

Progressive Defeat Explained

Amos Pinchot, a brother of Gifford Pinchot, late progressive candidate for United States senate in Pennsylvania, has given a very interesting explanation of the decadence of the progressive party. He suggests three causes, 1st: Personality instead of principle; 2nd, lack of definiteness in platform, and 3d, too much trust influence in the party management.

The first reason alone is sufficient. No permanent party can be built upon any man. Man is mortal and the fact that he may die at any moment robs any party built upon him of the element of permanence. A man may make an effective protest against something done by another man, or group of men, but mere personal influence is necessarily temporary. Principles only endure—man is important as he espouses and advances principles.

The second objection is also sound. The progressive platform did not present any new and clear-cut issues. In so far as it endorsed any definite policies it declared for that which the democratic party had advocated long before, but on most questions it was indefinite, especially so on the tariff question, the currency question, and the trust question. No one could tell by reading the platform what tariff reduction to expect, what changes to look for in the currency system or what anti-trust remedies to prepare for, and it will be remembered that Mr. Roosevelt has failed to give the progressives in congress any interpretation of that platform to guide them when these subjects were under consideration.

The third reason given by Mr. Pinchot operated against the progressives, especially in the middle west. Mr. Perkins was a liability instead of an asset—his contributions to the party's campaign fund could not overcome the odium which his intimacy with Mr. Roosevelt brought upon the party. The progressives leaned toward reforms and, had they joined the democratic party, they would have strengthened the reform element in that party, but Mr. Roosevelt denounced the democratic party as bitterly as he did the republican party. This tended to keep his admirers from allying themselves with the democrats.

It is quite natural, therefore, that most of those who, because of personal attachment, followed him out of the republican party should now as they desert him go back, but we may expect a considerable number of those who left the republican party on PRINCIPLE to come to the democratic party, now that they can no longer doubt its determination to consider all questions from the standpoint of the people. The democratic party has been progressive since the Chicago convention of 1896, but it has not had an opportunity to prove it until this administration began.

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The new reserve system has been in operation for a month now, and while its machinery has not yet been placed in the smoothest running order, its value has already been made apparent. When the public understands that this is not a method of controlling bank reserves so that everybody who wants to borrow money, can get what he thinks he wants, but a plan whereby every man who is entitled to a loan through the possession of character and assets has the opportunity to utilize his credit to his advantage—just as all other men in business are privileged to do—the real value of this new system will become apparent. It will end the monopoly of credit that has existed in this country and will enable the money of the country to be put to the use desired by its owners and not the use that its temporary custodians find most profitable.

The New York World has begun a crusade against what it terms the folly of spending millions to value the railroads of the country, but it has so far refrained from explaining how the interstate commerce commission will justify, as it must under the law, any set of rates as giving an adequate return on the capital invested, unless it first finds out what the investment really is.

With the next issue of the paper, The Commoner completes its fourteenth year of service to what it believes is the people's cause. The large number of subscribers who started with the first issue of the paper and have continued up to the present time, or, in other words, the charter subscribers of The Commoner, have been a great aid in helping the paper fulfill its mission. The subscriptions that commenced with the first issue of The Commoner and have been renewed each year since that time will expire with the next issue of the paper. The prompt renewal of all charter subscribers will prevent the necessity of the mailing of a separate notice from the business office and will also be an additional evidence of the interest and approval of The Commoner's course since it was established. May we not receive at once the renewal of all subscribers whose subscriptions expire with the December or January issue?

ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY

Probably at no other time during the past twenty-five years has there been so much interest taken by the tax payers of the country, regardless of party, in the running of the government, city, state, and national. The discussions during the recent campaign, on the stump and through the press, wherein charges and countercharges of extravagance and graft by the unnecessary and wasteful employment of a large number of assistants in various capacities, by the local, state, and national governments, with no other apparent motive in view but finding places for the friends of the various officials, and in the making of appropriations that will enable friends of various political workers to secure fat contracts at the expense of the public, has aroused such indignation among the tax payers that the session of state legislatures and the national congress will be watched more closely in the future than they ever have been in the past. The number of members of the state legislatures and members of congress, whose only claim for public approval is the large number of men they have been able to put on the pay rolls and the number and amount of appropriations which they have secured for their states or districts, are being rapidly weeded out of public life. The eyes of the country will follow the work of public officials, both state and national, with great scrutiny this winter. The amount of money spent through pork-barrel and other classes of appropriations does not measure the efficiency of governmental machinery. In the campaign to be made two years from now, democrats will have to answer to the public for the actions of their party wherever in power, and it behooves democratic public servants to scrutinize most carefully all appropriations and see that they are confined to the economical needs of the government and the welfare of the people as a whole. President Wilson, in his recent message to congress, points out the importance at this time of carefully guarding the appropriations and expenditures by congress covering the activities of the federal government for the next two years.

One of the big movements in education these days is to shorten the summer vacation period of the public schools on the theory that the boys and girls of the cities would be better off in the schools than on the streets. The long summer vacation is a hangover from the days when boys had real chores to do, and summer was the time they were most pressing.

Republican statisticians who have been figuring it out conclude that it will be practically impossible for the republicans to regain control of the United States senate before 1918, which is beyond the date of the next presidential election. Evidently the goddess of liberty is preparing herself against any accident at all in the future.

The doctors say that a blow on the head or a sudden shock often transforms a man of gloomy and foreboding cast of mind into an active and alert citizen. While the opinion is general that we have enough offices, it would not be difficult to obtain public approval of a bill creating the office of official head tapper for every community.

WHERE HAS THE MONEY GONE?

In his speech before the Economic club, Representative Gardner of Massachusetts described the United States navy as consisting of "twelve super-dreadnoughts, ten pretty fair battleships, eight venerable relics and four floating masses of scrap iron." As to the general condition of these ships, "each commander in the navy, out of pride praises his own ship, but says most of the rest are junk."

We have the solemn word of the representative from Massachusetts that "we started to have a navy, but we haven't got it."

If this be true, the proper investigating authority is not a committee of congress, but a federal grand jury. If we have no navy, what has become of the hundreds of millions of dollars that the American people have paid for a navy?

During the last ten years of republican administration under Roosevelt and Taft the total appropriations for the navy were nearly \$1,200,000,000. Mr. Gardner assures us that we have no navy; so what became of the money?

The naval appropriations for 1914 were more than \$140,000,000. The total appropriations made for the German navy in 1913 were only \$115,000,000. Our navy is costing as much as the combined navies of Germany and Austria-Hungary cost in 1913, and Mr. Gardner tells us that we have no navy. It is costing almost as much as the French navy cost in 1913 plus the Italian navy, and Mr. Gardner tells us that we have no navy. It is costing three-fifths as much as the British navy cost in 1913, and Mr. Gardner tells us that we have no navy.

We have certainly paid for one. We have lavished more money upon sea power than any other country except Great Britain, whose very life is dependent upon sea power, and when Mr. Gardner declares that we have little except junk to show for it, he makes the most serious charge against the Roosevelt and Taft administrations that could well be made; for if we have no navy to show for an expenditure of \$1,200,000,000 in ten years, the American people have not only been robbed, but shamelessly and treasonably robbed.

Either Mr. Gardner is woefully mistaken in his estimate of the efficiency of the United States navy, or the evidence of its inefficiency which he claims to have should be presented forthwith to the attorney general of the United States.—New York World.

Here is a page from actual experience that ought to hearten the advocates of municipal ownership! The City of Lincoln passed an ordinance eight years ago reducing the rate of gas to \$1 per thousand, the average price in cities of similar size in the middle west. The gas company has held up the ordinance through an appeal to the courts, and the old rate is still in force. Desiring to reduce electric lighting rates, the city commission added the necessary apparatus for generating current to the machinery at its central water works station, and strung wires upon the same poles that carried its street lighting distributing system. It passed no ordinance, as it had a right to do, to compel the two other companies that do commercial lighting to reduce rates, but put in a lower rate of its own. After six months time, in which the private companies busied themselves declaring that current could not be furnished for the city rate and the city busied itself hustling for customers, the private companies have met the city rates, and every consumer in Lincoln gets the same rate for the same class of service.

NO INCREASE IN THE NAVY

The report of the secretary of the navy giving the work contemplated by the department shows that the navy proposes to spend nearly \$500,000 less this year than last year if we exclude, as we should, the expenditure of the money received from the recent sale of two ships. The money received from these ships will be put into one ship which is intended to replace the two. The public will be glad to know that the government has not yielded to the clamor of those who started the propaganda for an increase in our military and naval expenditures. This nation is keeping its head moving along in the even, if not noiseless tenor of its way. Its example was never more needed than now and it is fortunate that those in authority represent the sober sense of the country and not the "jingo" sentiment.

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