

opolies—and this is the point at which the democratic party has for years drawn the line. Democrats do not oppose production on a large scale, but they do oppose private monopoly. They are in favor of enforcing the criminal law against trusts and trust magnates, and in their platform of 1900 the democratic party proposed the very license system to which the president now gives an alternative endorsement. He favors the charter of interstate corporations, but he says that "if a corporation law is not deemed advisable" a license act for big interstate corporations might be enacted. He insists, and that rightfully, that "congress can close the channels of interstate commerce" against private monopolies. Let the republican party be put to the test on this proposition, for surely no democrat will reject today a position which the democratic party announced more than seven years ago. Sentiment has been growing against the trusts all these years, and the democrat who has not yet reached the position which the democratic party announced in 1900 is lagging behind the army.

A federal license for big corporations could not be invoked against a state! it would simply be permission from the federal government to enter interstate commerce upon such terms as the various states might prescribe. If for instance the democratic party proposes a measure requiring a license to be taken out by corporations desiring to control as much as twenty-five per cent of the total product, such measure will be in harmony with the democratic platforms of 1900 and 1904, and in harmony also with the president's recommendation. If the measure also provides that no licensee shall be permitted to control more than fifty per cent of the total product, it will make a private monopoly impossible, and by withdrawing the interstate use of the railroads, the mails and the telegraph lines from any corporation which, being required to take out a license, refuses to do so, it can confine the corporation to the state of its origin and thus protect the public. Such a measure is thoroughly democratic, and yet the republicans can not oppose it without opposing the president.

The president admits the necessity for tariff reform, although he does so in language less forcible and direct than he usually employs. He says that no tariff legislation should be attempted until after the next election, but there are many republicans who differ from him on this proposition, and the democrats ought to give these tariff reform republicans a chance to express themselves. The democratic party is united on the tariff question, and it requires the vote of only about twenty-eight republicans acting with the democrats to pass a measure through the house. Are there twenty-eight tariff reform republicans in the house? The question can be tested by a caucus measure putting upon the free list imports that come into direct competition with trust-controlled products. For instance, the democrats might prepare a measure providing for the free importation of articles which come into direct competition with articles fifty per cent of the total consumption of which is controlled by one corporation or combination of corporations. Such a measure would enforce itself and every importer would be watching for combinations in restraint of trade. If it is impossible to get enough republicans to favor a measure putting the limit of control at fifty per cent, they should be tested upon a measure fixing the maximum control at sixty, seventy and seventy-five per cent. If they are not willing to use the free list to prevent any monopoly however complete, they will be on the defensive in the next campaign. Similar measures can be brought forward free-listing particular articles or reducing the tariff upon the necessities of life or fixing a maximum tariff. Congressman Williams, of Mississippi, introduced such a measure in the last congress but it ought to be re-introduced and urged by a party caucus. The republican tariff reformer should be given a chance to express himself, and if he refuses to express himself, he will be compelled to explain his position when he comes before his constituents.

It might be well to present a resolution amending the constitution so as to specifically authorize the levy and collection of an income tax whenever congress shall deem such a tax expedient. The president has recommended an income tax, and the democratic party stands for an income tax. The income tax measure would be objected to by some on the ground that it would be held unconstitutional, but a constitutional amendment specifically authorizing an income tax would bring the fight on the principle rather than on details and would enable us to find out how many republicans are really in

favor of the principle involved in an income tax.

The president asks that the interstate commerce commission be authorized to ascertain the present value of the railroads whenever it deems the matter important. Would it not be well for the democratic caucus to prepare and present a measure authorizing and instructing the interstate commission to ascertain the value of the railroads? If the republicans refuse to support a measure authorizing the commission to ascertain the value of all the railroads, let another measure be framed in exact accordance with the president's recommendation authorizing the commission "to make a physical valuation of any railroad whenever in its judgment it is necessary." The republican party must either accept such a measure or confess its opposition to the president's recommendation. In recommending the enlargement of the scope of the interstate commerce commission the president has simply followed the democratic platform, and the democratic party ought not to hesitate to urge the fulfillment of a doctrine set forth in the democratic platforms of 1896, 1900 and 1904.

The president recommends that the interstate commerce commission shall be given power "to pass upon the future issue of securities" of railroad companies. This is not only democratic but it is eminently just, and now while the people are smarting over the effects of vast issues of watered stock, public attention should be drawn to the subject, and the republican leaders should be forced to accept the president's recommendation or reject it. The republican leaders will not take the initiative in these matters because the republican leaders take their inspiration from the great corporations, but they can be put upon the defensive if the democratic party by united action forces them to take a position.

The railroad managers would be glad to get national incorporation of railroads, but this the democratic party can and ought to oppose to the very end. We do not need national incorporation; the constitutional power of congress regulating interstate commerce is ample. National incorporation is not desired by the railroads in the interest of better regulation but as a means of avoiding state regulation, and the democratic party will not for a moment countenance any surrender of the power that the state now has to protect its own people in all matters relating to commerce within the state even when that commerce is carried on by a railroad that runs through several states.

On the subject of arbitration the democratic party should in caucus advocate a measure which provides a board of arbitration, the findings of the board not to be binding upon either party but to be a guide to public opinion and a means of conciliation between labor and capital. If this board contains five members say, and then two members are added in each dispute, one to be selected by each side, both sides will be insured a fair hearing, and the chances are that a full investigation will lead to an amicable settlement of differences and thus protect the public from the inconveniences of a strike, the employees from the hardships involved in a strike and the employers from the bitterness and ill will that often accompany a strike. If the democrats will present such a measure—and such a measure is in harmony with the democratic platforms of 1896, 1900 and 1904—the republicans have to accept the measure or place themselves on record as opposed to the president's recommendation.

On the subject of government by injunction the democrats can also make use of the president's recommendation and compel the republican leaders to consent to the necessary legislation or confess their opposition to it. This test could be made by the introduction of a caucus measure giving to the accused in contempt cases the right of trial by jury when the contempt complained of is not committed in the presence of the court and must be established by evidence.

The same test can be made in the matter of the eight hour day and in other matters relating to the welfare of the laboring man.

The president intimates in his message that the suspension of state laws by injunctions issued by federal judges has been carried too far. This also gives the democrats an opportunity to force action by the republicans upon a very important question. This can be done by a caucus measure which will expressly deny to circuit and district judges of the United States courts the right to suspend state laws, leaving those laws to be passed upon first by the state courts with the right of appeal to the United States supreme court if any constitutional right is denied to the

corporations. Surely the corporations which do business in a state and rely upon the state courts for the condemnation of land and for the protection of their property from criminal acts ought to be compelled to give the state courts the benefit of the presumption and test their rights in these state courts first before their appeal to the federal courts.

Now is the time for the democratic party to lay down the lines of the coming campaign. The president's recommendations have given the democrats their opportunity. If the republicans are willing to go as far as the president has gone, several democratic measures will be enacted by the present congress. If on the contrary the republican leaders refuse to follow the president's recommendations, the breach between the president and his party will be shown and the differences of opinion emphasized.

Besides urging the democratic measures which the president has wholly or partially endorsed, the democrats should also force a vote upon the popular election of United States senators. That measure has already been endorsed five times by the house of representatives but the senate has five times obstructed the passage of the necessary resolution. Let the matter be brought up again and let the republican senators be put on record that their constituents may be able to identify them in the senatorial elections which are near at hand. The president has as yet failed to endorse the election of senators by the people, probably because he takes the Hamiltonian rather than the Jeffersonian view of government, but among the rank and file of the republican party this is the most popular reform now before the country, and the democrats should insist upon a vote. The republicans of the house do not dare to oppose it, and the opposition of the republican senators ought to be exposed.

The democrats have a great opportunity. Will they improve it?



MINORITY LEADERS CHOSEN

The democrats of the senate have chosen Senator Charles A. Culberson as the chairman of their caucus, which makes him the leader of the senate during this congress. It was a wise choice, for Senator Culberson is well equipped for the position. After a large experience in his own state, ending with his election as governor, he entered the United States senate and has from the first taken a prominent part in the shaping of legislation. He is a skillful debater as well as a sagacious counselor, and the minority in the senate is likely to make the most of its opportunities under his leadership.

Hon. John Sharp Williams, of Mississippi, has been again chosen a minority leader of the house, and no one disputes his great ability. He is a skillful parliamentarian and an eloquent and forceful speaker. While there have been differences of opinion among members of the minority upon various measures that have been proposed, there seems to be a disposition to unite and force a vote upon the questions about which the party is united, and Mr. Williams, with the solid democratic vote behind him, will be able to do effective work in the advancement of democratic policies. The democratic senators and members realize that the prospects of victory can be very much increased by wise action during the present session, and The Commoner will be glad to co-operate with the democrats of the senate and house in presenting to the country the issues formulated in congress.



THE PRESIDENT REITERATES DECLINATION

The president has cleared the political atmosphere by reiterating his determination not to be a candidate for a third term. It ought not to have been necessary to speak again, but some of his over-zealous friends were casting reflections upon his good faith by announcing that he would be a candidate if his party demanded it. The president could hardly feel complimented at so light an estimate being placed upon his declaration, and it is just as well that he set the matter at rest. There is no doubt that some of his enemies were declaring for him in order to get into the convention, and once there, could have thrown their influence against his policies after his refusal to be a candidate. Now the fight will be a straightout one between the republican reformer and the standpatter. That is, it will be an as straightout a fight as can be made for such a reformer as Secretary Taft has proven himself to be—a very weak one at