

The Reactionaries at Work

Secretary of War Weeks made a speech recently sounding the key note for the reactionaries. Senator Stanley spoke in New York assailing the progressives in both parties. Now comes "the late" Senator New—he has been "the late" ever since Beveridge defeated him although he is not yet officially interred—and announces that the primary must go.

No wonder the reactionaries hate the primary—it is the only piece of party machinery that they are unable to control. They used to keep a dominating boss in each state when they had the convention system. The primary has made it somewhat of a wilderness for the boss and he is looking back to the flesh-pots of Egypt, so to speak. But there will be no turning back. There are parasites which attack the primary system as parasites attack nearly all forms of life. But the faults of the system will be removed. We will not destroy the system in order to get rid of the parasites.

It is fortunate that the plans of the reactionaries include an attack upon the primaries. That, like the reduction in the tax on big incomes, is something that can be seen with the naked eye. Many of the schemes of the reactionaries are developed in the dark and the public finds it is victimized before it knows it. But an attack on the primaries has to be made in the daylight and that means that it will fail. If there is to be another war between the bosses supported by big business and the plain people, let it begin whenever the reactionaries are ready—a few more primaries and all their generals will be disabled.

W. J. BRYAN.

WHITE AND "JUDGE" SEPARATE

Press dispatches carried a statement of the reasons that led William Allen White to resign from the editorship of "Judge." The paper stands for light wines and beer and White is not willing to lend his name and influence to the light wine and beer propaganda. White is right and it is commendable for him to give up an editorial salary rather than be placed in a false position. If all editors would follow their consciences and refuse to write against their convictions or to lend their influence to papers with whose policies they could not agree, the tone of the press would be greatly improved.

The statement made by the owner of "Judge" is quite in line with the attitude of the wets—no wonder White found it difficult to look up to him as a boss. "Judge's" owner says that "a segment of Kansas convictions does not represent the country." That is about as wide a vision as any wet has. He looks at the nation through the foam on a glass of beer and thinks that everybody is wet. "A segment of Kansas convictions"—isn't that intelligence for you? The Amendment was submitted by a vote of TWO-THIRDS of both houses and ratified by FORTY-SIX states out of forty-eight. The last three congresses have been dry by more than two-thirds but the owner of "Judge" sees in it only "a segment of Kansas convictions."

Congratulations, Brother White, that you do not have to associate any longer with such a specimen of humanity.

ROBBERY BY AGREEMENT

The robbery from a distillery of eighty-one thousand dollars worth of liquor by fifty men in daylight would seem to indicate that it was by an understanding between the owner of the whisky and the supposed robbers. The United States ought to take over all the whisky now in bond, paying for it what it was worth on the day that the amendment was ratified (any increase in prices since that time should not be regarded as legitimate since it is due entirely to the possibility of selling it in violation of law). Whatever alcohol or whisky is needed for medicine or in the arts should be supplied by the government and by the government alone.

Several of the strong Republican newspapers have broken over the traces on the altitudinous tariff that the Republican congress is constructing. They say that the President and his congressional aides should remember that the big majorities of 1920 represented reaction from the war and were not mandates to boost tariff duties higher than ever Payne or Aldrich dreamed of.

CLASSIFYING HITCHCOCK

Paying tribute to the personal character and attainments of the opposing candidates for United States senator in Nebraska the Lincoln Journal says that "the state puts forth for the highest office at stake in this election two of its very ablest men, and men of such dignity and character that personalities cannot properly enter into the struggle." But, it adds, Mr. Howell is "an aggressive progressive" while Senator Hitchcock "is a conservative, a public man of the old school."

It is interesting to note that the Journal rests Mr. Howell's claim to "aggressive progressivism" on the ground that "one of the most remarkable public business organizations in the world, the Omaha municipal water, gas and ice services, is the work of his hands." It is perhaps not amiss to recall, in this connection, that the long and hard fight for municipal ownership in Omaha has been successfully prosecuted through the years with the earnest support of many Omaha citizens besides Mr. Howell, including Senator Hitchcock, in person and through his newspaper. That support has been given, despite partisanship and much adverse pressure, out of public-spirited devotion to a principle. Yet in some curious way, as the Journal interprets it, the record establishes Howell as a "progressive" and Hitchcock a "conservative."

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If to be thoughtful, judicious, open-minded and fair-minded, if respect for and devotion to the blood-cemented foundation stones on which the republic rests, is the mark of a conservative, then Senator Hitchcock, in these respects at least, is conservative. If adherence to the fundamental principles of American democracy, harking back for a century and a half to Thomas Jefferson, their first and foremost apostle, distinguishes the "public man of the old school," then it is to that school, rather than to the school of Lodge or Newberry or Berger, that Senator Hitchcock belongs.

Senator Hitchcock is the kind of conservative of the old school who ardently supported Bryan when clamorous and indignant creditors demanded that he support McKinley or imperil his business life and solvency. He is the kind of conservative of the old school who gave his support, at the beginning of the fight against corporation rule in Nebraska, to maximum freight rate laws, to a 2-cent passenger law, to the anti-pass law, to laws regulating and curbing telephone and express and stock yards and grain combinations—to the whole long series of reforms that put Nebraska near the head of the list of enlightened states.

He is the kind of conservative of the old school who supported the direct primary, the popular election of senators, the graduated income tax, the federal land bank system, the child labor law, the league of nations and other measures and ideals adherence to which has by common sense marked other men as progressive.

He is the kind of conservative of the old school who dared differ with his party and its administration when he believed it was mistaken in the framing of the federal reserve act, and from his place as a Democratic leader in the senate to demand a reorganization of the war department during the world war when he believed it was extravagant and inefficient.

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He is the kind of conservative of the old school who refused to trade his birthright for a mess of pottage when the Nebraska legislature unanimously demanded that he support the gold-brick "emergency tariff" law.

He is the kind of conservative of the old school who stands today in the Senate as an unyielding opponent of the profiteer's tariff and ship subsidy program of the present administration, just as he opposed its reduction of the surtaxes and its repeal of the excess profits law.

He is the kind of conservative of the old school who, with his Bank of Nations bill, has advanced the only proposal of scope, vision and bigness that has emerged since the war for the restoration of our once profitable trade with Europe.

The Lincoln Journal is an adept at the manipulation of words when it deals with a political opponent. It is particularly interesting to watch its deft legerdemain when its sets out to do tricks with Senator Hitchcock.—Omaha World-Herald.

Retailers are talking again about a buyers' strike. They say that the people have again slowed up in their buying. This, it appears on investigation, followed the announcement of an advance in prices. What do the retailers expect, that two and two will make five?

Time to Act

How long will the President wait before bringing the railroad strike to an end? Every day increases the tension and makes the situation more difficult to deal with. A Washington dispatch says that the railroad heads are determined to break up the unions—there is evidence of this fact in the attempt to organize a separate union for each company. The dispatch also suggests that the coal operators share in this purpose. To this information is added a statement that some of the President's friends think he should keep his hands off and allow the railroads and their men to fight it out.

But the government cannot keep its hands off and the railroad heads have no thought of fighting it out alone. They count on the army, and the question now is whether the government will use the army of the United States to enforce the private opinions of railroad magnates. Upon this subject there will be a wide difference of opinion. Those whose sympathies are with big business will demand this—that is why they want a big army. What does the general public think? The patrons of the railroads want traffic resumed and they want the work done by experienced men. The time has come for the President to invoke the aid of Congress for authority to end the strike by the operation of such roads as refuse to perform their duty to the public. The government can use the army for its own purposes, but it cannot rightfully use the army merely to please one side of a labor dispute. It does not use the army to force the railroads to take the men back on the terms fixed by the men; it should not use the army to enable the railroads to carry out the personal views of railroad heads regardless of the public welfare. If the President will use a people's government for the people's welfare and inform the railroad magnates of his determination to ask Congress for authority to operate the railroads until the railroad managers awaken to a sense of their obligation to the public, the strike will end very quickly and business can resume. It is time to act.

W. J. BRYAN.

AIDING THE PROFITEERS

On another page will be found a press dispatch suggesting the return to profiteers of fines collected from them before the law was declared unconstitutional. It would seem that with the present scarcity of money in the treasury the profiteers might be left to prosecute their claims against the government. Possibly some of them are ashamed to expose themselves by asking a return of the money they were compelled to pay. They were convicted on the facts and the facts show them to be guilty of extorting money from the public. Whether legally guilty or not, they were morally guilty of a crime against the nation and there is no reason why the government should make an effort to return the money collected. Let them sue if they are not ashamed to come into the limelight again.

LIQUOR NOT NECESSARY

On a British ship going to Panama about twelve years ago, the captain told me that during the eighteen years that he had been captain of that ship he had changed the policy in regard to liquor. They formerly furnished grog to the sailors three times a day but they afterwards abandoned this custom and fined any one who brought liquor aboard. He said it had greatly improved the crew. He also told me of several ships being wrecked in the neighborhood of Panama by captains under the influence of liquor. He said that during the eighteen years above mentioned the sale of liquor to cabin passengers had decreased seventy-five per cent. The last fact would seem to indicate that liquor is not as necessary as the members of the Shipping Board seem to think.

W. J. BRYAN.

On comparison it has been found that so much of Mr. Bryan's Sunday School Convention address at Kansas City has been covered in substance in the Sunday School lessons, and in the Radio Speech on "ALL," that it will not be necessary to publish the abstract of it, as mentioned in the July Commoner.

Speaking of the inability of congress to get anywhere, it will be recalled that while the Genoa conference was unable to accomplish anything, it adjourned when it discovered its impotency.