

THE BIGGER QUESTION

GRAVE ISSUE INVOLVED IN THE PUERTO RICAN PROBLEM.

It is Whether Our Newly Acquired Possessions Are or Are Not Already Integral Parts of the Republic—Republicans Are Right.

"Keep the real issue in sight, and let the president and the party be judged by that," is the wise conclusion of a very able article in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer on the Puerto Rican question. Obviously this excellent editorial treatment of a much discussed subject is the product of some knowledge and some thinking. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of a vast volume of matter that has found its way into print relative to the Puerto Rican topic. No writer has stated the issue more clearly or more intelligently than it is stated by the Post-Intelligencer thus:

"It is not a question whether we ought to impose a duty of 25 per cent or one of 15 per cent or none at all upon commerce between that island and the United States. It is whether this government has constitutional power to levy such a tax under any circumstances; whether Puerto Rico is territory to be governed as all other territory added has been, by the disposition of congress, or whether its people, acquired by the treaty of Paris, constitutional rights within the United States that compel recognition by us and leave us no choice but to acknowledge the new possessions as an integral part of the nation under the constitution, and finally to admit them as states."

Rightly the Post-Intelligencer insists that the contest is not waged on the question whether Puerto Rican trade should be free or untaxed. The opposition to the pending bill is based upon no such consideration. It cares nothing about the question either of tariff or revenue. Engineered by clever free-trade and anti-imperialist strategists, the movement, intended solely to "put the administration in a hole," has secured the adhesion of a considerable number of Republicans who seem to be unable to discover the use that is being made of them. They are apparently blind to the fact, so clearly pointed out by the Post-Intelligencer, that—

"The constitutional question is the real bone of contention. The Republican party cannot abandon its position upon that without reversing all our precedents and destroying the practical possibility of building up a mighty commerce in the far east by exchanging for the open door in the Philippines the open door in the vast portion of Asia under European control.

"We believe that those who have differed honestly from the party's policy in this particular will agree with it when they come to see what is involved; and how cunningly the advocates of retirement from the Philippines have sought to make that necessary by a pretended fight over the Puerto Rican tariff."

If only the army of dissenters from the policy of the Republican administration and the Republican party could once grasp the idea that a much bigger and more pretentious question than that of 25 per cent, 15 per cent, or no tariff at all is involved in the Puerto Rican proposition, it would mightily help to clear up the situation.

MUST STAND BY PROTECTION.

Wanted, a Ringing Declaration in Favor of the American Policy.

A danger signal which may well be heeded by thoughtful Republicans, in contemplating the approaching presidential campaign, is the unfaithfulness of many Republicans to the protective principle. There are many Republican papers and not a few prominent men who seem to seize every opportunity to discredit the policy which has carried the party to victory in the past and which lifted the country out of the slough of despond of business depression as the result of the Republican triumphs of 1894 and 1896.

"Speak well of the bridge that carries you safe over," saith the old adage; but the Republicans to whom we refer, while, as a rule, supporting the tariff plank of the Republican platform in national elections, do and say everything in their power between times to undermine protection to American industries.

How eagerly, for instance, they seize upon the complaints against the trusts to demand the abolition of the tariff upon trust manufactured goods—overlooking the fact that there are trusts in free trade England as well as in the United States. And then in the Puerto Rican discussion they have given unlimited aid and comfort to the political enemy demanding the defeat of the policy recommended by the vast majority of the Republican members of congress.

If the Republican party deserves well of the country as a business party it is largely because of its consistent record upon the tariff. In showing a division of sentiment now upon that issue it is playing into the hands of the Democrats. If the Republican party is to cease to be a consistent protectionist party it will lose its hold upon the element which has heretofore given it its chief strength.

It is time to draw the lines. The next Republican national convention must make a clear and ringing declaration upon the subject of protection to American industry, and those who cannot endorse the principle should cease to be active in the party's affairs. For every vote lost by such a declaration we believe two would be gained from men whose experience of the benefits of protection during the past

three or four years has convinced them that it is the only policy upon which the general prosperity of this country can be maintained.—Minneapolis Tribune.

A DIRECT RESULT.

Why Wages Have Increased So Enormously in the United States.

In the current news of the day occur two announcements of more than ordinary significance. In a dispatch from Charleston, S. C., of March 25, we are told that—

"The York cotton mills of Yorkville, this state, yesterday announced that they would on next pay day chip 3 per cent from the annual dividend and add it to the wages of operatives. The wages of some of the employees had recently been increased 33 per cent. These were not included in the increase yesterday. President Ashe says: 'We cannot help foresee that there must be an end of the present boom some day, and if we ever get back to the depression of a few years ago, just as we voluntarily increase wages now we will be compelled to reduce them then.'"

On the same date the following statement is made in a telegram from Philadelphia:

"In accordance with their notice posted shortly after Jan. 1, 1900, promising an advance to their employees, to take effect April 1, 1900, the Berwind-White Coal Mining company today notified all their miners of a general average advance of 20 per cent. The miners are now placed upon a basis of 60 cents per gross ton, and all day labor increased accordingly. This advance will make the wages paid the highest during the past thirty years, and in some instances the highest that have ever existed by nearly 7 per cent."

This is what is aimed at in the system of protection to American labor and industry—namely, that those who work for wages shall be the gainers through the profits accruing to their employers. As a direct result of the great prosperity which has come to the country since the election of William McKinley, and the consequent reinstatement of the thoroughly American policy of first taking good care of Americans and of regarding the fortunes of foreigners as a secondary consideration, wages and employment have increased enormously in the United States, and the general rate of wages is in nearly all lines of industry the highest ever known.

THE RISING TIDE.



A Fatuous Policy.

That something is needed for the rehabilitation of our merchant marine has been evident for a long time, and grows more alarmingly evident as our needs of commercial expansion become more pressing. In 1873-4 our merchant marine, though ridiculously small, represented a little more than 11 per cent of the steam tonnage of the seas; last year it represented a very little more than 4 per cent. In the same space of time the steam tonnage of Germany has risen from about 4 per cent to more than 8 per cent. Within the last century the steam tonnage of Europe has increased in these proportions: Norway, 1,410 per cent; Germany, 693; Italy, 395; Great Britain, 311; France, 200; Spain, 275; Russia, 430; Holland, 399. The increase of the steam tonnage of the United States in the same period has been but 66 per cent, though our increase of exports and imports has been phenomenal. The United States now pays more money for the transit of goods across the seas than any other nation, Great Britain alone excepted, and is pressing hard upon that country in the race for commercial supremacy. But we alone, of all trading countries, have been negligent of the obvious economy of paying our own countrymen for the shipment of our own goods. The fatuous policy should be reversed at once, and the bill under contemplation provides for its reversal.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

The Folly of It.

We can understand an American tariff, but neither we nor our lawmakers can predict the effect of the intricate system of individual treaties which, if ratified, would be a reversion to the commercial methods of the middle ages. The American policy has hitherto been the enactment of plain and uniform laws for the American people to which all doing business with us must conform. We have prospered under this system and it is utterly folly to depart from it.—San Francisco Chronicle.

One of the Essentials.

The manufacturing jewelers of the United States are strongly for protection. This is amply proved by their protests against any lowering of protective rates on their goods. In fact, among nine-tenths of all practical Americans protection is considered one of the essentials of business prosperity.

THE PRESIDENT IS RIGHT.

Common-Sense View of the True Inwardness of the Puerto Rican Matter.

The men who have rushed wildly into criticism of the administration and the Republican party because of the Puerto Rican tariff bill, including some Republicans who spoke before the facts were all within their knowledge, are commended to the expression of opinion by President McKinley. It is identical with the editorial view of the question taken by the Post-Intelligencer, and is absolutely unassailable in principle and in fact.

Mr. McKinley prefers, as the Post-Intelligencer prefers, entire free trade between the United States and Puerto Rico. He has not changed his mind on this subject nor have we. We do not regard the difference between free trade with our new possession and a duty of 15 per cent of the rates carried by the Dingley act as vital either way. It will make no great difference to us nor to the Puerto Ricans, except that it will put money into their treasury and none into ours. But free trade between us is the ideal condition.

The party in the house was forced from this position by the radicals on the other side, re-enforced by a few of its own extremists. By the speeches of these men another issue than expediency was introduced. It was contended by them that Puerto Rico must have absolute free trade, not in fairness, but as a legal right. It was held to be the due of those people under the constitution; and acquiescence in this doctrine would have bound us for all time to come with reference to the Philippines as well as to Puerto Rico.

It was impossible to ratify this theory. Yet the course of the debate and the attitude of the press were such that there was only a choice left between two extremes. Either we must impose some trifling duty, or we must announce that all territory acquired came within all of the provisions of the constitution as applied to the states of this union, reverse the policy and precedents of a century, and tie our hands in the important work that we have to do in the far east. This is the argument which constrains President McKinley, as it has constrained us, to agree to the imposition of a slight tax to vindicate a general principle rather than to hold free trade with Puerto Rico at the price of conceding the new false and fatal theory of the constitution which the Democratic party have bound up with it.

It is still possible that the senate may find a way out of this choice between evils. It would seem practicable to amend the house bill by abolishing the duty, if there were incorporated in it a clause denying in the strongest terms any constitutional compulsion, and asserting the unimpaired right of congress to legislate at its will on all matters relating to new territory. Or, if this is not done, a decision of the Supreme court will settle the question presently, and the Puerto Rican tariff may be repealed without danger. As matters stand today, however, the president is right and he is consistent. We suggest that those Republican newspapers in the state of Washington that have complained of his course and the policy of the party before all the facts were clearly stated should study the subject anew in the light of his utterances and of the explanations that have appeared in our columns.—Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

Fault-Finder and Growler.

The Democrats are giving themselves a great deal of unnecessary uneasiness over the alleged Republican differences as to a tariff for Puerto Rico. The Republican party thinks for itself, and usually to some purpose and with the result of settling fairly and satisfactorily the great questions with which it has to deal. When it gets through with Puerto Rico the people of that island will have no reason to complain. The Democratic party, which never yet enacted a piece of constructive legislation, is occupying the usual position of fault finder and growler in general, with not a practical idea to suggest.—Troy (N. Y.) Times.

Howling Bryanite Free-Traders.

In 1896 Bryanites yowled and screeched that prices were too low, and that if Bryan were elected higher prices would most surely prevail. But if McKinley were elected the prices of everything would fall and business and the nation would be ruined. Yet now that prices are higher, but mostly because higher wages prevail and everybody can have work, the Bryanites are howling like wolves about high prices.

Nothing on earth can ever satisfy Bryanite free traders except low prices of foreign goods for genteel idlers, with one or two million wage earners looking in vain for jobs while our codfish aristocracy can buy things awful cheap, and everything will be as nice as can be, don'tcher know?

He Ducked.

While speaking in New York the other night Mr. Bryan said: "A dollar that rises in purchasing power is just as dishonest as the dollar that falls in purchasing power. We want a stable dollar." A gruff voice in the back of the hall asked: "Well, how do you think you're going to get it?" Mr. Bryan failed to answer. He ducked. His gas bag was punctured. The admission that the silver dollar falls in purchasing power was fatal to Bryan's argument.—Benton (Ill.) Republican.

Senator Pettigrew Ashamed.

Senator Pettigrew declares that he is ashamed that he was born in New England.—Providence News.

And New England, by the way of reciprocity, is thoroughly ashamed that Pettigrew was born at all.

PUERTO RICO TARIFF

IT INJURES SPANISH OPPRESSORS OF LABOR

Who Have Been Piling Up Large Stocks of Products Awaiting Free Trade With This Country—A Clear Statement of Facts.

An important point in the Puerto Rican question still seems misunderstood by a large number of people. Three-quarters of the land in Puerto Rico is owned by Spanish grandees and other European aliens, and who live in Europe, where all of the net earnings from the products of their lands are sent. This is a system that has impoverished the islanders, and brought them to their present unfortunate industrial and social condition. From 15 to 20 cents a day is the average pay of laborers in Puerto Rico, and three-quarters of the population—if not more—are laborers who cultivate the lands and harvest the crops for their European owners.

Two and a half years ago, when our relations with Spain were becoming acute, these Spanish and European owners of the lands in Puerto Rico foresaw a probable war, the early withdrawal of Spanish authority, and eventual free trade between the United States and Puerto Rico. They therefore have been warehousing their staple crops of sugar and tobacco, so that now vast quantities are in store and accumulating, ready for shipment under free trade with the United States. To some extent American sugar and tobacco trusts have financial interest in, or complete ownership of, these crops.

Of this there can be no doubt: the Puerto Rican working people have nothing to lose by the imposition of the duty upon the products of their island entering the United States. Their work has been done and paid for at the prevailing rates of wages for labor—from 15 to 20 cents per day. The protests against the tariff that come from Puerto Ricans were from those who represented the owners of the lands and the warehoused crops. The protests are not coming from the laboring people of the islands who will be the beneficiaries of the act.

The imposition of this tariff creates a fund of several million dollars which is drawn almost entirely from aliens or American trusts. This money goes back to Puerto Rico for the employment of Puerto Ricans by our government in the permanent improvement of the island. The wages our government will pay will be higher than those paid by the land owners, and will tend to raise the rates of wages all over Puerto Rico. This would be impossible under immediate free trade, so, it must be plain, free trade would only benefit those whose oppression of Puerto Rican labor would remain undisturbed, and who could thus all the better compete with the products of American labor in the same articles. Immediate free trade could only benefit aliens and trusts. The temporary tariff benefits all Americans and only injures aliens and trusts.

A couple of years of this, and the Puerto Ricans will be in receipt of wages approximating to those paid to the laborers on the sugar and tobacco plantations in the United States, from 75 cents to a dollar a day, and at the end of the two years in which the tariff is to remain in force the free admission of Puerto Rican products into the United States will not have a disturbing effect upon those products of the mainland with which they will compete.

It is impossible, in view of these facts, which are confirmed by official reports from the officers of the United States stationed in Puerto Rico, for any sincere or informed person to point out where the imposition of the tariff upon the products of Puerto Rico for two years will injure either Puerto Ricans or Americans. On the contrary, it is a distinct benefit to all whom the United States desires to benefit. The more this subject is studied the more this will become apparent. This is a case where expediency is synonymous of justice to our fellow countrymen in Puerto Rico and at home. That is our first duty, and the tariff performs it.

FOREIGN TRADE GAINS.

March Figures Show Exports More Than Doubled Since 1893.

Total exports of American products and manufactures in March, as shown by the figures of the Treasury Bureau of Statistics, were \$134,313,348, against \$104,559,689 in March of last year, \$75,574,185 in March, 1896, and \$66,516,571 in March, 1893. Thus last month's exports were more than double those of March, 1893 and 25 per cent greater than those of March of last year, and larger than those of any preceding March in our history.

The total exports in the nine months ending with March, 1900, were \$1,053,832,675, against \$947,919,405 in the corresponding months of last year, \$925,905,326 in March, 1897, and \$515,499,635 in the same month of 1886, having thus doubled in fifteen years and increased over 53 per cent since 1893.

Exports of agricultural products are about the same as last year, the notable increase of more than 100 million dollars in the nine months in question being largely in manufactures. It is apparent that the total exports of the fiscal year 1900 will exceed those of any preceding year in our history. Imports also show a marked increase over last year, the principal gain being in manufacturers' materials, while manufactured articles for use in the mechanic arts also show an increase.

Thus the return to a protective tariff system has been followed by enormous gains in our exports, as well as by increased activity in our manufacturing interests at home with a consequent increase of employment and wages.

GOVERNOR AS A WITNESS.

Democratic Executive of Idaho Testified Against Miners.

A petition endorsing the actions of Governor Steunenberg of Idaho and requesting that the federal troops be continued in Shoshone county, where the mining riots occurred, and which was signed by 1,388 reputable business men and citizens of the Coeur d'Alene district, was kept from the records of the investigating committee of the house of representatives by the votes of the Democratic members of the committee. The investigation is supposed to determine whether the troops have been kept there contrary to the constitution, and contrary to the wishes of the people. Nothing could have had more direct bearing upon the subject than this petition, yet the Democrats by their action in keeping it out have demonstrated that it is political capital, and not facts pertinent to the labor trouble, which they are looking for. The motion to admit this evidence was made by Mr. Capron of Rhode Island, seconded by Col. Dick of Ohio. In the absence of Chairman Hull and one or two others of the Republicans the Democrats were enabled to cause a tie vote and defeat the motion.

Witness Henry E. Howes, a merchant of Wallace, was badgered by Representatives Lentz and Sulzer, who endeavored unsuccessfully to compel him to reveal matters which had come to his knowledge as a grand juror, and which he had taken solemn oath never to reveal. Objections were made to these unprofessional questions, which were sustained by all of the committee with the exception of the two members asking them.

On one occasion after Col. Dick had interposed an objection to the character of Mr. Sulzer's questions, the latter replied, rather warmly, "You are trying to protect the witness." To this Mr. Capron rejoined: "No, we are trying to save you. You need some one to keep you from asking a witness to divulge something which he has sworn not to divulge. I am trying to save you who profess to be a lawyer."

"It is not against organized labor, but against organized crime, that the state of Idaho has been waging war."

This was one of the strong statements made by Governor Steunenberg at the hearing in the Coeur d'Alene riots by the military committee of the house of representatives. Marked silence and attention were distinctly noticeable as the governor told of innumerable cases of anarchy, crime, riot and lawlessness that had sometimes led up to murder and assassination. Earnestly and quietly he stated his facts, and so convincingly that they must even have impressed Representative Lentz, who has been endeavoring, but fruitlessly, to show a misuse of the United States army and of the power of the president.

"Covert threats," said the Democratic governor, "are constantly being made by those engaged in the riot of April 29, which resulted in the destruction of some \$250,000 worth of property and the assassination of two men, that as soon as the troops were removed they will gratify their revenge upon those citizens who have been induced to assist the state in its attempt to ferret out crime. In the beginning of the present prosecution upon the part of the state a great many good citizens were induced to testify and give evidence upon the representation that they should be protected, and I have no doubt but that each and every one of these would be compelled to leave the country and sacrifice their homes and property should the protection which was assured them be taken away by the removal of the federal troops.

"This is not a conflict between labor and capital or a question of wages, but it is a conflict between the state of Idaho and certain criminal organizations which seek to cloak themselves under the cover of labor organizations."

Steunenberg for Governor.

The ludicrous feature of the Idaho situation is to be found in the fact that the Democrats out there want to renominate Governor Steunenberg in order to take advantage of his popularity and secure the electoral vote for Bryan. It is evident that the political capital sought in the Washington investigation was not for Idaho consumption.

Mr. Cleveland's Attitude.

The announcement that Mr. Cleveland will not support Mr. Bryan was by no means unexpected. However, in case the Democratic party should decide to take up a new candidate, Mr. Cleveland would be prepared to give it the address of a good and large man.

Democratic Force Bills.

The Democratic party has forever clamored against so-called force bills. Yet it was the Democratic party that introduced Kentucky with Goebellism and fastened the Nesbit law on Missouri.

Democratic Disappointment.

The collapse of the Chicago machinist strike was a serious disappointment to the strike department of the Democratic campaign management.

Value of Merchant Vessels in War Times

When in 1898 the United States became involved in war with Spain, one of the first things the government found it necessary to secure was merchant ships. It was found that the growth of our coastwise trade had brought into existence a considerable number of vessels in many ways adapted to various military and naval uses for which merchant ships are required in time of war, such as scout work, and the like. In the latter service the ships of the Prairie class were conspicuous. These vessels, of which there were but four, had belonged to the Morgan line, and ran between New York and New Orleans, connecting at the latter point with the Southern Pacific Railway. They were of about 5,000 tons register, each capable of steaming sixteen or seventeen knots an hour. They were furnished with guns, manned by the Naval Militia, and a number of times were under the enemy's fire, from which they emerged with records alike creditable to the ships and to those who manned them.

All of these ships were built in the United States, our laws ever having provided that none but American-built vessels may engage in our domestic commerce. Of course, if this trade had been open to the ships of all nations, as has been suggested at times, they would have been of no use to our government in time of war. But the number of these vessels that were capable of being transformed into government use was altogether too few, and so recourse was necessarily had to our ocean-going vessels. Here the lack of American ships was sharply accentuated, much to the people's surprise and humiliation. It was found that the four "crackerjack" ships of the American line, in the transatlantic trade—the St. Paul, the St. Louis, the Paris and the New York—of 11,000 tons register each, and each capable of steaming at the rate of 21 knots an hour, were of incalculable value to the United States. They were immediately impressed, their crews voluntarily entering into the nation's service, they were quickly provided with formidable guns for which they were equipped, and swept the Atlantic from the Grand Banks to the Bahamas.

But ships were needed for a great many other purposes, such as carrying troops to Cuba and Puerto Rico, also for supply and hospital needs, for colliers, and for a number of other reasons all directly connected with the war. Having practically stripped our coast of all its available ships, and having exhausted everything American that was available in our foreign trade, our government was at last obliged to resort to foreign ships. None could be chartered, as that is contrary to the rules of war. Neutral powers are expected to see to it that their merchant ships are not used for military or naval purposes by either belligerent.

After the government had chartered, or purchased every available American craft that could be utilized, no less than 70,509 tons of foreign merchant steamships were bought for the war department, and 56,309 tons of foreign merchant ships were bought for the navy department, making a total of 126,818 tons of foreign merchant steamships thus purchased by our government for use in a war that ceased within three months of its inauguration.

While it is impossible to charter foreign steamships, it was quite difficult to purchase those of the higher types and of the greatest utility—these could not be purchased at any price from their foreign owners. The consequence was, the government was forced to take the best it could get, and in fact some of the purchases made were of a character that would never have been looked at, had it been possible to secure first-class ships. Had American ships been doing the bulk of our carrying they would have been at the immediate command of the government.

Some of the wealthiest and most powerful steamship lines in our foreign trade actually sold some of their vessels to Spain for use against the United States—the very vessels our trade had created were turned against us! Had the enemy been a powerful maritime nation instead of weak Spain not only would our own available supply of merchant steamships have been entirely inadequate, but even the purchase of foreign steamships would have been an impossibility.

It is now found that only 8 per cent of our imports and exports are carried in American ships. The foreign ships carrying the balance earn, it is conservatively estimated, \$200,000,000 a year, at the expense of the American people. In five years this means a billion dollars, and in a quarter of a century five billions, for our ocean transportation account, sent out of the country to pay foreign shipowners. The magnitude of the subject, from an industrial and economical as well as from a naval and military point of view, is manifest. No wonder, in these circumstances, congress feels the need of legislating at the present session for an American merchant marine.

Prosperity Not Sectional.

The south is participating in the wave of prosperity, and thus is the charge that Republican legislation is sectional lines tucked away.

To the Robbers' Coast.

Mr. Croker, who has been in England for the benefit of his health, is coming home for the benefit of his finances.

The Millionaires Again.

The Chicago university has heard from the millionaires again. This time the institution of learning gets \$4,000,000.