

Washington Letter

Washington, D. C., December 9.—The newspaper publishers who called upon Mr. Roosevelt must shout with joy when they read the magnificent result of their visit to him and his promise to them. There is an old phrase about "the nigger in the woodpile," this being a matter bearing upon woodpiles and wood pulp, seems to justify the use of the metaphor. Mr. Roosevelt thinks "there should be no tariff on wood pulp, due notice of the change being of course given to those engaged in the business so as to enable them to adjust themselves to the new conditions. The repeal of the duty on wood pulp should, if possible, be accompanied by an agreement with Canada that there shall be no export duty on Canadian pulp wood."

If the committee of distinguished publishers who visited the White House and came away confident of presidential support, can get any comfort out of that, they are more credulous than the bumpkin who expected to get blood from a turnip. The notice to the American manufacturers and an agreement with Canada will require more time than the present congress will have at its disposal.

Of course the country thinks a little bit about the tariff. Naturally the president has to say something about it. One would think that in the sixty-three pages of his message at least one page might be given to this subject. As a matter of fact scarce half a page was given, and the presidential discussion of this subject is purely platitudinous except for one paragraph. "The subject can not with wisdom be dealt with in the year preceding a presidential election, because as a matter of fact experience has conclusively shown that at such a time it is impossible to get men to treat it from the standpoint of the public good. In my judgment the wise time to deal with the matter is immediately after such election."

Unless history is misread, this is the first time that a president has proclaimed himself a politician. Mr. Roosevelt sets aside the tariff issue in order that the fortunes of his party may not be impaired. What promise is there that after the election his party will touch the tariff in any way advantageous to the people. Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Dalzell, all the high prophets and saints of the republican party have for years been preaching that when the tariff is to be revised, it is to be revised by its friends. Its friends are now in power. They have the president, the vice president and the house, why not revise it now? If they defer there is grave danger that it may be revised by its enemies. Why does the president himself and the speaker, who is second only in power to the president, postpone the inevitable revision until the moment, when as the whole country believes, the friends of the robber tariff will be in the minority?

A certain New York newspaper has been raising a tremendous hullabaloo because Mr. Bryan made some remarks which inferentially accused a portion of the press of either wilful or ignorant misstatement. Mr. Bryan can fight out that battle for himself, if he cares to. But it so happens I heard in the marble room of the senate two days ago a senator come and vehemently deny an interview, alleged to be with him, printed in the columns of this same New York newspaper. Furthermore the morning I write this I find displayed in double leads on the first column of the same paper the statement that Mr. Bryan will sail Saturday to spend the winter on the Mediterranean coast. The article is printed in such a way as to make it appear that he is going somewhat surreptitiously. There are a dozen men in New York, and half as many in Washington—from which point the article was dated—any one of whom is easily to be caught by telephone, who could have denied this story authoritatively. As a matter of fact several western correspondents did make inquiry at Washington and were saved from a blunder. The New York World alone went on without inquiry to fall into the pitfall of falsehood.

With much blare of brass and clanging of cymbals Secretary Taft started some sixty days ago on a tour of the world at public expense. He stopped briefly to address the people of Oklahoma in opposition to the constitution upon which they were presently to vote. His speech was heralded as the most able exposition of the administration's views ever made. The constitution was adopted by a majority of 110,000 votes, and a full democratic state ticket elected

by a majority in the neighborhood of thirty thousand. After this triumph Mr. Taft went on his way. Mr. Taft is coming home directly. The reason is that he has received order from the man who ordered him to be a candidate for the presidency, to come back and look out for his candidacy. That candidacy is suffering sadly. No one speaks of it longer. It is a matter of general belief in Washington that Mr. Taft's own state will declare for Senator Foraker. It is a matter of notoriety that all the southern states which are controlled by Federal officeholders will have their delegates in the republican convention declare for Roosevelt.

The situation puts Mr. Taft in an ignominious position. Mr. Roosevelt in a shameful one. Taft's candidacy was first suggested by Roosevelt. Everybody who knows anything about politics knows that Taft himself was averse to the suggestion. He did not care for either the campaign or the office itself. The task was thrust upon him by the president who insisted that he alone could carry out "my policies." But after the ship was launched, after the candidacy announced, nothing has been done by the president to aid either the voyage or the campaign. As a matter of fact the opinion of politicians in Washington is that Mr. Roosevelt has withdrawn all support either moral, political, or friendly. Mr. Taft will come home to find himself in a most ridiculous position.

WILLIS J ABBOT.

A BOLT IN OREGON

In its issue of Friday, November 29, the Portland Oregonian printed the following somewhat significant editorial:

"The Oregonian has done what it could to support the republican party of Oregon. Republicans have not responded. They can now and henceforward support their party themselves if they desire to do so. Like Romeo at the play, the Oregonian will be a candle-holder and look on. It is tired of the effort to appeal on principles, political, social, financial, national and historic, to men who don't care for anything of the kind, but are actuated merely by selfish piques, petty desires and trifling personal ambitions.

"In many a contest the Oregonian has carried the flag, only to be deserted; and each failure was even more a defeat of the Oregonian—and the Oregonian was so taunted with it—than of the republican party.

"Now, brethren, if you want any success for the republican party in Oregon, get into line and get to the front.

"Should the pressure upon President Roosevelt compel him to be a candidate again, the Oregonian will support him. Beyond that, it has no announcement to make. It can be as independent as any of you, who have given this state and city over to the democratic party. Since you neither know nor care anything about political principles, or the origin, course, tendencies and achievements of your own party, or the historic tendencies or record of the others, why should the Oregonian worry further? So get in now, and send your democratic governor to the United States senate. You know your favorite idea is that one party is not preferable to the other.

"What do you intend? Will you get out your life and drum? What for? You know you think that, on the whole, you may as well be democrats as republicans—or better. The republican idea is that there should be no party in Oregon—but the democratic."

"IN GOD WE TRUST"

Mr. Roosevelt has been very generally criticised for removing the motto, "In God We Trust" from the gold coin. His long explanation does not appear to explain, at least to the satisfaction of a considerable number of people. On this point the Springfield (Mass.) Republican says:

More light upon the origin of the coinage motto, "In God We Trust," is given by Elmer H. Youngman, editor of the Bankers' Magazine, in a letter to the New York Times. He finds a full account in the twenty-fourth annual report of the director of the United States mint. It seems that in November, 1861, Secretary Salmon P. Chase of the treasury department received a letter from Rev. M. R. Watkinson of Ridleyville, Pa., which said: "One fact touching our currency has hitherto been seriously overlooked. I mean the recognition of the Almighty God in some form in our coins. You are probably a Christian. What if our republic were now shattered beyond recognition. Would not the antiquarians of succeeding centuries rightly

reason from our past that we were a heathen nation? What I propose is that, instead of the Goddess of Liberty we shall have next inside the thirteen stars a ring inscribed with the words, 'Perpetual union;' within this ring the all-seeing eye crowned with a halo; beneath this eye the American flag, bearing in its field stars equal to the number of the states united; in the folds of the bars the words, 'God, liberty, law.'"

This seems to have made a strong impression upon Secretary Chase, who a week later addressed this letter to the director of the mint: "No nation can be strong except in the strength of God, or safe except in His defense. The trust of our people in God should be declared on our national coins. You will cause a device to be prepared without unnecessary delay, with a motto expressing in the fewest and tersest words possible this national recognition."

It was found, however, that the act of 1837 prescribed the mottoes and devices which might be placed upon the coins of the country, and that act did not admit the carrying out of Secretary Chase's order. In December, 1863, however, the director of the mint submitted to the secretary designs for new one, two, and three-cent pieces, which provides these mottoes: "Our Country, Our God," and "God Our Trust." Secretary Chase approved of these with the latter changed to "In God We Trust." Early in 1864 congress authorized the coinage of two-cent pieces with such devices as might be fixed by the mint director with the approval of the secretary of the treasury, and accordingly it was upon that coin that the legend now, under discussion first appeared on the American coinage. The act of March 3, 1865, made it lawful for the same public officials to extend the legend to other coins of the United States which would admit of the appearance thereon, and it accordingly found its way to the gold coins of \$5 and up, and the silver dollar, half and quarter, where it has since remained. The coinage act of 1873, to which we have before referred, continued that provision of the act of 1865. One question still remains unanswered: How did it come about that this particular permissive provision of the act of 1873 was dropped out in the codification of national laws under title of the Revised Statutes, made in 1874 and amended and added to in 1877?—Springfield (Mass.) Republican.

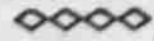


"NEWSPAPERS"

In his address delivered before the American Municipal League, Attorney General Bonaparte said: "Certain of our newspapers, including some whose influence within my memory, indeed within but a comparatively few years, were a power and a power for good in the community are now firmly and widely believed to be virtually or even literally owned by well known interests—in other words by wealthy men engaged in far reaching enterprises. This widely spread and very confident belief as to such ownership makes them virtually trade organs with but little more than papers published avowedly as such; and what is even more unfortunate it leads to a very general suspicion that other papers may be secretly in the same situation."

The Springfield (Mass.) Republican reminds the New York World that it has missed an opportunity, saying: "What is here said to be firmly and widely believed Mr. Bonaparte evidently believes also and we have not noticed that the World is challenging him to substantiate this belief as it did in the case of Mr. Bryan."

The World might have taken occasion, in the light of Mr. Bonaparte's general statement, to print in display type, as it did for some unaccountable reason at the time Mr. Bryan made his general statement, this certificate of character from the London Telegraph: "The New York World * * * holds an unassailable position in America as an independent newspaper, unbought and unbuyable."



FINIS

In his public statement telling why he omitted the motto "In God We Trust" from the new gold coin Mr. Roosevelt said: "As the custom, although without legal warrant, had grown up, however, I might have felt at liberty to keep the inscription had I approved of its being on the coinage. But as I did not approve of it I did not direct that it should again be put on."

That is very plain even though it may not be entirely satisfactory to the champions of the historic motto. Mr. Roosevelt did not approve of it and that was the end of it.