

Samuel M. Ralston's Great Democratic Speech

Samuel M. Ralston, democratic nominee for governor of Indiana, delivered a speech at Anderson, Ind., from which the following extracts are taken:

Fitness to hold office is determined by the principles and policies for which the candidate stands, his grasp of the problems affecting the people and the rectitude of his purposes. With such a standard by which to be measured, I dare to ask the people of Indiana to choose me for their chief executive.

I am an optimist. I have faith in the capacity of the American people for self government. Their silence in the presence of wrong doing does not necessarily indicate inability on their part to discover they have been wronged. What at times seems to be ignorance or indifference on their part is but patience in bearing their burdens. They are slow to wrath, but swift and terrible in vengeance when they decide to administer punishment for the betrayal of public confidence.

Unless all signs are misleading the people have determined to transfer their national government from the party in power to a party of their own choosing next November, and the change will not be made without a just cause. All the democrats, all the prohibitionists, all the socialists and fully one-half of those heretofore constituting the party in power, agree there should be a change in the administrative policy of the government.

What is the source of the people's grievance against the republican party? The query is not difficult to answer. This is a government of delegated powers and the republican party in the administration of the government has perverted those powers to the building of fortunes for favorite individuals and combinations to the injury of society.

This it has done chiefly through the power to tax—a sweeping power. Upon its wise exercise the maintenance of the government depends. Through its abuse the property of the citizen may in effect be confiscated and transferred without consideration to another. In the language of Chief Justice Marshall, "the power to tax is the power to destroy."

The abusive exercise of this power appears most prominently in the working of our tariff system. All agree that this system, which is a system of indirect taxation, affords the most convenient method for the government to derive the revenue necessary to defray its expenses.

But the democratic party insists that in operating this system no more than enough money should be taken from the people than is necessary to defray the expenses of the government economically administered, while the republican party maintains that in levying a tariff a wage for the laborer and a profit for the manufacturer should be included, in addition to its revenue feature. In other words the difference between the two parties is the difference between a tariff for revenue and a tariff for protection. The one through this system seeks to get money from the private citizen into the public treasury for public purposes, cheerfully acquiescing in any incidental advantage, if any, thereby afforded the laborer and the manufacturer. The other through this system, under the guise of the general welfare, seeks to get money from the private citizen beyond the needs of the government so as to enhance the profits of some other private citizen or corporate combination of private citizens engaged in a private enterprise. "This," declared Justice Miller, "is none the less robbery because done under the form of law, and is called taxation."

It is apparent that in the national contest this year the tariff will be the paramount issue in connection with its brood of evils. Let us consider briefly then the position of the democratic party on this question as set forth in the Baltimore platform. And just here let me digress long enough to observe that no greater convention ever assembled on American soil than the Baltimore convention. It was composed of masterful men. They were big of brain, of heart and of stature, and the first among them was he whom Indiana always delights to honor and whose name is revered the world around, wherever the home and the republican form of government are held sacred—the first citizen of the republic, William Jennings Bryan.

I think it clearly appears and has, by implication at least, been acknowledged by the republican party in its platforms, that a protective tariff appropriates the property of one citizen for the benefit of another citizen in his private

capacity, without compensation. Is such an appropriation authorized by the federal constitution? Democrats say it is not.

Webster, in defining a tax, says: "It is a charge or burden usually pecuniary laid upon the person or property for public purposes: a forced contribution of wealth to meet the public needs of government."

From this definition it is plain that a tax must be for the public and not for the benefit of individuals, unless they be the inmates of almshouses, and then the public element controls.

The fifth amendment to the federal constitution in part reads: "Nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation."

High judicial authority has declared that "private property necessarily includes everything that can be held or owned by private persons."

Notwithstanding this broad definition of private property, courts have held that money can not be taken for public use under the clause of the constitution just quoted.

The founders of our government vigilantly labored to shield the property rights of the individual citizen against the designing avarice of those who ignore the moral element in the ownership of property and do not hesitate to despoil both the individual and the public in their efforts to enrich themselves.

When the fathers provided against the taking of private property for a public purpose without just compensation they thereby declared to the world that he who labors and acquires shall not be deprived of his possessions beyond a fair contribution on his part toward defraying the expenses of his government economically administered. They thus laid the foundation for true liberty and gave assurance of an indestructible republic.

I am not required to furnish figures to show that the American manufacturer can compete with the world in putting his product on the market. He can do this so easily and with such a handsome profit to himself that we have in this country manufacturing concerns that dispose of all their output in foreign markets. Nor need I pause to remind the American consumer of the injustice—the cruel injustice—done him by the tariff beneficiary in selling the product of the American loom and factory abroad cheaper than he will sell it at home.

There is scarcely a machine or tool, made in this country, used by an American farmer that is not sold in a foreign market cheaper than it is sold at home. The foreigner can purchase the American sewing machine for his wife cheaper than the American husband can buy the same machine for his wife. The father in a foreign land can put an American shoe on his boy at a lower cost than the American father can put the same shoe on his boy. The foreign wage earner can fit up his home with American furniture, American carpets, American queensware, American cutlery and American utensils cheaper than the American wage earner can supply his home with the same things. And yet the American consumer, the farmer and wage earner alike, through the operation of a high tariff, has long and patiently made his contribution to the home manufacturer to enable the latter to compete in the American market—not the foreign—but the American market with the foreign manufacturer. This the American consumer has been urged to do for more than forty years in the name of patriotism, but it has at last dawned upon him that the patriotism demanding tribute from all the people to satisfy the greed of a few of the people, is neither a safe guide for the individual nor the nation.

We are told in eulogistic terms that among the advantages derived from a protective tariff are an increased wage scale and prosperity for the American laborer. If this assurance be correct it is strange that men like John Mitchell have not made the discovery. In discussing the American standard of wages in his book on organized labor, Mitchell says:

"The greater skill and effectiveness of workmen, the invention of machinery, the improvement and increased productiveness of manufacturing have all contributed to this result. But without the active intervention of trade unions, the increase in wages, which has marked the progress of American industry in the nineteenth century, would not have taken place."

Further on in the same book he uses this language: "The wages of the working man are measured in the final instance, not by the mere amount of money contained in his envelope, but by what that money will buy."

What a splendid opportunity was here afforded this champion of labor to pay a tribute to the protective policy of the republican party by pointing out the blessings it brings to the homes of working men. But he did not attempt it. He understood that to the extent the tariff increases the price of what the laborer consumes it decreases his wage scale.

By no means then does it follow that high wages and prosperous workmen are found in the industrial centers most highly favored by the tariff. Not long ago Senator La Follette pointed out to the senate that the tariff on woolen goods made the manufacturers thereof \$100,000,000 annually in excess of a reasonable profit thereon and that through the tariff the manufacturers of cotton goods netted annually more than \$90,000,000 beyond what is a reasonable profit.

There is no lack of ability, then, it is apparent, on the part of those engaged in these industries to pay their employes a living wage, plus something for the misfortunes of the future. The result of the recent investigation of labor conditions at Lawrence, Mass., a woolen and cotton manufacturing center, is yet fresh in the public mind.

We gather from statistics that 27 children under five years of age, die in every 100 deaths. In Lawrence and some of the other labor centers, notable for their protected industries, the death rate among children of this age has been found to be as high as 47 in every 100 deaths.

The shroud and the hearse portray more graphically the oppression and suffering endured by the American family in many of our highest protected centers than it is possible for me to do.

John Mitchell, in speaking of the standard of living for an unskilled workman, says:

"The American standard of living should mean, to the unskilled workman, carpets, pictures, books and furniture, with which to make home bright, comfortable and attractive for himself and his family, an ample supply of clothing, suitable for winter and summer, and above all a sufficient quantity of good, wholesome, nourishing food at all times of the year."

Let us ascertain, if we can, whether it is possible—not probable—but possible, for the families depending upon the woolen and cotton industries of Lawrence for support, to enjoy the standard of living suggested by Mitchell for the unskilled workman.

W. J. Lauck, who at one time was connected with the United States immigration commission, is an experienced investigator of industrial conditions. He has examined into labor conditions at Lawrence and makes the statement in reference thereto that—

"The average annual earnings of the male heads of families in these woolen and worsted industries in Lawrence are only \$400 and of all males upwards of 18 years, \$346."

Four hundred dollars per year is \$1.09 per day. The average American family consists of five, and at the rate of \$1.09 per day each member would have to live the year around on 21 and a fraction cents per day. This allows no day for sickness and no day for pleasure. Does it occur to you that there is a relation existing between this daily wage and the death rate of children to which I have called your attention? And how do you suppose the head of a family under such conditions would go about to provide for those dependent upon him the standard of living suggested by Mitchell for the unskilled workman?

During the recent strike in the mills at Lawrence, 119 children, having mill employment, were found to be in such destitute circumstances that they had to be ministered to by a nurse, furnished by charity. This ministering angel found that but four of the 119 children had underwear of any description to protect their shivering forms against the wintry blast. Think you, I again ask, is there any relation between the wages paid at Lawrence and the death rate to which I have directed your attention?

But our republican friends assure the country that their party will correct tariff inequalities and right many of the wrongs the people have suffered if the republican party is given another trial and a tariff commission, through which to work. My friend, Hon. James E. Watson, who recently delivered the keynote speech for his party, at the republican state convention, made a plea for such a commission, citing the impracticability of making a proper revision without the aid of a commission. He said:

"For, if all persons interested had the opportunity of presenting their claim to such a board, and if the entire question as it affects any one

(Continued on Page 10.)