

The Commoner.

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Discriminating Praise

Have you read Mr. Roosevelt's endorsement of President Taft? If not read it. It is a literary gem. No one can hereafter doubt Mr. Roosevelt's skill in the selection of words; he is a master of nice distinction. According to the press dispatches he said that the laws passed during Mr. Taft's administration "reflect high credit on all who succeeded in putting them in their present shape." This is not praise for Mr. Taft but praise for the democrats and insurgents who SUCCEEDED in putting them in their PRESENT SHAPE—which is quite different from the shape in which the president and his attorney general recommended them.

He commends the laws as a "sample of the achievement which is yet to come." As a SAMPLE is small in comparison with the thing it represents it would look as if the things accomplished during the first half of the term were somewhat disappointing. When he speaks of the credit "due to the congress and our able, upright and distinguished president, William Howard Taft," he puts congress FIRST. And what weak praise of the president!

The ex-president has an extended vocabulary; could he not find a stronger adjective than "distinguished?" Why did he not say patriotic, or loyal, or faithful, or vigorous, or steadfast, or courageous, or progressive, or something indicating a successful administration? To call a president distinguished is like introducing him as "one of whom you have all doubtless heard" or as "a gentleman whose name is familiar to you." But if there are several more complimentary adjectives which he might have used there are several less complimentary ones that he avoided. He did not call him a good looking, jovial or a healthy president. Republicans often say of Mr. Bryan that he has "remarkable physical endurance;" the ex-president did a little better than that in commending the president whom he nominated and elected—but not much.

ETERNAL VIGILANCE

Eternal vigilance has been declared to be the price of liberty, and the voters ought to be reminded of this fact when they are selecting their public officials. Governments are administered by human hands, and human beings are imperfect. Even with the best intentions they often err in judgment, and when powerful interests are on one side and the silent and unorganized masses on the other, the representative is sometimes weaned away from his constituents and their interests. The danger is the greater the farther the individual is removed from the voters; even city councilmen occasionally betray their trust; state legislators more often do, because they are not so carefully watched. United States senators and congressmen meet greater temptations and are less restrained by the eye of the constituents. It is especially im-

portant, therefore, that in selecting congressmen and senators care should be taken to secure men with moral character—men who are guided by conscience and are afraid to do wrong.

If there is danger of a good man yielding to the temptations that beset our capitals, how much greater the danger where a man is biased in favor of predatory corporations? This bias is sometimes an unconscious one, and the more dangerous because unconscious. No man can safely be trusted to guard the public interests whose business relations are such as to bias him in favor of the interests that are seeking advantage from the operation of law. The temptation to make the government a private asset in business can hardly be resisted by those who are so situated that their pecuniary interests blind them to the public welfare. Put only the faithful on guard!

SURPRISED

The editor of the Omaha Bee pretends to be surprised because Mr. Bryan said that the corporations were trying to pick a democratic candidate for the presidency. The Bee editor congratulates Mr. Bryan, saying that he has progressed so far "from the hide-bound bigotry of partisan blindness" as to admit that the interests exert influence in the democratic party.

If the Bee editor would make a little progress on his own account from the "hide-bound bigotry of partisan blindness" he would know that Mr. Bryan has spent the years of his public life in combatting the influence special interests try to exert in the democratic party. As a rule these interests have no politics, but no confidence is violated when it is stated that whenever Mr. Bryan has been the candidate they have been republican—and "hide-bound" at that.

THE NEW YORK REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

Mr. Roosevelt's speeches in the New York convention were vigorous, but the platform was disappointing. Little in it that can be called progressive except the demand for direct primaries. The fulsome endorsement of the president is in sharp contrast with progressive platforms in the west.

The nominee for governor must be taken, if at all, on Mr. Roosevelt's endorsement, and Mr. Roosevelt guaranteed Mr. Taft. As a lawyer he has prosecuted the sugar trust, but that was his legal duty—it does not indicate his sympathies. He was trained in Senator Root's office and has the senator's endorsement, and Senator Root can hardly be accepted as an authority on progressive policies.

MAKING CONDITIONS

The Pilot, the official organ of the Catholic archdiocese of Boston gives Theodore Roosevelt something to think about in the following editorial, printed in the Pilot's September 24th issue:

"Colonel Roosevelt once insisted that he could not, as an American citizen, submit to any conditions when he asked for an audience with the pope. It is only two weeks ago since the same colonel refused to attend a banquet except on condition that a certain obnoxious United States senator should not be there. Truly the colonel is consistent!"

THE ARKANSAS VICTORY

The initiative and referendum is adopted in Arkansas by a majority of at least 12,080 votes. The total vote cast was 158,564, making it necessary for the amendment to receive 79,283. The vote on the amendment was 91,363 for and 39,680 against—a little more than two and a half to one. Good for Arkansas! Governor Donaghey was re-elected by a vote of 101,557 to 39,880 for the republican candidate. The fact that he received within nine thousand of the vote polled by him in the presidential campaign shows his strength. Good for Arkansas!

Mr. Root as permanent chairman of a reform convention and as the instructor of the reform candidate is not reassuring.

Tariff Catechism

Q. What is a tariff?

A. A duty collected on imports.

Q. What is a protective tariff?

A. A duty imposed upon imports for the aid of home factories producing competing articles.

Q. What is a revenue tariff?

A. A revenue tariff is a tariff levied for the purpose of raising a revenue.

Q. What is the difference between the two kinds of tariff?

A. A revenue tariff is collected for the benefit of the whole public, and the government stops when it gets enough. A protective tariff is imposed for private benefit, may be so levied as to impose a heavy burden without raising much revenue and there is no limit to its exactions except the greed of the protected interests and the patience of the people.

Q. Who pays the tariff?

A. The consumer.

Q. How can this fact be established?

A. By reason, by observation and by experience. If a tariff were paid by the foreigner it would be no protection to the home industry. Only when the consumer must pay more than the foreign price for an imported article can the home producer charge more than the foreign price for the domestic article. A tariff paid by the foreigner would give no protection to an American manufacturer. Then, too, the government gives a rebate on raw material when the finished product is exported. Why does the government pay the rebate to the domestic manufacturer if the foreigner pays the tariff? But experience is the best test. Go abroad, buy in the open market, and when you return you will pay the duty and you can not find any foreigner to reimburse you.

Q. Is such a tax constitutional?

A. It violates the spirit of the constitution for it collects from the many and gives to the few, but as the protective features are concealed in a revenue law it is difficult to get a decision on the principle involved.

Q. Can the wisdom of such a tax be defended?

A. No; a policy of favoritism is never wise in a republic. A government of the people, by the people and for the people should be administered according to the maxim: Equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

Q. Is the present protective tariff necessary?

A. No; it is about twice as high as would be necessary to cover the entire labor cost of protected manufactures. The fact that we are exporting an increasing amount of manufactures is proof that our industries do not need the present protection. And it must be remembered that our manufactures have the benefit of the freight when the foreigner brings his goods here, while the foreign competitor has the benefit of the freight when we export. And it must also be remembered that the tariff on all kinds of material, on machinery and on food and clothing increases the cost of articles manufactured here. If we can now export in spite of these burdens we could export more if the tariff were reduced.

Q. Does a high tariff make good wages?

A. No. If it is said that we pay higher wages than they do in England—a stock argument with protectionists—it is a complete answer to say that England, with no protective tariff, pays better wages than Germany does under protection. Our best wages are paid in our unprotected industries and the fact that we export goods made with our high priced labor is positive proof that good wages do not depend on protection. The labor organizations have done far more to increase wages than all the tariff laws.

Q. What about the home market argument?

A. The friends of protection claim that the farmer can afford to pay more when he buys because the manufacturers furnish him a home market, but this is a fallacy. The staples of the farm are exported and the price received for the surplus exported fixes the price received for the part sold at home. As the farmer sells in the unprotected markets of the world and buys in a protected market he is constantly

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