

# Governor Haskell's Speech at the Nebraska Democratic Dinner

At the dinner given January 15 at Lincoln by the Nebraska democracy, Governor Haskell of Oklahoma spoke on "The Responsibilities of Government." Governor Haskell's speech was as follows:

It is an old saying that it takes all kinds of people to make a world and in talking to our subject, we shall construe this ancient expression, and assert that human comfort is promoted best when we have the opportunity to enjoy the products of all our various industries.

Created things are the root; transportation, finances and commerce the branches, and combined in one harmonious aggregate the tree of comfortable life flourishes.

Government is at its best when it effectually protects the rights of each class, insures mutual fairness, and protects the weak against the strong; and the least amount of law necessary to accomplish this purpose is the best form of government. I sometimes think we have an unnecessary amount of detail legislation, and not enough of basic principle.

## GOVERNMENT IS A BUSINESS PROPOSITION

Everything pertaining to the supplying of the necessaries as well as the luxuries of life, is derived by the application of business methods, therefore, government itself must be considered as a business proposition, and in a country like ours, it is indeed a business proposition of vast magnitude.

The producer must receive the first consideration; for without products no business element would ever have occasion to exist.

Transportation, finances, and commerce follow in the wake of the producer, and traffic in the fruits of his labor; and when productions are bountiful, all these other elements of business find their activity and profit. Then in every line of business, let the laborer be worthy of his hire, and let government have for its chief aim such regulations as will render unto each man just remuneration for the part he performs in the great scheme of life.

## POLITICS

It is but natural that honest men should differ in the science of government tending to accomplish this purpose, and it is those differences which give rise to so-called political opinion, and from differing opinions to politics, or political parties; all through the history of our glorious country we have to a greater or less degree of intensity been fighting out these different opinions.

We of the democratic faith have followed in general the teachings of the great Jefferson, whose foundation stone was laid in the true cement of a people's government, and upon the declaration "Let government be by the people and for the people." In this declaration he did not mean that the farmer should oppress the banker, nor the great corporate manufacturing agencies; nor on the other hand did he mean that the farmer and the laborer should be serfs, and subject to the oppression which it is possible for powerful capitalists to wield.

And we are Jeffersonians. The producing class asks nothing today but a fair share of the fruits of their own industry, and the government that guards that equitable demand may do so without injustice to the other elements of business great or small.

There be, however, at times in political parties influences and individuals who have no sincere political belief; men who place the Almighty dollar on top of the pedestal, and expect humanity to kneel supplicating at its feet, and such individuals invariably change, shift, and adjust their so-called politics to suit the immediate emergency; provided that that emergency is always with them the selfish consideration of their own avaricious desires.

Democracy was never nearer Jeffersonianism in the last century than it is today.

Republicanism was never further from Lincolnism than it is today.

It is a glorious privilege that every true American, regardless of his politics, and regardless of whether he was fully in accord with the patriotic ideas of Abraham Lincoln, looks back upon that patriot as one of the noblest Americans of the century, and standing here in this city, which bears his name, I feel that as an American citizen, I am on hallowed ground, and proud of America because it has a Lincoln; but the days of Lincoln were far too short, and the troublesome times of his day, continuing beyond

him, offered an opportunity for greed and injustice that selfishness was quick to grasp.

Patriotism, inspired by war, was made a cloak for human greed,—

Proud ambition for a glorious America was made an excuse for unjust taxation,—

Tariff tax, which was first excused as a war necessity was continued for private gain.—

The honest yeomanry of our land, always unselfish, always generous, always ready to shed their blood on the field of battle in the defense of their country or to suffer the oppression of taxation for the public good, were deceived by the genius of those who were able to coin beautiful sounding phrases—"protection to American industry," "protection to American labor," had charms to the ear, and were worked to the limit of deception until today there stands not a man, conceded to be above selfishness and a patriot for the sake of patriotism, who dares to deny that tariff is a tax upon the consumer for the benefit of the favored few, and without yielding any measure of benefit to the deserving classes.

I look back on my own life's experience as a farm hand until twenty-one years of age; I observe those who are today engaged in that line of industry, I see that every nail, every pound of wire, every manufactured implement, in fact practically all of their purchases, have attained all the price additions made possible by our protective tariff, and I ask myself, why is it that the quantity of material manufactured in Illinois, for example, and shipped great distances to foreign ports, where in competition with foreign mills, it sells for six dollars and fifty cents; why is it we here at home, under the very eaves of this same mill pay ten dollars for the same quantity of material? There is no reason for this injustice. It is a result only of unjust opportunity given a favored few, and they have availed themselves full strong of the opportunity.

But government has not accomplished its purpose when it permits things like these, and as I have said before, every patriot concedes this tariff is a robbery.

We only differ as to when the robbery should cease.—

Democracy says let it cease now.—

Our opponents say, let it cease after the next presidential election.

Does our memory serve us right, when we say that four years ago today they said let it cease after that presidential election?

I should feel more encouraged if I was sure that the beneficiaries of this robber tariff were not going to be permitted in the future, as they have in the past, by vast contributions to political campaign funds, to so endear themselves to the republican party that they just wouldn't have the heart to make them quit robbing the Nebraska farmer every time he buys a roll of barbed wire or a keg of nails.

Has the protective tariff justified those beautiful sounding phrases heretofore mentioned?

Let us see.—I believe one example will be enough to make a prima facie case of "no," emphatically "no."

A few years after the war, Andrew Carnegie, with a capital of ten thousand dollars, and associating five of his neighbors, entered the field of iron and steel manufacturing in the valley near the city of Pittsburg. He saw the opportunity afforded by a so-called protective tariff. He applied its privilege to his business.

Year after year went by, he surrounded himself with greater mills—the accumulation of his annual profits.

He drew into his employ thousands of men; they filled the valley with cabins for these employes.

The fires burned; the smoke rolled toward the heavens—manufactured products poured forth and the American consumer in every workshop and on every farm paid tribute, the result of protective tariff.

Twenty-odd years came and went—the day of settlement came when Mr. Carnegie's accumulation realized a selling price of four hundred and sixty million dollars—this was Carnegie's share, and if the roster of employes be as many as 46,000 men in his employ, this vast amount realized by Mr. Carnegie was equivalent to ten thousand dollars each for every one of such a vast army of men.

Think for a moment—four hundred and sixty million dollars; substantially equal to one-

sixth of all the circulating medium of the United States.

With this fabulous sum he retired to his mansion, to the rest and luxury made possible by such a fortune.

Now, my friends, he had accumulated this fortune through that beautifully sounding expression "protection to American Labor."

But let us see where we find the laborer.

I traverse that same valley again. The fires are burning, the smoke is still ascending—wraps the valley almost in darkness, but in the dim light beneath the smoke, the men are still alive and able to work, are at the same old position, performing the same duties as in days of Carnegie—we grope our way to the same cabins that Carnegie built.

Where is the evidence of the laborers' share of that great fortune?

Is there any evidence that the thousands of men who were supposed to have enjoyed "the protection to American Labor" realized their share?

Is there a piano in their parlor, or a carpet upon the floor?

No, there is neither a piano nor a carpet in the parlor, nor is there a parlor to contain any of these things. It is the same old cabin, where life is eked out in the same old way. The "Protective Tariff" was a boon to American industries in so far only as the proprietor of the mill was concerned, but to none others.

My friends, the infant industries of this country as shown by time not only have been an infant, but to have been a glutton, and those who nursed the infant, who rocked its cradle, who paid for its soothing syrup, and who labored for its welfare, can certainly realize that the time has come when moral suasion will not reform the infant, and corporal punishment must be resorted to.

And he who concedes that it is proper to stop this robbery (after the next presidential election) should certainly be called upon to explain why justice should be so long deferred, and particularly when it is the third time that they have made the same kind of a promise.

My friends, if I seem to differ in my views from those who have been charged with the duties of government for the last ten years, please consider that I am simply expressing my ideas of government, and I always defer criticism until I am prepared to suggest a remedy. An omnibus criticism is easily made, but the remedy requires careful thought.

If in steering the ship of state through the shoals of bad crops, and calamities not caused by man, disaster overtook our country, it would be excusable, but in the midst of God's bounteous harvest, and every reason for peace and plenty, the ship of state is strained, we naturally look about in amazement and ask our pilot for an explanation.

Listen to the explanation: Lawyers would call it "a plea of confession and avoidance." They concede that conditions are bad—tremendously bad; they promise to change them "after the presidential election;" they offer no excuse for the past seven years.

They say that the panic is due to too rapid growth, extravagance and over capitalization. They say the sudden halt precipitating business calamity may have resulted by them simply turning on the light.

Thus you have the confession which simplifies the argument. In detail it is admitted:

That the Senate will not respond to the needs of the people;

That our banking system is insecure;

That our currency is insufficient;

That our tariff is a breeder of monopolies and results in robbery;

That government by injunction has become an injustice;

That trusts, monopoly and inflation are running rampant in our land;

That as a result of these things fully disclosed, depression and disaster followed through no fault of the pilot, and in his own language, his plea of avoidance says: "I simply turned on the light, and am not responsible for the rottenness it discloses." This plea of avoidance comes under the head: "Important if True."

## ELECT SENATORS

As to the United States Senate, the pilot has no remedy to suggest, but we have, and that is, elect the members of the United States Senate by direct vote of the people upon your state ticket the same as you do your governor or other state officers, and to secure this result do not