

Boutwell vs. McKinley.

Hon. George S. Boutwell, Ex-Governor of Massachusetts, ex-cabinet officer, and for many years a leader among eastern republicans, was one of the most active opponents of imperialism during the campaign of 1900. Defeat did not reconcile him to the doctrine of empire, neither did it silence him. The following indictment of the administration, reprinted from the columns of the Philadelphia Times, shows that Governor Boutwell is more attached to the principles of our government than to the party of which he was for so long a time an honored member:

Is the administration of President McKinley worthy of the approval, or does it deserve the condemnation of the country?

As a political question, his administration has been approved, but it is open, and it must ever remain open, for inquiry upon ethical grounds. The election of November, 1900, ended the contest over the presidency, but it did not end the contest over the war in the Philippine Islands, nor did it check inquiry as to the wisdom of a public policy of which that war is but a symptom.

How can a people organized as a nation become a world power, and how can a nation continue to be a world power? How is America to become a world power? These are the questions that have been thrust upon the country by President McKinley. It is assumed by the questions that previous to 1897 America did not have a rank as a world power, and it may be assumed further that the president entered upon a policy which, in his opinion, would advance the country to that rank.

The president is supported by bodies of men who think his policy an erroneous policy, a dangerous policy, and who yet excuse him and tolerate him upon the ground that he is under bad influences from which he may in time escape. They who belittle the president and condemn his policy and yet submit themselves to his leadership, knowing that his policy means the overthrow of the republic, and they who proclaim his greatness and condemn his policy while they continue to tolerate it and to give it support, are one and all alike witnesses to his supremacy over them.

Do you expect me to advance a step and to indicate the motive under which the president is acting? May there come a president with an overleaping ambition who will not be satisfied to see his name in the list and in rank with Polk and Pierce and Buchanan and Hayes? Even Johnson may be an historical personage when those whom I have mentioned shall be neglected or shall have been forgotten utterly.

The president who can seize a republic of a century of 75,000,000 strong, born to an inheritance of freedom, of great principles in self-government, illustrated by worthy examples, and can build an empire on foundations so laid with possibilities not attained by Rome nor possessed by Britain will have gained a place in history as permanent as that occupied by Washington, and such a president is already assured of the approval of no inconsiderable portion of mankind.

If you press me for more definite answer to the question, What motive? I ask you this question as my answer: What vision of the future led Napoleon to carry the eagles of France under the "burning suns of Egypt and amid the wintry storms of Russia" and concealed from his eye the dismal outlook from the mid-ocean island of St. Helena?

An inquiry into the motives of the president may have more interest for the historian than for us.

If there is a cardinal principle in the idea and in the organization of a republic by which it is distinguishable from a monarchy or an empire it must be found in this declaration: That the right

to govern is in the man, and that the power to govern is not derivable from any other source whatsoever. An organized republican government must rest upon one or both of two conditions: First, the assent of the people expressed voluntarily and upon full opportunity, or, secondly, submissive assent to an existing form of government when there is an opportunity for protest and resistance. It that can be shown to be true which possibly is true, that no such government has ever existed, the fact cannot justify a people, claiming to be republicans, in a policy by which they proceed to violate with deliberation and system, the ideal in government, which is the only security for the bettering of that which is.

It is an art of despotic governments, an art essential to the existence of despotic governments, that the facts on which public interests may center shall be subordinated to circumstances as they may arise.

When the presidential election was pending, the country was assured that the life of the insurrection in the Philippines was in the anti-imperialists of America, and that the defeat of Mr. Bryan would be followed in sixty days with submission, peace and happiness in the islands. The president made himself responsible for the first part of the statement. In October votes for Mr. McKinley were needed.

When the sixty days were ending votes were needed for the army bill. Fortunately for the administration the condition of affairs in the islands was favorable to the policy at Washington, and Senator Sewell, from the committee on military affairs, was able to say in January that the insurrection had reached a height that it had not attained at any time previous. To be sure, the predictions of October had been falsified, the truth of the declaration of peace which was made at the opening of the new year had not been vindicated, but destiny had come to the aid of the president, and the reasons for the passage of the army bill could no longer be resisted by any except those who were prepared to disgrace the country by the abandonment of a contest in which we were engaged. The army bill has been passed, but insurrections are not suppressed by army bills unless army bills are followed by recruits.

We commemorated the 19th of April, 1898, as a day of freedom in the annals of America, and on the 20th we volunteered a tender of independence and unqualified sovereignty to Cuba, whose freedom from the dominion of Spain we had proclaimed. In that pledge of freedom to Cuba the president and the congress united, and with the general approval of the American people. We are now redeeming that pledge, and by what process? We demand concessions that are inconsistent with our pledge of independence and sovereignty.

If such a power of supervision and intervention existed in our congress over the states of this union there would remain not even a shadow of that sovereignty which was once claimed for them.

We announced a purpose to protect American states against the injustice we are now to practice on Cuba. The Monroe doctrine was designed to protect American states from the injustice which we are imposing upon an embryo state which is powerless to defend itself. Thus does the administration subvert a policy of freedom and sovereignty in states into a policy by which strong states may tyrannize over the weaker ones upon the pretext of aiding and defending them. And thus is the administration struggling to become a world power by alliances with the strong, as in the case of China, and by usurpations over the weak, as in Hawaii, Porto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines.

Let us first of all perform our obligations to Cuba in their fullness, and then, by negotiations with Cuba, as a free, independent and sovereign state, we may secure every concession that Cuba ought to make or that we ought to seek. No en-

forced concession from Cuba can compensate the American people for the willful violation of the pledge of April, 1898. The purpose of the president is so well known that there can be no hope for the honor of America or for justice to Cuba if the conduct of the measure shall be left in his hands.

The demand has been made in congress and in the country that the Philippines should be put upon the basis of Cuba. If the terms named can be imposed upon Cuba with the approval of congress and the consent of the country the president may accept like terms for the Philippines. Thus, upon the theory of the president, the republic will have been far advanced as a world power, and thus the republic will have taken on, irretrievably taken on, all the characteristics of an empire.

I give the president credit for having contemplated all this as the outcome of the policy that he is pursuing. Thus the steps by which the president seeks to advance the country to the rank of a world power aid him in like degree in his ambition to create an empire on the foundations of the republic. The president has never faltered in his purpose. We can now trace his policy step by step from the 19th of April, when by the declaration of war against Spain a way was opened for the execution of the ambitious designs of the president.

We entered China as one of the world powers for the protection of our minister. That purpose was accomplished many months ago and yet we remain. Why? The president says the integrity of China ought not to be disturbed. In like manner he has said that our pledge to Cuba is to be kept. That pledge has been in his keeping, and with what result? Why does the president retain his hold upon Pekin? The answer must be this: As a world power we were of the allies that achieved the conquest of the city. If China is to be divided why should not the United States as a world power and as one of the allies take a share in the fruits of the conquest? By what authority did the president make war upon China, a nation with which we were at peace? Had he any purpose in view but the acquisition of more territory? And now that our minister is secure, and when the missionaries have had an opportunity to leave the country, can the president have any other motive for remaining at Pekin than greed of territory and lust for power? A fragment of our army is to remain in Pekin, not to prevent a division of the empire, but to share in it, if division shall become inevitable.

We have secured from England and Germany exclusive jurisdiction of islands in the Samoan group, where we are engaged in keeping the peace by the presence of a naval force.

Porto Rico has been annexed unconditionally. In that island we have a civil government that has been created by the order of the president.

In disregard of our pledge of freedom and sovereignty to Cuba we are imposing on that island conditions of colonial vassalage.

The island of Guam has been made a penal colony and one person, whose name has become historical, has been deported by a military order without a trial and without an opportunity for defence.

Finally congress has given the president full power to govern Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines and in none of these vast possessions can the people appeal either to the constitution or the laws of the United States.

Has power more unlimited been exercised by any despot in any age or country? We may not as yet doubt the disposition of the country to do what is right, but in these facts there is ground for denying to President McKinley the purpose to do what is right. The question is not as the president would have the country believe whether we can conquer the Philippine Islands, the question is not whether we have power to make Cuba a vassal state, the question is this: Are we justified in the attempt to do either?