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The New Nationalism

Some surprise has been expressed that Mr. Roosevelt should have selected the name, "new nationalism," for the creed promulgated at Osawatimie. The parts that attracted most attention were those in which he endorsed doctrines for which the democratic party has been fighting for years. The Outlook, however, makes the matter clear. It says that the essence of the new nationalism is to be found in a few sentences, among which the following stand out most prominently:

"The new nationalism is impatient of the utter confusion that results from local legislatures attempting to treat national issues as local issues."

"It is still more impatient of the impotence which springs from the over-division of government powers."

"This new nationalism regards the executive power as the steward of the public welfare."

It seems that the ex-president regards as minor matters the income tax, publicity as to campaign contributions, the domination of politics by corporations, etc., while he lays great stress on the centralizing propositions which he sets forth. He raises an issue which must in time separate him from most of the insurgents and alienate such sympathy as won from democrats by his endorsement of a part of the democratic program. The country will not take kindly to his attempt to revive discarded Hamiltonian doctrines. He can not popularize them. The trend is toward democracy and away from the aristocratic ideas of Alexander Hamilton.

Mr. Roosevelt is mistaken when he thinks that there is "utter confusion" because the states insist upon dealing with questions that concern them. It remains to be seen what he had in mind when he made this indictment against state legislatures. If he had reference to conservation, he ought to read the New York platform. He will find that even in New York the convention over which he presided was careful to safeguard the interests of the states. But it is probable that he had in mind the national incorporation of railroads which he has urged and the national incorporation of industrial enterprises which both he and President Taft favor. The purpose of national incorporation is not to increase national supervision but to leave incorporation to state supervision. It is not in the interest of the people but in the interest of ambitious corporations which are anxious to remove the center of control as far away from the people as possible. When Mr. Roosevelt descends from generalities to the outlining of specific measures, he will find that Jeffersonianism is in the ascendancy in this country by an overwhelming majority and that that Jeffersonianism will thwart any attempt that he may make to obliterate state lines and concentrate

all power in Washington where a senate controlled by a predatory interest can obstruct remedial legislation.

His second plank recalls the restiveness which he has ever shown when confronted by constitutional limitations. Here again he discloses the Hamiltonian bent of his mind. Hamilton was a believer in centralization. He views society from an aristocratic standpoint while those who framed our constitution justly recognized the impossibility of securing justice except by a proper distribution of power. Mr. Roosevelt will have hard work convincing the public that it would be wise to go backward and consolidate the departments of our government.

The third plank is really a corollary of the second. It is a sort of an apology as well as an explanation. If the executive is to be everything under new nationalism, Mr. Roosevelt wants it understood that he is to recognize himself as a steward of the public welfare. Why single out the executive? Are not all public officials stewards of the public welfare in the same sense? If the word steward is intended to mean the same as the word representative, then the legislative and judicial departments should feel the same responsibility as the executive department. If, however, Mr. Roosevelt uses the word steward in a different sense and means that while other departments of government are to be representative, the executive department is to exercise a fatherly interest and act independently of the wishes of the people—but for their good, of course—he is advancing a doctrine that is as dangerous as it is strange to our people. That is the doctrine of monarchies, not the doctrine of republics.

But we shall see as time goes on just how far Mr. Roosevelt's creed is to be nationalistic and how far it is to be really new. If it means centralization, it ought not to be called new because centralization is the old system from which he has departed, not a new system toward which we are advancing.

PROSPECTS FOR 1912

In an interview given to the Harrison (Ark.) correspondent for the St. Louis Republican, Mr. Bryan said:

"The prospects for a democratic victory in 1912 look good, and seem to be growing better. The first element of strength is the spread of ideas that are distinctively democratic. Democratic policies are being taken up by progressive republicans, and many republicans feel that if democratic policies are to be put into operation they should be intrusted to democratic officials.

"The second source of democratic strength at this time is found in the radical division in the republican party. The epithets which insurgents and standpatters apply to each other are more severe than the average criticism a democrat would make against the average republican. This division runs from the head of the party down to the precinct.

"With former President Roosevelt and Vice President Sherman rival candidates for the temporary chairmanship of the state convention of the largest state in the union, with insurgents and standpatters opposing each other as candidates for senate and congress, the democrats can not but gain largely, and it now seems probable that we shall have a majority in the house.

"We shall gain several members of the senate, and the progressives will gain several more. It is entirely possible that the democrats and progressive republicans may control the senate. When we look back at the unexpected things that have happened within the last two years we get some idea of what is possible within the next two years, with a democratic house and an anti-stand-pat senate."

"Who do you regard as the leader among the insurgents?"

"Former President Roosevelt is, of course,

the most prominent, but the real leader of the insurgent movement is Senator LaFollette. He has been at it longer, has worked harder and has insurged in more different directions than any of the rest of them. He was turned out of the convention that nominated Roosevelt in 1904, but was elected governor by his people, and afterwards sent to the senate.

"The republicans of the senate attempted to ignore him, and to make their opposition to him more marked they ostentatiously walked out of the senate when he began to speak. He noticed it and warned them that the chairs which they voluntarily deserted that day they would later leave under compulsion from their constituents. His prophecy has been strikingly realized. One after another of the conspicuous standpatters has been forced into retirement.

"Aldrich did not wait for a summons. Hale saw that an opponent would defeat him and retired from the contest. Burrows had less discretion, and waited until he was pushed. Curtis of Kansas has received a two years' notice and several other standpatters are trying to get both ears to the ground. Great changes seem to be impending. Democratic spirit is making itself felt."

"What do you think of Roosevelt's action in refusing to sit at a banquet table with Lorimer?"

"He was entirely right. The Lorimer election was probably the most corrupt senatorial election ever held in the country. At least, it was the boldest in its corruption, and if Lorimer was not totally unfit for the place, and incapable of shame he would refuse to hold the office. Mr. Roosevelt's action in openly rebuking him will receive the commendation of people of all parties. It is not always easy to establish guilt under the rules of evidence, even when there is moral certainty of guilt, and it would help in the purification of politics if the rule applied by Roosevelt were applied universally."

"Who do you think will be the republican nominee?"

"It seems probable that Mr. Taft will be re-nominated, a second nomination being customary, but it is too early to make predictions and the situation is so chaotic that the ordinary rules do not apply. If, for instance, the fight between the insurgents and the standpatters reaches the national convention and Roosevelt leads the fight, it is hard to say at this time which side would win.

"We are not informed yet as to whether Roosevelt will be a candidate. My own opinion is he would be stronger advocating some other progressive than he would be as a candidate himself. If he becomes a candidate the third-term issue will be raised against him and he would find it difficult to overcome the precedent of a century.

"If, however, he espouses the cause of some progressive he might be able to secure his nomination. You see how much there is to speculate on in the political situation and what interesting times we have before us."

"What do you think the democrats will do?"

"That depends a great deal upon the action of the next congress. If it is democratic the next campaign will have to be fought on the record made by congress and our chances will be good or bad in proportion as that record is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Wall Street will make the usual attempt to write the platform and nominate the ticket, but I think it will find it impossible to do so.

"The growth of radicalism in the republican party makes it expedient as well as right that the democrats shall stand for progressive measures. No matter whether the republicans nominate a standpatter or progressive it will be necessary for the democrats to nominate a radical. If the republicans nominate a standpatter a radical democrat would draw to his standard a great many progressive republicans.

"If, on the other hand, the republicans nominate an insurgent it will be necessary to nominate a radical democrat in order to hold the democratic vote."

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