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"Roosevelt's Policies Now in the Ditch"

A reader of The Commoner—an "independent republican," as he describes himself, sends a clipping from the Cincinnati Post, and in a letter to Mr. Bryan says: "When I read this article I thought of your prediction." The article is a Washington dispatch under date of April 5, and written by Mr. Gardner, the Post's Washington correspondent. The article follows:

Washington, April 5.—Today William H. Taft enters upon the second month of his presidency. The first month, summed up, has been big with promise for some and filled with bitter disappointment for others.

During the month Taft has done much to lose the confidence of Roosevelt and the loyal Roosevelt following.

Losing that he will have lost what made him president.

It was upon the Roosevelt guarantee that the people of the country accepted Taft. It was Roosevelt's judgment that Taft was the best man to carry on the Roosevelt policies that made the nomination of Taft possible.

Since November 9 the policy and conduct of Taft have been one unbroken series of shocks to Roosevelt and the Roosevelt legions—the men trained in the tactics of "my policies."

Taft's appointments and his policies—his cabinet and his official acts—and, incidentally, his affiliations, political, personal and legislative, have compelled the Roosevelt following and indorsement to be withdrawn.

In making this statement I do not assume to speak for Mr. Roosevelt. I do not speak from any inside knowledge as to Mr. Roosevelt's views. I speak for myself what I believe or know to be facts.

"Had it been known a year ago, what appointments Taft would make and what policies he would pursue, he never would have received the republican nomination and never would have been elected president."

In substantially these words the New York Evening Post has stated, editorially, a thought which has lain unspoken in many minds.

Such are the facts. Had Roosevelt known, or for one moment suspected, what would be the general line of action followed by the present occupant of the White House, he would have thrown his influence to Hughes or to LaFollette sooner than assist Taft to the presidency.

Taft has been a bitter disappointment. And to none has the cup been more bitter than to the man who selected Taft to carry on the policies which have become associated with the name of Roosevelt.

The Taft administration is "reactionary."

To prevent the substitution of "reactionary" for "progressive" policies was the one chief aim of Roosevelt.

The Taft administration is dominated by the big business interests. It was to keep the national government true to the best interests of the people as distinguished from the privileged class that Roosevelt used his influence in naming his successor.

From the very beginning the Taft administration has given constant comfort to the enemies of Roosevelt. That comfort may be seen in tangible form each day. Harriman has won. Rockefeller has won. Morgan has won.

As an earnest to Morgan, Taft appointed as attorney general, to administer the laws, Morgan's personal attorney, George C. Wickersham.

As an earnest to Rockefeller, Taft appointed Charles Nagel, attorney for the Waters-Pierce (Standard) Oil

company, as head of the department in which is located the bureau of corporations.

For the other members of his cabinet Taft has selected men entirely satisfactory to the influences which controlled the appointments already named. With these appointments safe, the vested privilege was indifferent.

The machinery of government which handles prosecutions is the thing that counted most.

Of this, Wall street influence is once more in control.

E. H. Harriman indorses Taft. He has stated publicly that he hopes for eight years of the present administration.

So does Nelson W. Aldrich.

So does Joseph G. Cannon.

So do Bellamy and Maria Storer—so do B. R. Tillman, Joseph Bailey, Senator Penrose and many others.

It is interesting to note that the line of approval and indorsement is not a party line. No more than was the line with respect to Roosevelt.

The former president numbered his best friends among the democrats as well as republicans. He had as bitter foes among republicans as democrats.

It was, and is, not the party line, but the line which has of late cut both the republican and democratic parties in two. The line which separates the believers of a government for the people from those who believe in a government for the dollar.

It is the same line that was drawn in the house the other day when good republicans refused to vote for Cannon and dyed-in-the-wool democrats came to his aid.

I am very sure that former President Roosevelt carried a sad heart way from Washington. He had suffered from the deepest wound known to man—that inflicted by the seeming ingratitude of a trusted friend. Taft had been his friend, and he had trusted him.

But the former president was game. He kept up a cheerful front, even to the last. He did not allow the matter to become personal. All appearances of friendliness were continued to the end.

The friends of Taft will seek in vain, however, for any spoken or written word which puts the indorsement of Roosevelt on the actions of the present occupant of the White House between November 9, 1908, and April 5, 1909.

In a paragraph, this is the charge against the Taft administration: Since election day, in every way (except words), by every essential act, Taft seems to have made a studied effort to repudiate the things for which his predecessor stood.

Owing all to Roosevelt, Taft, safely elected to the presidency, offered nothing of recognition. Pledged to Roosevelt's policies, he neither asked nor took Roosevelt's advice. In filling places and laying the foundations for his administration, he counseled with the people who had been Roosevelt's bitterest enemies. He withdrew himself, even geographically, from the man to whom he owed his office, and the White House knew no more of the Taft councils at Hot Springs and Atlanta, Ga., than it would have known if Bryan had been the successful candidate.

A chasm which is wide and deep has opened between Taft and former President Roosevelt. And every day will make the truth of this statement more plain. President Taft and former President Roosevelt have said their political farewells. Taft has chosen the "reactionary" road; Roosevelt will always be "progressive."

There is not a well-informed news-

paper correspondent in the capital who does not know the things here set down. Some know more about the inside of conditions than do others. But the facts are in the air—on the street, at the club, bandied in the gossip of the press gallery, talked even on the White House office steps.

"When will it break?" one man asks another.

"Oh, I don't know," the other answers. "I hate to be the first. I have been holding off—to give him every chance to make good. It's not a pleasant story. But this won't last forever. It's bound to come—and probably before very long."

Now comes a story of a "coalition of the big magazines and weeklies," which are said to be getting ready to "muck rake" the Taft administration and to raise the devil generally for the next four years. This story is handed out by one of Cannon's friends, and seems to be an effort to discount what ordinary political shrewdness must indicate is inevitable, and in the not distant future.

Yes, the storm is bound to break. The friends of Roosevelt have clung tenaciously to the hope that they might yet remain the friends of Taft. They have held their judgment in abeyance. They have refrained from criticism. They have thought up explanations and apologies on their own account. They have even gone in person and voiced their fears and criticisms at the White House. But to no purpose. Taft has made it clear that his alliances are not with Roosevelt's friends.

Taft and Roosevelt's enemies hold the fort.

The "progressive policies" of Mr. Roosevelt are in the ditch.

The sad joke is on the people—the people who loved and followed Roosevelt.

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