

Mediation in the Mexican Crisis

Republican leaders. Those who are specially interested in a high tariff will be sure that the nation has repudiated tariff reform; those who take the views of the big financiers on the money question will see in the result of the election a repudiation of the president's currency reform measure; the trust magnates will be just as sure that the people do not want to interfere with private monopoly. Some may regard such a result as a rebuke to the president on the tolls question, but each one will look at it from his own standpoint and assume that the people are with him in the construction that he places upon the people's verdict. In addition to the influence exerted by various issues, it is necessary to consider business conditions and the crops—both of which affect elections. If, as seems certain, a democratic congress is elected this fall, each group above named will refuse to regard the election as a repudiation of its particular views.

It would be just as reasonable to ask that the tolls question be postponed until after the next presidential election. In fact, it would be about as reasonable for the friends of free tolls to ask for the adoption of a resolution declaring that the final vote should be postponed until the beneficiaries of free tolls express themselves as willing to surrender the benefits which they hope to obtain from the present law.

Those who believe with the president in the repeal of the tolls law should not permit the Borah resolution to delay action for a single moment. Senators have made up their minds and the vote should be taken as soon as they have had an opportunity to express their views. More time given to discussion will simply obstruct the passage of other important measures.

W. J. BRYAN.

A PITFALL FOR CAMPAIGNERS

During the congressional campaign this fall the republicans will be angling for the farmer vote by telling how fearful will be the effect upon the prices the farmer obtains for his products, of the new democratic tariff law. Mind, the law has been in effect for over a year, and prices have not been damagingly affected; but the republican spellbinders are very sure they will be. If one of this kind of speeches is made in your neighborhood, call the attention of the speaker to the fact that on the first day of May, 1909, three months before the Payne-Aldrich tariff law was passed, hogs brought on the great western market at South Omaha \$6.98 a hundred pounds. Also remind him that exactly a year later and nine months after that law had gone into effect, hogs on the same market brought \$9.14. Ask him if, in his opinion, the enactment of the tariff law by the republicans had anything to do with this 35 per cent increase in prices.

If he replies that it did, then ask him why upon May 1, 1911, exactly a year later than the \$9.14 quotation, hogs were being quoted on that same market at \$5.61? You might add a little more to his mental confusion by asking him to kindly explain why, after the democrats had passed a tariff law in 1912, in which the live stock schedule had been materially lowered hogs rose on the South Omaha market from \$7.51 on May 1, 1912, to \$8.17 1-2 a hundred?

These are official figures, and can be relied upon. The explanation, of course, is that the law of supply and demand was the dominant factor. The number of hogs kept out by the republican tariff barrier and the number let in by the removal by the democrats of that barrier was too small in comparison with the total marketed to cut even an appreciable effect.

BALTIMORE CONVENTION AGAINST FREE TOLLS

Senator Gore has made a poll of the delegates to the Baltimore convention of 1912 and has so far received answer from 846 delegates out of the 1,100. Of those voting 682 favor the repeal of the free tolls law, 125 are against repeal and 38 are non-committal. The advocates of repeal therefore number more than 130 in excess of a majority; that is to say, if the convention were now in session and the question were put to the delegates, the advocates of repeal would have a majority of more than 260 even if all of those who have not voted and those who answer non-committal were counted with the opponents. This would seem to be a conclusive answer to those who in spite of the plank against subsidies regard the free tolls plank as binding on the party.

W. J. BRYAN.

It may be assumed that the readers of The Commoner have obtained from the daily newspapers a history of the Mexican situation up to this time. For more than a year the president has been called upon to give a large part of his time and thought to disrupted and unhappy Mexico. During the early months of his administration he resisted the entreaties of American capitalists who urged him to recognize Huerta—the Mexican general who turned upon his commander-in-chief, took him prisoner and then permitted him to be assassinated. The president has described him in his messages as a usurper and has resolutely refused to countenance the methods which he employed, first in obtaining possession of the instrumentalities of government and, second, in suspending the guaranties of the constitution and ruling with the hand of a despot. This country, as the situation became known, more and more unanimously endorsed the position taken by the president. A few, to be sure, clamored for intervention, but the multitude applauded the president's efforts to find a peaceful solution of the difficulties that confronted the republic to the south of us.

The wanton arrest of American sailors by the local authorities at Tampico, however, resulted in a demand for redress to which General Huerta refused to yield. He even aggravated the situation, first by insisting upon a SIMULTANEOUS salute, as if this government shared his guilt, and, second, by asking for a written agreement that the salute would be returned, which implied a charge that this government could not be trusted to live up to the requirements of international courtesy. His course aroused a suspicion, boldly expressed by the constitutionalists, that he deliberately sought to provoke intervention in the hope of uniting the country behind him in "resistance to invasion"; and, that failing in this, he preferred to yield to a foreign power rather than be overcome by insurgents at home. Subsequent developments indicated that the negotiations in regard to the firing of the salute were drawn out for the purpose of giving himself time to secure additional arms and ammunition.

Whatever reasons may have actuated General Huerta, the president felt it his duty to lay the

THIS IS THE PRICE OF INTERVENTION—DOES AMERICA WANT TO PAY?



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matter before congress, not for the purpose of securing a declaration of war, but with the object of inviting a vote of confidence that General Huerta might not be longer deluded with the idea that the government at Washington lacked popular support, a delusion for which he was indebted to those newspapers which have with deliberate intent misrepresented the attitude of the public mind on this subject.

After a resolution endorsing the president's course had passed the house by a vote of nearly ten to one, and while it was under discussion in the senate, the president, to meet new contingencies that had arisen, took possession of the custom house at Vera Cruz and then, in order to defend it, was forced to extend the lines beyond the city limits. A period of turmoil and excitement in the capital and throughout the country followed, during which nearly all of the Americans residing in Mexico sought safety in a return to the United States. Fortunately no deaths have been reported in the American colony, and now that the excitement has subsided, it is not likely that any fatalities will occur.

As soon as a display of force was made at Vera Cruz, representatives of the three leading countries of Latin America, Ambassador da Gama of Brazil, Dr. Naon, minister from Argentina, and Senor Don Eduardo Suarez, minister from Chili, by authority of their governments, tendered their good offices as mediators with a view to reaching a peaceful solution of the differences between the United States government and General Huerta, and to the restoration of peace in Mexico. The tender of good offices was promptly accepted by the United States and soon afterwards by General Huerta, and still later by General Carranza. At the time of the writing of this editorial the details for the conference are being arranged. The mediators have fixed upon Niagara Falls, Canada, as the place and May 18th as the time for conference with the representatives of the various parties.

Without attempting to forecast the result of this effort, the writer gives his cordial endorsement to the president's policy and earnestly hopes that a further resort to arms may not be necessary. No one in sympathy with the spirit of the present age can regard war without a feeling of horror. The passions which it would arouse in those participating are passions which should be allowed to slumber, and the prejudices which it would engender throughout Latin America would prevent that cordiality which should characterize the relations of neighbors. At times like these the way is not always clear to those upon whom great responsibilities rest, but the time has come when doubts should be resolved in favor of peaceful methods rather than against them. If mediation succeeds its beneficent results will be a blessing to the whole world; if—God forbid it!—mediation fails the offer and acceptance will not be barren of good results, for the attempt has already awakened the generous interest of all Central and South America and proven our nation's desire to exhaust every other method before resorting to the arbitrament of arms.

W. J. BRYAN.

THE COLOMBIAN TREATY

After many months of negotiation, a treaty has been agreed upon with Colombia for the adjustment of the differences that have existed since the date of the organization of the Panama republic. As the treaty has not yet been laid before the senate, its terms have not been made public by this government, further than the announcement that the pecuniary compensation agreed upon is \$25,000,000. The treaty is quite certain to be ratified by the Colombian government and there seems no reason to doubt its ratification by our senate. Besides restoring cordial relations with one of the larger republics of South America, the ratification of the treaty will make a very favorable impression upon the Spanish speaking people of this hemisphere.

The "business idea" of war was well typified by the incident which followed Admiral Badger's landing at Vera Cruz. He was waited upon by a committee of American importers who asked for tariff rebates on American-made goods. The request was peremptorily refused, of course, but Badger laid himself open to the accusation that he is unpatriotic, because the business idea is that trade ought to follow the flag.