

Editor Munsey's Honest Confession

Editorial in the Washington, D. C. Times: When William Jennings Bryan expressed his opinion of the Chicago platform, and declared that the republican convention had not promised "downward" revision and that the republican party would not give the country downward revision, we hooted him. We thought it was absurd to make such a claim. We set it down to blind, partisan bias. We told ourselves that surely, after all the agitation and discussion of the necessity for reducing the tariff, no party—and no leaders of any party—would have the hardihood to attempt a stationary or upward revision.

No, indeed! This time the people were aroused! After years of procrastination and deceit the republican congressional dictators had finally been forced to an actual reduction of the tariff schedules! There was no mistake about it; that was what the Chicago platform provided! Bryan was crazy!

We all know what happened, and we must admit today that Mr. Bryan was right and the rest of the country wrong, as unusual. The tariff session had hardly gotten under way when the standpat republican leaders began to tell us that

the party had never promised "downward" revision, and that the Chicago platform did not promise downward revision. They kept it up throughout the session and have been at it ever since.

It is not our purpose at this time to discuss whether such a promise was made or not made; whether, if made, it has been kept or shattered. What we would bring to your attention is the weird mental attitude of the defenders of the tariff law. Had you observed, in studying their speeches, that they all say, "We did not promise downward revision," and that they then proceed to devote all the intellectual energy at their command to prove that this was exactly the kind of revision which they did accomplish.

If, as they contend, they did not promise downward revision, and if, as they declare, the country did not demand or expect downward revision, why, in the name of everything sane and sensible, are Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Cannon, and their friends so determined to convince us that the tariff was actually revised downward? If they made no promises—if they did not deceive the country—what difference does it make whether the revision was up or down or sideways?

LAFOLLETTE ATTACKS THE ADMINISTRATION

Soon after Mr. Taft was nominated to the presidency in 1908, Senator Robert M. LaFollette sent to Mr. Taft this dispatch: "While the platform is disappointing in some fundamental provisions and omissions, and I shall claim the right to say so, I congratulate you most sincerely, and in the faith that you are more nearly in accord with the great body of republican voters than the platform, I shall do all in my power to insure your election."

Plainly, Senator LaFollette has changed his opinion. On April 12th he delivered a speech in the senate and that speech fairly bristled with denunciations of the Taft administration. Following are extracts from the report made by the Washington correspondent for the Denver News:

Painting J. P. Morgan as a "beefy, red-faced, thick-necked financial bully, whose operations in the commerce of the nation are a ruination to the people's rights," characterizing Attorney General Wickersham as a former chief trickster of monopolistic interests, and condemning in fiery language the merger of the Boston and Maine railroad with the New York, New Haven and Hartford, Senator LaFollette today delivered his long-promised arraignment of Taft's railroad administration bill.

At the bottom of the attempt to place more power in the hands of the railroads, the Wisconsin senator declared there was a force fresh from the White House willing and anxious to add to the already great pile of corruptness which is fast infesting every branch of transportation in the United States.

Few times did the vitriolic denunciation use the name of the president, but behind every argument was the well-founded intimation that it was through the efforts of the chief executive that the big men of the financial world were going to be allowed to gobble up everything in sight, regardless of the rights of the people who, after all, LaFollette shouted, are supposed to be the beneficiaries of the corporations.

The particular part of the railroad bill LaFollette picked out as bad was the provision allowing railroads to take over the holdings of other concerns. He charged openly that the Massachusetts legislation allowing the consolidation of the Boston and Maine was consummated at the dictation of President Mellen of the New Haven road, and for this he held the attorney general and the president of the United States directly responsible.

Mellen, he said, was simply the tool of Morgan, "a hireling," the westerner emphasized by pounding his fist upon his table until the crowded galleries sat motionless in preparation of the denunciation they knew was to follow.

"This bill, Mr. President," he said, "is the boldest raid upon public right, in the form of legislation upon this great subject, that the highbinders of big business have ever succeeded in having forced upon the serious consideration of congress. Never before has any one undertaken seriously to ask congress for a charter for the monopolization and oppression of the commerce of this country, such as is carried in the

devious language and hidden purposes of this measure.

"Never before has it been attempted to foreclose the people of this country of their rights and to fasten irrevocably upon the commerce of the country the public burden of transportation charges, to pay interest and dividends upon all the watered stocks and bonds, which unrestrained corporate greed has set afloat in the financial channels of this country."

Mr. LaFollette asserted that at the behest of the New Haven company the Massachusetts legislature had undertaken to repeal a federal law and license an act which congress had declared to be a crime against the people.

"And," he said, "the attorney general, the highest law officer of the federal government sworn to preserve, protect and defend the constitution and enforce the laws of congress, gives his official approval of this legislative compact between the New Haven company and the Massachusetts legislature to nullify the laws of congress and declares that it expressly authorizes what congress has expressly forbidden.

"If the federal anti-trust law can be repealed by a state legislature—if the department of justice at Washington will hold conferences with and countenance the agents of the law-breaking corporations while they are engaged in lobbying through state legislatures a pretended sanction of their violation of the criminal statutes of the federal government and then by official edict make such statutes a shield and cover under which the criminal corporations may go unwhipped of justice; if the door of the federal court may thus be closed in the face of a wronged and outraged public by the attorney general of the United States, then the law becomes a black art and justice a mere juggler's pawn."

Speaking of President Mellen and Vice President Byrnes of the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad, Senator LaFollette said:

"The mask is off. We have all of us done injustice to Mr. Mellen, gross injustice. Nor is Mr. Byrnes in his private capacity or in any capacity, except as corporation employes, the truculent braggart that he seems in the press reports of railroad hearings.

"Both of these men and others of their kind are but hired megaphones through which a beefy, red-faced, thick-necked financial bully, drunk with wealth and power, bawls his orders to stock market, directors, courts, governments and nations. We have been listening to Mr. Morgan."

"COME INTO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY," SAYS FOSS

Eugene N. Foss, recently elected to the house of representatives from the Boston district, visited Rochester, New York, recently and gave to the Associated Press an interesting interview. The Associated Press report of the interview follows:

Mr. Foss declared that he now "enjoyed in his various business enterprises from 45 to 100 per cent protection."

"It is too much," he added. "I don't need that protection, and I ought not to have it. All that I have above a certain point represents

tariff graft. I am willing that protection should be cut right in half, and then I would have all I am entitled to or need."

In regard to insurgency, he said: "My insurgent republican friends, if you want to accomplish the results you desire, you have got to step aside and join the opposition party and force legislation along lines that will bring relief. You have been 'insurgents' long enough and what practical results have you secured?"

"Senator Lodge read me out of the republican party six years ago, but I clung to it, for I loved it, until my self-respect and my judgment forced me into the party of the opposition. I went out of the party last fall and in a thirty days' campaign on this same issue cut down a majority of 96,000 to one of less than 8,000. Senator Lodge said that I could not make the tariff an issue last fall. But before the campaign ended he was defending and praising the Aldrich act whenever and wherever he spoke. It was the dominant issue. It was along the same lines when the opportunity came this spring that I fought the campaign in the Fourteenth district, and the district which defeated me last fall for lieutenant governor by 5,000 votes has just sent me to congress by a majority of 5,600 votes.

"The insurgent republicans hope, as I hoped, for eight long years to bring about reform within their own party. It's a mistake, it can't be done.

"To my insurgent republican friends I say: 'Don't be a near-democrat; be a real one. Come over with me where you belong and where you can do real service.'"

Party names mean little today, he declared, to the average man who thinks seriously.

"It was not a party victory in the Fourteenth district. It was a protest by men of all shades of political belief against an economic policy which has made and is still making it more difficult for the average man to stretch his income to meet his absolutely necessary living expenses.

"Lifelong republicans sat on the platform side by side with lifelong democrats when I discussed the tariff issue, and the applause was as hearty from the one as from the other."

Mr. Foss started off humorously by saying: "We recently had an election in Massachusetts." He spoke first of his campaign and of the issues on which he won it. His campaign, he declared, had been one of publicity. The full strength of the republican machine had been exerted in behalf of his opponent.

"The entire campaign was fought on tariff lines," he said. "Our platform was put into the hands of every voter. I discussed the tariff in almost every village and town in the district pointing out to the voters what this outrageous tariff was doing for them. I endeavored to show them how the tariff affected nearly every article they wore, ate or drank, or that contributed to the comfort of their homes.

"While Senators Lodge and Aldrich claimed that the Payne-Aldrich tariff was drawn in the interests of New England, and chuckled over the thought that they had given New England more than it was entitled to, the people of this most typical New England district have repudiated flatly the Aldrich act, and pronounced it unfair, unjust and inequitable. They realize that it would be disastrous to permit it to remain."

Mr. Foss declared that his election means that the people are tired of the Aldrich bill. "It is a demand of Massachusetts and of all New England for free raw material, untaxed food products and wider markets. It is a demand that we treat Canada decently, and that we take down our tariff wall against her.

"I would go so far as to say," he continued, "that we should do this whether Canada lowered hers or not. We are the sufferers. We need her lumber, her coal and iron, her wheat, her wood pulp, her other products.

"The remedy lies in the hands of the people," he said in conclusion, "and they are going to supply it this fall, else I greatly misunderstand the signs of the times and the temper of the American people."

BE CAREFUL

Referring to Mr. Taft's "get together" speech the Philadelphia North American, republican, says: "Out of his own mouth came words that more nearly convicted him of insincerity and false pretenses than anything ever said of him by his severest critics." The editor of the North American should be careful; he may go so far that he may find it difficult to get into line in time to give to the Taft party his customary hysterical support.