the enforcement of the criminal

clause of the anti-Sherman law against the chief magnates of the trusts, requiring those persistent violators of law to wear the prison stripes? Does it stand for the restoration of this government as the fathers intended to the position of a government of, by, and for the people, rather than a government of, by, and for the trusts?

If the democratic party does stand for these things, if its platforms are written in unmistakable terms and its candidates are of such character that they may reasonably be trusted to do the people's will, then the democratic party has a great constructive policy.

Some men may sneer when they are told that the republican party has gone so far in its plutocratic policy that it has actually imperiled popular government. But more and more thoughtful men are coming to recognize this as a solemn fact.

"But soberly it is now no child's play to save the principles of Jefferson from total overthrow in this nation." The democratic party has the fundamental principles essential to this great work of salvation. If it shall remain true to those principles, true to the spirit in which Jefferson and Jackson served the public interests, it will be given the task of restoring the American nation, and the opportunity to dedicate it anew to the real service of the people.

THEY ARE "THE PARTY"

The Sioux City (Iowa) Journal (rep.) says: "The insurgent Washington correspondents tell us that the president has finally lined up with Aldrich and Cannon." That is misleading. He has simply stayed lined up with the party majority—with the party organization that has all along accepted his leadership and defended the record of the party. The only recent change in the situation is the disclosure that the insurgents—or some of them—have definitely decided not to co-operate with the party majority in securing the adoption of a single item of the administration program. Will the Taft leadership mean opposition to the insurgents? It will—inevitably—not because Taft so wills it or the organization so wills it, but because the insurgents so will it."

The Sioux City Journal knows whereof it speaks. Mr. Taft is simply "staying with the party" when he lines up with Aldrich and Cannon. Aldrichism, Cannonism or Taftism is republican partyism. Those republicans who are in earnest and are anxious to accomplish something for popular government will do well to recognize the synonymy between the terms Aldrichism, Cannonism, Taftism. They will do well to understand that they are engaged in child's play when they denounce Aldrichism and Cannonism while professing undying devotion to Taftism.

TROUBLE IN NEW YORK

Senator Elihu Root acting, it is presumed, for Mr. Taft took what the dispatches called "active charge of the critical situation in the republican party in New York state." He wired to the state senators demanding that Mr. Hinman be chosen as president pro tem of the senate to succeed Mr. Allds, who is just now under a cloud. Mr. Root made it plain that Governor Hughes was with him in this demand. The senators promptly ignored Messrs. Taft, Root and Hughes and proceeded to the election of their own candidate. There will be a lively scramble for the mantle of the late Thomas Collier Platt. But Mr. Elihu Root is not the heir apparent.

TIME FOR A CHANGE

Nelson A. Aldrich, admittedly the leader of the republican party, says that the government should be conducted for \$300,000,000 less each year than is now expended under republican administration. This is a good thing to show to your republican neighbor. It may lead him to make investigation all along the line, in which event he will probably conclude that the time has come for a change in the administration of national affairs.

That Ultimatum

Mr. Bryan's Commoner reprints from the Indianapolis News what is called the "Insurgent Ultimatum." And this is the ultimatum: "Either the insurgents of today are the republican party of tomorrow or else when that tomorrow comes there will be no republican party." The terms are rather hard. In substance it is declared that the insurgents will rule or they will ruin. It is something new in public affairs to be brought up standing in so harsh a manner. If the minority is not permitted to govern the majority, in the open field there will be no republican majority. That is to say, if the republican party does not hustle to get down the pole the democratic party will be placed in the saddle. Something like that happened in 1892, but the democratic party was unhorsed at the first opportunity.—Sioux City, Iowa, Journal, (Rep.)

The Indianapolis News' editorial was not necessarily a threat. It was more in the nature of prophecy. If all of the members of congress, who have shown signs of insurgency, deserted the party that of itself would not necessarily bring fulfillment to the prophecy, and if all of the congressmen who have shown signs of insurgency remained faithful to the party organization, regardless of the party platform, that fact would not necessarily interfere with the prophecy's fulfillment. The force that makes and unmakes political parties is among the non-officeholding class and the vote that swings the pendulum first one way and then another is likely to be influenced by the very conditions described by the Indianapolis News. It is an insult to the intelligence of the American people to say that they are unmindful of the danger to popular government that is involved in the present day republican program. It is true that prophecy, so far as the republican party is concerned, has not always been safe. Repeatedly that party has been given power in the face of conditions that to the minds of many thoughtful men made such a result extremely dangerous to the well being of American government. Repeatedly that party has won power through false pretenses, through the manipulation of the ballot, through the use of enormous campaign funds provided by special interests, and many men have wondered why the people trusted the party. During the last presidential campaign the republican candidates were notoriously supported by the trusts. Republican managers refused to print the list of the contributions to their presidential campaign fund made through the congressional committee. Only a few days prior to the election, John D. Rockefeller himself made public announcement that the republican candidate was his choice. The people, then praying for relief on the tariff question, trusted the republican party's promise that the tariff would be revised. After the election the party revised the tariff upward and then explained to a betrayed people that it did not specifically promise to revise the tariff downward.

The Sioux City Journal need not be concerned by threats as to what a coterie of individuals may do. Insurgent Norris of Nebraska may protest against Cannon in the caucus and then vote for him in the end. Insurgent Hayes of California may become frightened at the party whip and rush to the cover of the White House. Insurgent Murdock of Kansas may become alarmed lest by his protest against Cannonism and Aldrichism he is helping to defeat the republican party, but a betrayed people that are not concerned in the discipline or the preservation of the party may not follow weak-kneed statesmen in their mad flight beneath the crack of the party whip. Sometimes it happens with parties that they have so imposed upon the patience of the people that even their best and truest reformers are helpless to save. It might be that the insurgents of today would become the republican party of tomorrow and yet the republican party would go down to defeat. The Journal refers briefly to democratic history. Does it not remember that in 1896 the demo-

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