

Democracy and Insurgency

(Editorial in Omaha World-Herald)

Thousands of members of the World-Herald's great family of readers who, for a good many years, were charmed, instructed and inspired by the eloquent gospel of pure democracy as expounded in these columns in editorial articles written by Richard L. Metcalfe, will take especial pleasure in reading the message from Mr. Metcalfe's pen published on this page today under the heading, "Democracy and Insurgency."

In these turbulent days of seething political unrest and bewildering change, when a great many members of both parties show that they are in danger of losing their bearings and either drifting or steaming blindly ahead in the fog, it is a source of much gratification to this newspaper that so earnest and true a democrat as Mr. Metcalfe joins with such a democrat as Governor Folk to indorse its policy and its attitude toward insurgency and the democratic party. Mr. Metcalfe, with his old-time brilliant logic, covers the question so thoroughly and so convincingly, in our humble judgment, that it leaves nothing further to be said. We commend his article not only to those of our readers who enjoy the fair and able discussion of any great question, but particularly to those who are themselves in doubt and who are seeking guidance concerning an important matter with which they will soon be called on to deal.

DEMOCRACY AND INSURGENCY

Lincoln, Neb., January 24.—To the Editor of the World-Herald: I have been interested in reading two sorts of criticism concerning the World-Herald's policy. In one quarter you are condemned on the theory that you are giving too much encouragement to the "insurgent republicans." In the other you are criticised because you do not agree with Senator Gore's recommendation that democrats should not nominate a candidate against an insurgent republican congressman.

I happen to know that, in the language of an old-time journalist, "newspaper writers like a kind word now and then just the same as human beings do;" and because I can indorse your course against both sorts of the criticisms referred to I send you this letter.

Glad as I am to give a word of cheer to a fellow newspaper worker who will never receive the tenth of the cheers that are coming to him, I would not write this letter solely on your account. I would not write it if I did not think it of the highest importance that the subject to which it intimately relates be presented, with the utmost frankness, by those who take the view I do.

In the beginning those who criticize you for giving so much space and encouragement to the insurgent republicans overlook first the requirements of your office as a news dispenser and then your editorial duty to give encouragement to all men everywhere who are making any sort of a fight against usurpation in any sort of a party and any sort of a struggle for reform.

The important criticism, however, relates to Senator Gore's proposition. I think I appreciate the services of the insurgent republicans. I know something of the courage necessary for an officeholder to rebel against the authority of perhaps the best disciplined political organization in the world's history. I would not withhold from these gentlemen the credit marks they have won.

But in moving for relief it is important that men remember that it is the republican party that is doing the damage to the people; it is the organized power of the republican party which the people have to fear; it is the republican party which those who understand the dangerous trend of affairs have to overthrow.

Will it be possible to overthrow that party by electing to congress men who are subject to its wonderful powers of discipline?

In his letter printed in Saturday's World-Herald Mr. W. F. Porter says he would vote for Mr. Norris "regardless of who might be his opponent." Yet, with all of his insurgency Mr. Norris, I think, voted for Mr. Cannon on the final vote in the house of representatives. Although protesting against the rejection of Rainey in the republican caucus, Mr. Norris was not

able to make similar protest in the house or to vote against that palpable effort to give a little aid to a cabinet officer who was about to be investigated. While condemning the republican tariff law and denouncing what he calls Aldrichism and Cannonism, Mr. Norris frequently reasserts his confidence in the Taft administration and his loyalty to the "Taft policies."

This professed devotion to the "Taft policies" characterizes the utterances of most of the republican leaders that are just now insurgent.

Yet, in his Winona speech Mr. Taft pronounced the Payne tariff law the best ever placed upon the statute books; in his Boston speech he proclaimed Mr. Aldrich one of the safest of counsellors for the people, while it is an open secret that he gave of his great influence to the re-election of Mr. Cannon as speaker of the house.

I do not say these things for the idle purpose of criticising these insurgents. In view of the great resources and the superior discipline of the republican party these gentlemen are doing all that may reasonably be expected of them. Great courage is shown in a mere protest against the program of a political organization whose members have been taught that the organization acts under divine decree—even though it obtains its campaign funds from special interests whose managers sometimes appear to be intensely human.

Unquestionably the insurgent republican congressmen find it to be the part of wisdom to shout adherence to the "Taft policies" while rebelling against the policies of Aldrich and Cannon. But the people whom congressmen are presumed to represent should have no concern in republican party discipline. They can not be consoled for trust impositions by a fine distinction between the policy that fights "Pinchotism" in the capital building and the policy in the White House that throws Pinchot out of office. They can not differentiate between the point of view that permits Aldrich and Cannon to enact the Payne tariff law and the point of view that permits Mr. Taft to declare it to be the best tariff law ever passed by an American congress. They can not see great difference between the capital building spirit that exercises partisan care in the selection of the Ballinger investigating committee and the White House spirit that keeps Mr. Ballinger in office while retiring Mr. Glavis to private life.

Without undertaking to enumerate the evils against which there is just now popular protest, it may be said the republican party is responsible for those evils; and the only way to destroy them is to drive the republican party from power. This can only be accomplished by the election of men who may be depended upon to locate the responsibility for evils and to fight evil wherever it raises its head without apology to White House or capital building.

I make bold to say that if the situation is so bad as democrats and populists say it is, or so bad even as insurgent republicans say it is, then no man who promises any allegiance whatever to the party that is responsible for this situation, is in a position to serve the people in this crisis. Ultra-conservatives may say there is no crisis, but in the light of the complaint against the high cost of living heard on every hand and the general unrest apparent in all political parties, it is not difficult for men who have any foresight to realize that the American people are face to face with a critical situation. The trouble is not to be corrected by boycotts such as the one now being organized against the meat packers, nor by "immunity bath" prosecutions of the beef trust such as have been carried on by republican administrations. The evils of which the people today complain are the logical results of an administration of public affairs at the hands of a political party that derives its campaign fund from men who profit through the existence of those evils.

So long as we are governed by parties we must move through parties for whatever reforms we would have. I do not mean to say that every man nominated by the democratic party may be depended upon to do the right thing. Mr. Porter, in his letter printed in the World-Herald, cites the case of the twenty-three men who, elected as democrats, voted for Mr. Cannon. But these men no more represented the democratic party than the handful of insurgents represented the republican party in any of their insurgent acts. If the hope for relief depended upon "democrats" like the twenty-three who voted for Mr. Cannon or upon some of the men who, elected to the senate as democrats, yet voted for a republican tariff law, then when the burdens upon the people became unbearable revolution would be the only recourse. We have the right

to believe, however, that the good record of Champ Clark and his faithful followers, rather than that of the deserters, represents the purpose of the democratic party.

There is no analogy between the proposed indorsement by democrats of insurgent-republican nominees and the nomination of Mr. Bryan by populists, as Mr. Porter suggests in his letter. Mr. Bryan, if elected, would not have owned allegiance in any degree to a political party that was supported by the campaign funds contributed by the very system against whose impositions the people were protesting.

I agree with Mr. Porter that "voters everywhere are becoming convinced that they must be citizens before they are partisans." But in order to make their acts, as patriotic citizens, effective they must have a party to work through. Caring nothing for mere party name they must give their efforts to some party organization that gives the best promise of relief. Certainly they will not, at the very time they are seeking to overthrow republican policies, elect to congress men who are subject to republican party discipline even on the theory that in some particulars these men have violated republican orders.

Democrats who object to the indorsement by the democratic party of an insurgent republican congressman do not wholly base their objection on the ground—as my old-young friend Harry B. Fleharty puts it—"because he is not democratic all over and clear through," but also because with all of his virtues, with all of his insurgency, he has not shown himself free from republican party discipline; and he can not, in the nature of things, be free from that discipline. He can not, therefore, be free to represent the people with that thoroughness which the gravity of the situation demands.

If I lived in a district where the republicans had nominated a Norris or a Murdock and the democrats had nominated a man whom I suspected would vote with the tariff barons or with other special interests, then I should cast my vote for the insurgent republican with all of his republican party allegiance. But, living in that district, I should devote my energies beforehand to the nomination of a faithful democrat, one whom I had reason to believe would be true to the people. I might know that so far as personal character is concerned there could be no preference between the democratic nominee and the insurgent republican nominee. But I would vote for the democrat rather than for the insurgent republican because I would know that no party discipline nor political expediency would require him to defend Aldrichism in the White House any more than in the capital building. I would know that he would go to Washington with the commission to destroy, rather than to apologize for—even in a small degree—the system whose present day program is, admittedly, a menace to popular government.

RICHARD L. METCALFE.

A PRAYER FOR BUSINESS MEN

We plead with Thee, O God, for our brothers who are pressed by the cares and beset by the temptations of business life. We acknowledge before Thee our common guilt for the hardness and deceitfulness of our commercial life, which leads so many into temptation and causes even the righteous to slip and fall. So long as it must be that man is set against man in a struggle for wealth, help them to make their contest in some measure a test of excellence, by which even the defeated may be spurred to better work. If any man is pitted against those who have forgotten fairness and honesty, help him to put his trust resolutely in the profitableness of sincerity and uprightness and, if need be, to accept loss rather than follow the others on crooked paths. Establish in unshaken fidelity all who hold in trust the wealth of others. The property and welfare of our nation are controlled by our business men. Help them to realize that they have high public functions and let them not betray the interest of all for their own enrichment. Grant them far-sighted patriotism to subordinate their work to the public weal and a steadfast determination to transform the disorder of the present into the nobler and freer harmony of the future. Let the spirit of Christ, which goes out from Thee and which is ceaselessly pleading within us, prevail to bring our business life under Christ's law of service, that all who guide the processes of factory and trade may feel that high consciousness of a divine calling which blesses only those who are the free servants of God and the people, and who are consciously devoting their strength to the common good.—American Magazine.