

Why Democrats of 1896 and 1900 Should Support Parker

In response to the request of the Saturday Evening Post, I beg to submit the following reasons why Parker and Davis should this year receive the support of those democrats who supported the party candidates in 1896 and 1900.

In 1896 the money question was declared by the democrats to be the paramount issue, and the party announced its unalterable opposition to the gold standard and its advocacy of the restoration of bimetallism at the existing legal ratio of sixteen to one. The republican party, though not admitting the money question to be paramount, pledged itself to assist in restoring bimetallism by international agreement, but insisted upon the maintenance of the gold standard until such agreement should be secured. The election resulted in a victory for the republican party, and, in pursuance of its party's promise, the administration immediately sent a commission to Europe to secure international co-operation and the abandonment of the gold standard, congress appropriating \$100,000 to pay the expenses of the commission. The commission was composed of ex-Vice President Adlai Stevenson, Senator Edward O. Wolcott of Colorado, and Mr. Payne of Massachusetts. There is no doubt that these gentlemen, though unsuccessful in their mission, earnestly endeavored to carry out their instructions and secure the restoration of bimetallism; but Senator Wolcott complained upon his return that their work had been hindered and embarrassed by the utterances of Secretary Gage, the new head of the treasury department, who gave out interviews in favor of the gold standard while the commission was trying to secure bimetallism.

Unless the administration was insincere in the appointment of the commission we must conclude that the gold standard was unsatisfactory, for had it been satisfactory no attempt would have been made to replace it with international bimetallism. The promise to promote an international agreement, together with the steps taken to fulfill that promise, must be accepted as an admission that the democrats were right in condemning the gold standard, although a majority of the voters preferred international bimetallism to independent bimetallism.

The failure of the commission to enlist the aid of other nations in behalf of the double standard would have reacted in favor of independent bimetallism and strengthened the democratic position but for the unexpected increase in the gold supply. This has been so considerable as to check the fall in prices and, to some extent, to raise the level of prices. Just how far the higher price level has been due to an enlarged volume of money and how much to the wars in Cuba, the Philippines, South Africa and later in Russia, no one can accurately determine; but it is certain that the increased production of gold has brought in part the benefits which bimetallists expected from the restoration of silver. While the quantitative theory of money, for which bimetallists contended in 1896, has been vindicated, still the political advantage of the vindication has accrued to the advocates of the gold standard, because with higher prices the main argument in favor of bimetallism has been answered, or rather the necessity for bimetallism has decreased as gold has become more plentiful.

By 1900 industrial conditions had been so improved that the money question was no longer acute, and many democrats were willing to ignore it entirely for the time being. In the meantime the question of imperialism had been thrust into the political arena by the Philippine policy of the administration. The trusts, too, had grown so rapidly in number and in size as to make that question an important issue in the campaign. When the democrats met in national convention in Kansas City imperialism was made the paramount issue and the trust question was given a position of secondary importance. The Chicago platform of 1896 was reaffirmed—there being no opposition to reaffirmation—but the money plank was reiterated only after a very animated discussion in the committee and by a close vote.

The democrats fought the campaign of 1900 mainly upon the question of imperialism, while the republicans denied that their party had any imperialistic intent, and, openly advocating the

gold standard, sought to use the money question as a scare to hold the business interests in line. It was a little inconsistent for the republican party, which favored international bimetallism in 1896, to be so enthusiastic for the gold standard in 1900, but the argument had its effect—more effect probably than it would have had if the democrats had given more time to the discussion of the money question.

During the four years that followed 1900 the money question, owing to the continued increase in the production of gold, was less and less considered, while President Roosevelt's administration has brought forward new issues.

When the democrats met in St. Louis last July a considerable majority of the delegates favored a platform entirely eliminating the money question. Though some believed, as I did, that the Kansas City platform should be reaffirmed, and that the party's position on the question of bimetallism, without being emphasized, should be maintained, the convention decided that the fight should be made upon other questions—questions upon which the party was united. There was no declaration against bimetallism, that proposition having been voted down by a decided majority in the committee. The position of our candidate, though strongly opposed to bimetallism, does not necessarily control the party's action beyond his own administration.

I have thus stated the history of the money question during the last eight years in order to show why those who voted for bimetallism in recent campaigns can this year vote for a democratic candidate known to favor the gold standard. Although the advocates of bimetallism believe as firmly as ever in the principles of the double standard, though they believe that their principles have been vindicated by the improved conditions that have followed an increase in the volume of money, and though they believe that bimetallism will again become popular when the demand for money overtakes the supply, yet they recognize that the question is not only not paramount, but, for the present, of diminishing importance. They also recognize that, even if the question were more acute than it is, they could not hope to secure the restoration of bimetallism by voting any other ticket. Either Judge Parker or President Roosevelt will be elected, and President Roosevelt is as hostile to the use of silver as standard money as Judge Parker can possibly be. Though the republican candidate enthusiastically supported his party in 1888, when the republican platform denounced President Cleveland's effort to demonetize silver, and again in 1892, when the republican platform declared that the American people from tradition and interest favored bimetallism, and still again in 1896, when his party was pledged to promote international bimetallism, still he loses no opportunity now to proclaim his love for the single gold standard and his abhorrence of any return to the free coinage of silver. On the money question, therefore, the free silver democrats, having been defeated in their own convention, have nothing to hope for from a republican victory. They have not the same reason for leaving their party that the silver republicans and populists had for supporting the democratic ticket in 1896.

The same may be said of other economic questions. Wherever the supporters of the platforms of 1896 and 1900 feel that the democratic platform or candidate this year is unsatisfactory they find the republican platform and candidate still less satisfactory. There is no reason, therefore, why they should express their dissatisfaction with their own party by casting in their lot temporarily or permanently with the republican party.

But though the democrats who were loyal to their party in 1896 and 1900 have their views upon the money question and upon other economic questions, they are also deeply interested in the new questions that have been forced upon the attention of the public by eight years of republican rule. I shall speak later of the question of imperialism, which absorbed a large share of our party's attention in 1900.

President Roosevelt is responsible for the prominence of three issues which the people are considering. First, he has done more to embitter the white and black races against each other in the south than any or even all of the presidents

who have occupied the white house since the civil war. Whether in insisting upon the appointment of colored officials over the protest of white patrons of the office he has been actuated by a desire to help the colored people, or by a desire to make political capital among the colored voters of the north, is immaterial. It is certain that he has raised an issue which has thrown the southern states into anxiety and alarm. His attempt to override the wishes of the whites in various southern communities has made the entire south fearful that a second terror may still further estrange the races and plunge that section of the country into the horrors of a race struggle. The entertainment of Professor Booker Washington at the white house has been construed by many as an attempt upon the part of the president to raise the question of social equality, and this has further aggravated the race situation in the south. If the president intended to raise that question with a view to settling it in favor of the black man it means the arousing of a feeling which will seriously interfere with the calm consideration of industrial and economic problems. If, on the other hand, the president did not intend to force upon the public the consideration of the question of social equality it was exceedingly unfortunate that he did anything that could bear that construction. The people of the north, where the dominance of the white race is not menaced and where the blacks are comparatively few in number, have no conception of the conditions which prevailed in the south during the period of reconstruction, and it is therefore difficult for them to understand the feeling of the southern people. The democrats of the north, who both desire and need the co-operation of southern democrats in resisting the encroachments of plutocracy, are vitally interested in removing the race issue from national politics, so that the party can make an aggressive fight for industrial and economic reforms.

President Roosevelt has not only disturbed the south by the creation of a race issue, but he has offended the sentiment of the entire country by the substitution of a swaggering, war-like spirit for the pacific spirit which has heretofore characterized our national administration. We have had some eminent soldiers in the white house, conspicuous among whom were Washington, Jackson and Grant, but never have we had a president who seemed to take so much delight as does our present president in war and the recital of war-like deeds.

The panegyric upon war pronounced by ex-Governor Black of New York, in presenting President Roosevelt's name to the last republican convention, was in entire harmony with the speeches of the president, and still further emphasized his departure from the nation's traditions and ideals.

The difference between the spirit which animated our first president and the spirit which animates our present executive can be clearly shown by a comparison between their utterances. I have already referred to Mr. Roosevelt's delight in war. Washington, in a letter to the Marquis de Chateaux in 1788, said:

It is time for the age of knight-errantry and mad heroism to be at an end. Your young military men, who want to reap the harvest of laurels, do not care, I suppose, how many seeds of war are sown; but for the sake of humanity it is devoutly to be wished that the manly employment of agriculture and the humanizing benefits of commerce would supersede the waste of war and the rage of conquest; that the swords might be turned into plowshares, the spears into pruning-hooks, and, as the Scriptures express it, "the nations learn war no more."

President Roosevelt's fondness for military display, military phrases and exhibitions of military prowess is not only hurtful because of its pernicious influence upon our young men, and harmful to the nation because of the false position in which it places this country before the world, but it endangers peace by increasing the possibility of foreign complications. The democrats who bore the burden of the campaigns four and eight years ago believe that this nation should devote its energies to the remedying of the govern-

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