

The Commoner.

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VOL. 9, NO. 42

Lincoln, Nebraska, October 29, 1909

Whole Number 458

Wanted—Men

The congressional campaign of 1910 will soon be upon us and we ought to begin NOW to plan for it. Whether we shall secure a democratic majority in the next congress depends largely upon the character of the democrats nominated and upon the platform on which they run.

There may be districts in which the democratic candidate will have so large a personal following that his constituents will trust him without a platform, but these districts are, fortunately, very few. As a rule, the man who objects to a platform is the very man who needs to be pledged to a platform. If a candidate is in sympathy with his people and shares their sentiments he will not hesitate to state his position frankly and fully. When a candidate refuses to take the people into his confidence on a question at issue it is usually because he is conscious of holding opinions adverse to the interests of those whose votes he asks.

The first thing, therefore, is to find a democratic candidate in each congressional district who believes in platforms and who is willing to let the voters know where he stands.

The next thing is to find a democratic candidate whose platform is acceptable to the voters of his party, and a platform to be acceptable must represent the interests of the voters. There is scarcely a district in the United States where the INTERESTS of a MAJORITY of the voters are on the side of PROTECTION. The trouble is that the protected industries are active and clamorous. The democratic candidate should have the courage to protect the SILENT MAJORITY against the demands of the NOISY MINORITY.

Take the wool question for illustration. There is probably not a district in the United States where the owners of sheep constitute one-tenth of the voting population, but that less than one-tenth often has more influence on the congressman than the more than nine-tenths. Why? Because the sheep owners are organized and active while the rest of the people are often indifferent.

In Texas, for instance, about eleven hundred men own all the sheep in the state (1,500,000) and fifty men own about half the total number. Counting the clip at 6½ pounds to the sheep the annual wool crop would amount to about 10,000,000 pounds and be worth about \$2,000,000. If the sheep owners get the benefit of the 40 per cent duty on wool then the eleven hundred sheep owners in Texas receive about \$800,000 from the tariff on wool and, of this,

fifty men receive about \$400,000 or \$8,000 apiece. Fifty men can afford to make a good deal of noise for \$8,000 per year each; they can afford to subsidize newspapers and to subscribe to campaign funds.

But the 1,500,000 people in Texas who pay at least 40 per cent (probably 50 or 60) more on woolen goods than they would with free wool, pay, each a little, and, therefore, do not take as active an interest in the subject. But a democratic candidate for congress ought to take the side of the many in spite of the threats of the greedy few.

The Commoner uses Texas as an illustration because it has the figures in regard to that state. In Arizona about 300 men own the 1,250,000 sheep in the territory. The Commoner will be glad to have its readers send in the statistics from other states—they can probably be obtained at the state capital.

The same is true of the tariff on lumber, iron ore, coal, etc. Protection is the fight of a few for privileges at the expense of the many; tariff reform is the fight of the many to keep the hands of the few out of their pockets.

The Commoner has presented a sample platform and it asks democratic candidates for congress to accept, reject or amend it to suit themselves, and it asks the democratic voters to see to it that democratic candidates are selected who really reflect the sentiment of the people of their district. Let the fight begin now and be continued in the open until we have a democratic congress made up of men who will put the interests of the masses above the clamor of those who seek favors.

Wanted—Men who dare to stand for the Jeffersonian doctrine of equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

THE RAILROADS GET IT

Tariff reformers are just now laughing at the joke that the western railroads have played upon the fruit growers of California. The senators and members from California demanded an increase in the tariff on citrus fruits, and finally secured an increase in the tariff rate. Whereupon the railroads raised their rates and greedily grabbed up the exact increase. Of course the fruit growers are very indignant, and Senator Flint is making the air blue with threats. He says: "The question that confronts us in this case is whether a combination of railroads can nullify the act of congress and destroy a great industry that congress has, by legislation, endeavored to protect." And then he adds this note of warning: "I feel that the protective tariff system can not be maintained and that we will be placed in an indefensible position if we permit one penny raised by this tariff to go to the railroad corporations of this country."

If Senator Flint will investigate the matter, he will find that a considerable portion of the tariff is levied for the benefit of the railroads. Take the tariff on coal for instance; who gets the benefit of it? We export coal and it simply enables the railroads to charge a higher rate for coal used at the seaboard than for coal sent to the seaboard for export.

The more protection is studied, the more glaring its iniquities become. Possibly a part of the wool tariff is absorbed by the railroads.

"RED HOT"

Mr. Crane says that the president told him to utilize all the opportunities offered to speak on the eastern situation and to give it to them "red hot." Just what red hot means has now become a matter of inquiry. If Mr. Crane did only what he was directed to do he ought not to be dismissed but that is a matter of degree. He may have raised the temperature to white heat when he was authorized to go no farther than red hot. At least, the brown people and the yellow people were stirred up. Possibly the phrase "red hot" is like the word "revise"—it needs to be defined. If the president had given it to Aldrich republicans "red hot" he might have accomplished something.

Unique Defense

The Chicago Tribune (rep.) rushes to Mr. Taft's defense, seeking to justify the president's failure to recommend an amendment providing for the election of senators by popular vote. The Tribune says:

"Mr. Bryan knew full well when he wrote his letter that not even the most passionate appeal by the president would have moved congress or at least the senate to submit to the states the amendment in question. But he thought he saw a chance to put the president in a hole, for Mr. Taft had said during the campaign that he was personally inclined to favor the direct election of senators. He did not say, however, that if elected he would waste himself by urging congress to do something he knew it would not do."

That is very much like the claim that when Mr. Taft promised the people tariff revision he did not say that if elected he would waste himself by urging congress to revise the tariff downward—something he knew it would not do.

It is noticeable, however, that Mr. Taft is not so careful on questions like ship subsidy and central bank. The things that Mr. Aldrich wants done may be recommended because persistent recommendation may result finally in legislation.

The defense made by the Tribune is unworthy a great newspaper. Editors devoted to a cause do not refrain from advocating that cause on the theory that they could not immediately persuade men in authority or even the masses to their way of thinking. Men to whom the people have a right to look for counsel do not "waste themselves" when they urge a plan which they conceive to be for the public welfare. "Agitation," said Wendell Phillips, "is the method that plants the seed by the side of the ballot box." And surely the president of the United States need not fear to advocate a great reform on the theory that by doing so "he would waste himself by urging congress to do something he knew it would not do."

That sort of argument carried to its logical conclusion would cause the people to lose interest in public questions and would result in the overthrow of popular government.

IS THE SOUTH FOR "PROTECTION?"

The Dallas (Texas) Times-Herald prints a letter from James T. Stacey in which that gentleman, taking issue with Mr. Bryan's tariff views, says:

"It is not difficult to make a prediction as to the final outcome of this friendly rivalry between the north and the south for commercial supremacy. When the mills and factories of the south are able to consume the entire product of southern fields and mines, I predict that a complete reversal on the tariff will have taken place. The north and east will stand for the views of Watterson and Morrison, while the south will stand for those enunciated by Randall and Reed."

But is the south ready to turn "protection?"

REAL TARIFF REFORM

If Mr. Bryan were a republican he would probably construe "revise" to mean to take the tariff off what the manufacturer buys and leave it on the things the people buy.—Fort Worth (Texas) Record.

But Mr. Bryan does not propose "to take the tariff off what the manufacturers buy and leave it on the things the people buy." When he speaks for free hides he speaks also for free leather, free harness, free boots and free shoes, and the free raw material tax which Mr. Bryan would abolish is paid in the end by the people.

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