

People Bear Burden of Increased Army and Navy Expense

[Extract from Congressional Record, from remarks of Clyde H. Tavenner, in the house of representatives.]

It is interesting to note that the per capita appropriations by congress for all purposes is climbing up just about in proportion to the increased cost of the navy, as the following figures will show:

Navy appropriations, 1890—\$20,000,000; all appropriations per capita, \$6.15.

Navy appropriations, 1900—\$48,000,000; all appropriations, per capita, \$9.05.

Navy appropriations, 1912—\$126,000,000; all appropriations, per capita, \$10.73.

Navy appropriations, 1914—\$140,000,000; all appropriations, per capita, \$11.09.

It is pertinent to inquire where the millions that have been poured into militarism to the enrichment of the armor and ammunition capitalists came from. These millions were not picked up in the streets, and they were not contributed by the rich. Our citizens have not contributed in proportion to their wealth, but the poor man has paid on an average almost as much as the rich; and since there are 99 poor to every rich man, it means that the millions that have piled up in the pockets of the armor-plate magnates have come from the pockets of the poor.

And this is the feature of militarism-gone-mad that strikes home—the fact that the wasted millions did not come from an income tax or inheritance tax levied on those best able to bear the burden, none of it having been collected by a direct tax, but that practically every penny of the \$2,000,000,000 expended on the army and navy in the last 10 years came through the customhouses and the internal revenue offices. Since customhouses and internal revenue offices do not levy taxes on men according to their wealth or ability to pay, but solely upon things the people eat, wear, and use, it means that the people pay the armor-plate makers' bills in the increased cost of living.

Therefore it is but logical that the cost of living must increase in proportion to the cost of militarism—and it does, as the table heretofore give shows beyond successful contradiction. The people may as well know that as the cost of militarism increases in the future so will the cost of living.

To make clearer my statement that the poor man has been paying almost as much toward defraying the expenses of the federal government as the rich man, permit me to correct the impression of the average person that some part of the taxes he has been paying to his local tax-collector has been sent to Washington for the purpose of maintaining the federal government. The truth is that not one penny of the taxes we have been paying our local tax collectors has come to Washington. Every penny of such taxes has gone toward defraying the expenses of township, city, county and state. Therefore if a millionaire pays a heavy state tax none of it goes toward defraying the cost of the army and navy or maintaining the federal government. The manner in which the people have been supporting the army and navy and meeting all other federal expenses has been by paying increased prices for things eaten, worn or used. The local grocer and dry goods merchant has been the federal tax collector without knowing it, or

without his average customer knowing it. To the extent that the average poor man eats the same amount of food as the rich man he has been paying as much tax. Funds for the maintenance of the army and navy, as well as all other federal expenses, have thus in the past been raised wholly in the form of increased cost of living.

EXPRESS COMPANIES SURVIVE

Accounting for the improved financial showing of the four big express companies the Wall Street Journal says:

"There were chiefly two reasons for this improved showing. One, the greater degree of efficiency in conducting their transportation business developed by the several companies and in which Wells Fargo took an early start and lead. Wells Fargo, in 1914, practically preserved its net operating revenue by the reductions in cost it was able to effect without impairment of necessary service. The other reason was the elimination of the United States Express company."

It is not worth while in this connection to stop to consider to what extent the withdrawal of the United States company has contributed to the prosperity of the remaining companies, further possibly than to note that it has not been the chief cause of the financial revival.

But it is worth while to stop to consider the main contributing cause, the improved methods that have been introduced by the express companies and the economies practiced.

It has been a favorite theory so long that privately managed companies could be depended upon to reduce the cost of operation to the minimum and carry efficiency of service to the maximum without aid or stimulus from any source whatever, that this confession of inefficiency and extravagance is bound to carry the suggestion much beyond the bounds of the express business. For if the express companies when they had the field to themselves were neither economical nor efficient, what is likely to be found with regard to the railroads and to all the other public services operating under similar conditions.

When the government proposed and inaugurated the parcel post the express companies made exactly the same claim for themselves the railroads make now. They were being driven to the wall by intolerable competition and unjust rates. But the parcel post was installed, and the government rates were fixed, and after a few years of readjustment the express companies find they were not driven to the wall at all, but that by doing business on business principles they are able to pay their dividends, for the Wall Street Journal publishes a table of earnings showing that for the year ending June 30, "they were able to earn on their total capitalization of \$58,967,400, an equivalent of 2.66 per cent from transportation, as against 0.53 per cent for the year before. And, considering their other income, they earned a return of 7.11 per cent, as compared with 5.23 per cent in 1914."

It possibly would not be fair to say that all other privately owned public service utilities from railroads and telegraphs and telephones down to the smallest town pumping plant had been run with the same loose hand as the express companies in their days of monopoly, but it has proved true that in nearly every instance



PRACTICAL DIPLOMACY

—Los Angeles Tribune.

where the facts have been dug into, railroads and telegraphs, and telephones and all other privately owned public services down to town pumping plants have come up with a bad showing.

But whether any conclusion may be drawn from the experience of the express companies that will serve for guidance in the tangle over railroad rates, telegraph and telephone rates, street railway reorganization, and the like, it is well worth while to get firmly in mind that the express companies have pulled themselves out of threatening bankruptcy by installing an economical and efficient administration of their business.

The public is getting an express service enormously better through express companies and the parcel post, at very much reduced costs, and the express companies have been able to readjust and continue to do business at the old stand.—Des Moines Register.

AN APPALLING CONDITION

Editor Commoner:

Would it be impertinent now when the silver issue of 1896 has been so long settled (?) to rise up and ask a question? I don't really wish to disturb the sweet dreams of those gold standard monometallists who have always been so cocksure of their knowledge and so contemptuously doubtful of other people's views, but there's one thing—one fact—that is bothering me. Fact is stubborn, sometimes. That fact is that gold is fluctuating! Horrors! The world must indeed be upside down! The British pound sterling which our monometallists said would be less likely to fluctuate than the pole star itself, has slumped!

Would it be wicked to call our gold standard friends' attention to it? They surely can't call us "ag'in the gov'ment" as they used to do, for two reasons: First, the government is democratic now; and, second, because they want us to be "ag'in the

gov'ment," for they are against it themselves. They might call us unneutral, but for the fact that good old gold standard marks have suffered the same kind of a slump.

Really, my dear editor, I can not see anything treasonable in calling attention to it now, unless indeed it might possibly detract from our program of preparedness for war. If you think it does that, don't print it, Mr. Editor. If not however, I'd kind of like to see it in print.

J. M. TADLOCK.

A GREAT MORAL FORCE

In every land and every clime there are men and women whose whole lives are devoted to the service of mankind, to the abolishment of poverty and to the ushering in of that glorious day when peace and plenty shall be the common heritage of men. These men and women are working singly and in groups with a common purpose that at once the hope and inspiration of the race—and all have climbed the mountain tops and gaze upon a panorama of a future for humanity that is awe-inspiring in its beauty and which nerves them for the work in hand.

With a clearness of vision, an undaunted strength of purpose, a charity that suffers and endures the jeers and sneers of pigmy men, an unconquerable faith in a loving God, William J. Bryan stands in the forefront of the conflict—the greatest individual moral force in the world.

No matter what place history may assign him in its record of his political activities; his matchless courage, his unflinching loyalty to his own highest ideals, his guiding polestar of righteousness will mark him as the seer and prophet, the foremost citizen of the world of his day and generation, one of the immortals whose names grow ever brighter as coming generations view with impartial eyes their work and achievements.—Boise (Idaho) New Freedom.