

# TAFT GIVES VIEWS ON THE YEAR'S CAMPAIGN

## Still Defends the Tariff Law, but Will Help Revision of Some Schedules.

### HIS LETTER TO M'KINLEY

New York, Aug. 29.—The letter of President Taft to Chairman McKinley of the republican congressional committee, on the issues of the fall campaign, was made public at the New York headquarters of the committee yesterday. It is as follows:

I assume that when this letter is given publicly the lines will be drawn, the party candidates will have been selected, and the question for decision will be whether we shall have in the House of Representatives a republican or a democratic majority. The question, then, will be not what complexion of republicanism one prefers, but whether it is better for the country to have the republican party control the legislation for the next two years and further redeem its promises, or to enable a democratic majority in the House to interpose a veto to republican measures, or to formulate and pass bills to carry out democratic principles. Prominence has been given during the present canvasses just to the differences between republicans; but in the election such differences should be forgotten. Differences within the party are indicated in the two sessions of the present congress, and yet never in its history has the republican party passed and become responsible for as much unwise and aggressive legislation as in the present. Doubtless arise between members of a republican majority as to the details of their legislation, but as a whole they will show itself in the future as in the past, practical and patriotic in subordinating individual opinions in order to secure real progress. Hence the republican candidates have been duly and fairly chosen, all republicans who believe in the party principles as declared in the national platform should give the candidates loyal and effective support. If this is done, there will be no doubt of a return of a republican majority.

#### Democratic Repudiation.

The only other alternative is a democratic majority. It is difficult, very difficult, to state all the principles that would govern such a majority in its legislative course; and this because its party platforms have presented a variety of planks not altogether consistent, and because the present congress, in its legislative course in the Senate and the House have not hesitated to repudiate certain of their party pledges and to deny their binding character. We may reasonably assume, however, that a democratic majority in the House would reject the republican doctrine of protection as announced in 1888. What, therefore, a republican who believes in protection, but objects to some rates or schedules in the present tariff act, to hope for from a democratic majority which would attack the protective system, and halt business by a threatened revision of the whole tariff on revenue basis, or to hope that the executive would merely do nothing?

Such a legislative program as that set forth in the republican platform of 1896 could not be carried out in full by one congress. Certainly if all its promises are executed in one administration, it will be with a republican majority. If congress has not only fulfilled many party pledges, but it has by its course set higher the standard of party responsibility for such pledges as it has made in the history of American parties. Hereafter those who would catch voters by declarations in favor of allying remedial legislation with the tariff, should have more care as to the possibility of its enactment. In view of the history of the present congress, the return of a republican majority in authority in the future will inspire confidence that the pledges still unredeemed will be met and satisfied.

#### The Tariff.

Let us consider, summarily, the promises made and the legislation enacted by the present congress. The most important measure is the promise to revise the tariff in accordance with the rule laid down in the platform, to-wit: "That the tariff on articles imported from any one country shall be equal to the difference between their cost of production abroad and that cost in this country, including a reasonable profit for the domestic manufacturer." This investigation, full, at least, as such investigations have been conducted in the past, was made by the ways and means committee of the House, which has reported 1,159 articles. The tariff on 624 of these was amended in the Senate, but the proportion of increases to decreases was maintained. The president here incorporates the memorandum on articles which he accompanied his approval of it, and contains:

"This fairly states the effect of the bill. The bill has been criticized for certain of its rates and schedules. Some of the criticisms are just and some are wide of the mark and most unjust. The truth is that under the old protective idea the tariff was made too high to protect the industry. The excess of the tariff over the difference in the cost of production here and abroad was not objectionable because it was supposed that competition between those who enjoyed the high protection would keep the price of the goods at a reasonable level. The evil of excessive tariff rates, however, showed itself in the temptation of manufacturers to combine and protect their interests well when to maintain the prices so as to take advantage of the excess of the tariff rate over the difference between the cost of production abroad and here.

The Payne tariff bill is the first bill passed by the republican party in which the necessary revision of the tariff to this level has been recognized, and it is therefore a decided step in the right direction and it ought to be accepted as such on the whole. It was done in a very particular way on articles of necessity and on raw materials. The actual figures on the first year's operation of the law demonstrate this. It must also be remembered that the tariff rates in the new law on imported liquors, wines and silks were increased substantially and the duty rates, because these were luxuries and it was intended to increase the revenue.

The charge that the present tariff is responsible for the increase in rates in respect to many articles is, after consideration, demonstrably false, because the high prices, with very few exceptions, affect articles in the tariff upon which there was no increase in rates in respect to which there was a substantial reduction.

#### Tariff Board.

Perhaps more important than any one feature of the operative part of the tariff law is that section which enables the executive to appoint a tariff commission or board to secure the needed information for the proper amendment and execution of the law. The difficulty in fixing the proper tariff rates in accordance with the principle stated in the republican platform is that the evidence in respect to the difference between the cost of production at home and the cost of production abroad. The bias of the manufacturer seeking protection and the importer opposing it weakens the weight of their testimony. Moreover, when we understand that the tariff rates in respect to many articles in one country abroad from that in another, and that it changes from year to year and from month to month, we must realize that the precise difference in cost of production sought for is not capable of definite ascertainment, and that all that even the most scientific person can do in his investigation is, after consideration of many facts which he learns, to exercise his best judgment in reaching a conclusion.

The commission, however, already selected and at work, is a commission of disinterested persons who will ascertain the facts, not in a hostile or unbecoming and cross-examination of witnesses, but by the kind of investigation that statisticians and other investigators use. When the commission completes its work, either on the entire tariff or on

any of the schedules in respect to which issue has arisen, and the work of the commission is to present a tariff schedule which should be changed, I expect to bring the matter to the attention of the congress with a view to its amendment in that particular. Of course, this will be impracticable unless congress itself shall adopt the parliamentary rule, as I hope it will, that a bill to amend one schedule of the tariff may be subject to a motion to amend by adding changes in other schedules.

It will thus be possible to take up a single schedule with respect to which it is probable that a great majority of each house will be unprejudiced, to admit the evidence and to reach a fair conclusion, and this method will tend to avoid disturbing business conditions. For these reasons it seems to me that all republican-conservative, progressive and radical—may well abide the situation with respect to the tariff until evidence now being accumulated shall justify a change in the rates; and that it is much better for them to vote for republicans than to help create a democratic majority which would create a tariff board to be subject to a motion to amend by adding changes in other schedules.

#### Results of Payne Law.

One great virtue in the new tariff law, including the corporation tax, is the reduction of the present tariff on the administration, to keep down or reduce governmental expenditures and to reform the methods of collecting the customs revenue. It has, by its revenue producing capacity, turned a deficit in the ordinary operations of the government of \$3,000,000 for the year ending June 30, 1897, to a surplus in the first full year of the law, ending August 5, 1900, of \$25,000,000. From the present standpoint, then, there is no controversy over the effectiveness of the new law. Increased revenue indicates increased imports, and an examination of our imports during the past year will disclose a most substantial increase in manufacturers' material, from which, in the making of finished products, the exportation or home consumption, has come a larger volume of employment for our wage earners, a larger purchasing power and greater demand for the products of our farms and fabrications of our factories. So far, then, as such importations as displace home production, they must be of benefit to all. Generally speaking, a full measure of industrial activity in production, transportation and distribution is the result of the operation of the new law. Under the maximum and minimum provisions we have concluded treaties with all foreign nations, gaining the best possible terms for entrance to their markets without sacrificing our own. By the Payne tariff act we have secured for the Philippines by allowing the producers of those islands the benefits of our markets with which limitations to prevent injury to our home industries.

Again, the present law in its corporation tax imposes a new kind of tax which is not a tax on the profits of an enterprise. It taxes success, not failure. Unlike a personal income tax, it is easily and exactly collected, and by an increase or decrease of rates it enables congress to regulate its income to its necessary expenditures. More than this, it is an indirect but effective method of keeping the government advised as to the kind of business done by all corporations. It is one of the most important features of the new law. In spite of the criticisms heaped upon it at the time, it has no party responsible for its enactment or anxious to retain every means of legitimate supervision of corporations will repeal it.

#### Interstate Commerce.

The next most important work of the present congress was the passage of an amendment to the interstate commerce bill. The republican platform favored amendment to the interstate commerce bill, and the republican majority in the House favored such national legislation and supervision as would prevent the future over-issue of stocks and bonds by interstate carriers. After the adjournment of the congress at its extra session I invited two of my cabinet and a member of the interstate commerce commission and a member of congress to make recommendations as to the needed amendments to the interstate commerce act. These gentlemen returned to me, and in a speech in Des Moines, I forecasted their recommendations as I intended to make them to the congress. The amendments were in accordance with the text of the republican platform. Subsequently, bills were drawn embodying these amendments, and legislation on the subject, while the principle was maintained, there were limitations introduced, as justice suggested, after a conference with the carriers interested. The bill was submitted to the congress and after a great deal of discussion both in the House and the Senate, it was enacted into law with many amendments which did not materially change the effect of the recommendations except to strike out the provisions promised in the republican platform, to permit traffic agreements between railroads in spite of the interstate commerce act, to permit a company to acquire stock in a competing company, and to secure supervision of the interstate commerce commission of the issue of stocks and bonds by interstate railroads.

For this last was substituted a provision authorizing the appointment of a commission to consider the evils arising from the over-issue of stocks and bonds, and the methods of preventing such evils by direct primary legislation. In addition to the purposes already recited accomplished by the bill, the so-called long and short clauses of the existing law, which forbade the charging of a greater rate for a less distance included in the greater distance than for the greater distance, was amended so as to vest in the commission somewhat wider discretion in enforcing the clause than had been permitted by the existing law. Moreover, interstate telegraphs and telephones, as well as the railroads, were brought within the regulation of the commission. The bill as at present in force is an excellent bill. It is not enacted in its entirety, but the commission has submitted them to a closer and more effective supervision by the interstate commerce commission, and to avoid injustice in their management and control.

The important part that railroads play as the arterial circulation in the business of the country, the 1,500,000 of their employees and the 1,000,000 of their stockholders, the importance of their purchasing power, and the influence of their general business—all require in the public interest that an unfair treatment should be accorded them. But I am glad to note that the railway managers have acquiesced in the fairness of the present bill, and propose loyally to comply with its useful provisions. It was supported by the whole republican party in congress, and that party is entitled to credit for its passage. The whole democratic strength was exhibited against it in both houses. It was a performance of a pledge of the platform, and only needs time to vindicate the wisdom of its enactment.

#### Postal Savings Banks.

The postal savings bank bill has a similar history. It is one of the great congressional enactments. It creates an entirely new kind of system which works effectively to promote thrift among

the poor, by providing a depository for their savings which they properly may consider absolutely safe, and will also turn into the channels of trade and commerce a large volume of money which otherwise would be idle. It is a bill which will stimulate the investment of savings in government bonds of small denominations, for which the bill provides. Like the revenue bill, the bill passed, but was put through each house of congress by a republican majority, and was signed by the president. The legislation of congress in respect to the navy department is a full compliance with the promises of the republican platform. The department has been kept down appropriations, congress saw the necessity for a continuance of our present naval policy and regulate strengthening of the navy by the addition of two more battleships. More than this, it has enabled the secretary of the navy to carry out a reform in the business management of the department and the organization of the bureaus and staff of the navy so as to contribute materially to its effectiveness as one of the military arms of the government. Although the democratic national platform apparently favored the increase in the navy, a large majority of the members of the House and the Senate opposed the bill when presented in the form of concrete legislation.

#### Labor Legislation.

The republican party in its last session of congress again exhibited its deep and sincere interest in the general welfare of the working men and women of the country. The republican majority in congress already long record of legislation on this subject. Practically all classes of employees, especially those engaged in occupations more or less hazardous to the beneficiaries of laws which should operate to lighten the burdens which naturally fall upon the shoulders of man. The republican party recognized the necessity of reducing the dangers under which hundreds of thousands of miners work by creating the bureau of mines. This bill was passed for the purpose of establishing an efficient government instrument for investigation, examination and report to the bureau of mines. The bill will prevent the awful losses of life in the operation of mines, and especially of coal mines. A second purpose of the bureau is to perform the same office in respect to the great industry of mining that the department of agriculture performs in respect to the farming interests of the country. The bureau will investigate and determine the most effective methods of mining and the best means of avoiding the deplorable waste that now obtains in the present methods. No more important legislation in the interest of human life has ever been enacted in the history of the republic. The present session giving to the interstate commerce commission ample powers to define the needed safety appliances for the prevention of accidents in the operation of railroads, and after a hearing, to require their adoption by interstate railroads. Other legislation, with respect to the inspection of locomotives, and the removal of dangerous overhead obstructions, awaits the consideration of the next session of this congress, and I hope that it may be enacted in the present session. The bill act was perfected by needed amendments so as to enable injured employees more easily to recover just damages.

One of the great questions which has been made a national issue and aroused public interest through the assistance of President Roosevelt is that of conservation of the natural resources of the federal government. This concerns the preservation of forests, the reclamation of arid lands of the government and the removal of obstructions to the navigation of government coal lands, phosphate lands, oil and gas lands, and of the lands known as water power sites. The points on the coast where the water of the sea is converted in order to be useful. During Mr. Roosevelt's administration millions of acres of land in the western states were withdrawn in the United States proper and in Alaska, in order to await proper legislation. Doubt arose as to the executive power of making withdrawals, and therefore as to their legality, should they be contested in court. The present administration continued the withdrawals, and therefore as to their matter of wise precaution, securing from congress express power to make them. By republican majorities in both houses a bill was passed which authorized the enactment, and now over 70,000,000 acres have been re-withdrawn of lands included within the classes described. Much of the land withdrawn is for use in agriculture, and therefore congress adopted an entirely feasible and useful plan by which the homestead laws were applied to these lands. The law which was enacted, and now over 70,000,000 acres have been re-withdrawn of lands included within the classes described. Much of the land withdrawn is for use in agriculture, and therefore congress adopted an entirely feasible and useful plan by which the homestead laws were applied to these lands. The law which was enacted, and now over 70,000,000 acres have been re-withdrawn of lands included within the classes described. 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