

The Independent.

VOL. XIV.

LINCOLN, NEB., NOV. 27, 1902.

No. 27.

THAT POLITICAL CHAOS

What is to be Done Now?—Separation in the Democratic Party Must Come Which Side Shall Have the Name?

The following is part of a personal letter to the editor of The Independent, written by one of the most distinguished and unselfish reformers in the state of Indiana. It is of such general interest at this time, for tens of thousands of men seem to be all thinking along the same lines, that the editor takes the liberty to print it. There seems to be a kind of "telepathy" among the men who fight plutocracy, for it often happens that the same idea strikes them in all the states of the union at the same time. This letter is along the lines of many others that have been received during the last week or two, and the editor has been doing some hard thinking on the subject himself. The question is: What shall we do now? The extract is as follows:

"But, Friend Tibbles, what are we to do in politics? The mental confusion among the mass of voters, who made up the great army that followed the standard-bearer of the democratic party in 1896 and in 1900, has produced, as shown by the late election, results that you well call "political chaos." Ideas and motives have been terribly mixed. Some, saturated with disgust, have remained away from the polls—disgusted with so-called leadership such as we have had in Indiana, and not caring to stultify themselves by voting the republican ticket, while others voted the prohibition or socialist tickets. Others, angered by the manifest duplicity and unmistakable treachery of their own party committeemen, concluded that the best way to get rid of such influences in their own party was to close their eyes to principle and political policy, and vote in a way to destroy the organization. Some, not believing that either organization cared anything about principle or political policy, have mixed up their tickets in trying to select from both the men believed to be best fitted and most honest.

"Under such circumstances, nothing could be reasonably predicted except what has occurred. Let the republicans and the reorganizers figure out as much comfort as they please, the encouraging fact remains that the reorganizers, while able to make confusion, cannot draw the rank and file after them. The two million or more voters outside the democratic party, who supported Mr. Bryan more because of the confidence they had in him than in the party he represented, cannot be induced in another national campaign to assist the democratic party, unless it shall manifest enough vitality and courage to rid itself of not only Cleveland and Hill, but of every man who holds onto the party standard with one hand and to plutocratic influences with the other.

"There were too many men on the rostrum in 1900 who were overly anxious, while supporting Mr. Bryan, to have every audience they faced understand that they were not in accord with Mr. Bryan on the money question, and who never lost an opportunity, in season or out, to inform an audience of that fact.

"So important and so fundamental is the financial question, that it is a matter of doubt about any man being right on any political question who is not right on that question. The man who, by reason of personal interests, is deceiving himself or trying to deceive others, or the man who thinks he is opposed to trusts, etc., and yet sees nothing wrong in the financial combinations, cannot be depended upon when the pinch comes, no difference who he may be, or how earnest and energetic he may be in his attempts to bring about some reforms.

"When I say this, I believe that I am expressing the well-settled belief of a very large per cent of the democratic masses and almost all of those outside of that party, who supported Mr. Bryan in two campaigns.

"The silver republican organization has served its purpose in two campaigns and will not appear again, but your organization ought to be kept up, as I have no doubt it will be, until something arises that may make it

necessary or possible to bring into existence an organization that will rally all those, who are believers in the principles of the Kansas City platform, if it shall be, that the people's party cannot do it.

"This election has demonstrated, what ought to have been clear from the first, that the two elements in the democratic party cannot operate together. It is a house divided against itself. That there must, in the end, be a separation seems no clearer to me now than it did before the Kansas City convention. Nothing holds them together now but the name. There would be some advantage if the Bryan element could keep the name, but there would also be some disadvantages. There is a growing conviction that the disadvantages far outweigh all possible advantage. Just so long as the old name remains, the political barnacles will attach themselves to it, and the only way to get rid of them seems to be to let them and the name go together. If this separation must come—as I believe it must—the sooner it comes the better it will be for the country.

"It can be said of the people's party—greatly to its credit—that it has cared more about principles and results than about party name. Judging by the past, I believe that it can be relied upon to do almost anything that will advance its cause, and that will give reasonable hope of securing the results it has desired.

"Some of us at least are, therefore, looking to your party to take such action as the situation demands as early as possible. It is useless for us to think about another national campaign under the leadership of the democratic party. The traitors cannot be discovered and driven out of it. Enough will remain to betray it and bring defeat. Thousands of voters are so firmly fixed in this belief that they will not make a move to prevent the reorganization element from taking possession of the organization. Many of them hope that this will occur, believing that when it does occur the separation will take place, and that all true believers in the Kansas City declarations will gladly come out of it."

Municipal Ownership

The Massachusetts law of 1893, providing that the supreme court appoint a commission of three to value properties to be taken by the city for public purposes, seems to have been drawn on the wrong principle. The city of Holyoke determined four years ago to take over the plant of the water power company. After four years of struggle in the courts at a cost of \$250,000, the commission has reported that the city should pay \$708,790 for the property. The Outlook suggests that a more practical plan would be for the law to give the city power to take the property at once—as in the case of streets—and settle the question of compensation afterwards.

Whoa There, Hayseed

When the farmers' alliance demanded government loans at 2 per cent interest on warehouse receipts for wheat and other non-perishable products, the property element laughed them to scorn. That would interfere with the bankers' profits and dead cinch. But when the bankers want money the secretary of the treasury—without any law—loans them thirty millions on their chattel paper! The farmers asked only 65 per cent of the value of their grain, but the bankers ask and get 100 per cent of the face value of their chattel notes! The bankers are in politics—controlling both old parties. The farmers, well they are mostly controlled by the bankers by voting the tickets that the bankers vote and control. The government has gone into not only the banking, but the brokerage business—but not for the people, but for the especial benefit of the bankers. Whoa there, hayseed!—J. A. Wayland, in Appeal to Reason.

Readers of The Independent should examine the advertisements in its columns. It will pay you to read them and take advantage of the bargains offered. Always mention The Independent.

SMASH THE TRUSTS

Will Roosevelt do It, Asks Mr. De Hart—How the Steel Trust Kills off Competitors

Editor Independent: I quote a press dispatch:

"Cleveland, Nov. 7.—The reduction in the price of steel tubes, amounting to about \$5 a ton, which went into effect within the past week, is said by steel men to mark the opening of an aggressive warfare by the steel trust against the independent manufacturers of tube steel.

"The trust has sought to buy up these outside mills, but the owners would not sell. Now it is said to be the purpose to force them out of business by cutting the price so low they cannot meet it. When their extermination has been accomplished it is understood the trust will go ahead with the construction of the two big tube plants it is to build at Duquesne, Pa., and Lorain, O."

Theodore Roosevelt should make a note of the above. I take it from the New York Times of November 8, four days after election. Six months ago the Times, apparently, was ignorant of trusts, but now it can speak of a "steel trust," as if there were no doubt of its existence and that this was one of many others.

If it is true, as charged, that the United States Steel combination is really reducing the price of its steel tubes for the purpose of forcing the "independent manufacturers of tube steel" out of existence, by cutting the price so low that they cannot meet it, then it is time for the president to take notice of the fact and apply the Sherman anti-trust law.

A monopoly shows its teeth in two ways: First, by cutting prices so low that a competitor cannot meet them; second, by elevating prices against consumers. In the one case, the object is to kill off competition and thereby increase the power of a monopoly. In the other case, the object is to make money by charging exorbitant prices to the consumers.

Whenever the president sees, or ought to see, that prices are lowered unreasonably, that is, below the cost of production, then he sees, or ought to see, the evidence of a monopoly; and he ought to apply the Sherman law. Again, if he sees that prices are raised unreasonably, that is, far above the cost of production, then he can see the evidence again of a monopoly. In the latter case, the monster is at war with the general public of consumers; while, in the former case, the trust is destroying a competitor, in order to get ready to make war upon the general public again.

It is as much the duty of the president to prevent a trust from destroying a competitor as it is to prevent it from eating out the substance of the people by charging exorbitant prices. If the president will act when prices are reduced unreasonably, he will not have to act when prices are raised unreasonably against the public, because prices will never be raised against consumers if the trust is punished promptly for lowering them against competitors.

The Sherman law reads: "Sec. 2. Every person who shall monopolize, or attempt to monopolize, or combine or conspire with any other person or persons, to monopolize any part of the trade or commerce among the several states, or with foreign nations, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, shall be punished by fine not exceeding \$5,000, or by imprisonment not exceeding one year, or by both said punishments, in the discretion of the court."

What is better evidence of an "attempt" to monopolize than the lowering of the price of a commodity unreasonably against competitors? Take the great billion dollar steel trust, for instance. If we find it reducing the price of steel tubes \$5 a ton, what more evidence do we want that it is done for the purpose of destroying a competitor, especially when independent manufacturers of tube steel are willing to come forward and swear that they can not be produced at so low a price and pay reasonable wages and reasonable dividends on the capital invested? In the case of the "independent manufacturers of tube steel" it appears that the

trust wanted to buy them out, and when they refused to sell, the trust lowered the price \$5 a ton. This evidence, in connection with the fact that as soon as the "independents" were crushed, the trust would have a complete monopoly, ought to be enough to cause the president to move.

But, suppose this evidence is not sufficient to cause a grand jury to indict, or, if sufficient to cause a grand jury to indict, it is not sufficient to move a petit jury to convict, it is certainly sufficient to cause the president to commence a civil suit in equity for the purpose of putting the defendants under oath and of getting more evidence. The fourth section of the law which gives the circuit courts of the United States jurisdiction for the purpose of "preventing and restraining violations of this act," and which authorizes the president to order the attorney general to commence such suits, can be used for getting additional or sufficient evidence for an indictment by grand jury and conviction by petit jury. It is as much the duty of the president to hunt for evidence by means of a suit in equity as it is to use the evidence for trial and conviction in the ordinary criminal procedure by a grand and petit jury. And this evidence cannot only be used by the president in a criminal proceeding, but for the purpose of enjoining and restraining the parties from going further with their monopolistic business. The right to commence a suit for the purpose of more evidence and an injunction, carries with it, incidentally, the right to have a temporary and, perhaps, a permanent receiver appointed. We have plenty of precedents for injunctions against labor unions, and it is high time to have precedents for injunctions against such combinations as the steel trust, if it proposes to monopolize the whole steel business of the country and to do it by putting up and putting down prices.

There is not much disposition, here, to interfere with the great aggregations of capital, merely because they are great aggregations, but when they attempt to break down small concerns by lowering prices, or to fleece the public by raising prices inordinately, then we all wake up, and the newspapers are obliged to follow suit or lose their circulation. This is so, especially when prices are raised, oppressively against consumers. The meat combine was an illustration of this. We could stand idly by and see the business of our little butchers here in the east destroyed by the competition of the great butchers of the west, but when it came to paying two prices for every pound of meat, then we all found out that a meat monopoly is a crime and that it can be punished as such—not only by the laws of the several states, but by the laws of the United States as well.

The Washington special correspondent of the New York World wrote November 9 as follows:

"President Roosevelt has cast Wall street overboard, hook, line and sinker. It is stated on good authority that he has decided to ignore the big financial interests, typified by J. P. Morgan & Co., and similar organizations, and to advocate such policies as will benefit the people and enhance his popularity with the masses.

"His plans are to be accomplished without any reduction of the present tariff. When tariff revision comes it is to be placed on a strictly scientific basis and handled by a tariff commission.

"My aim," the president said last week to a representative of one of the biggest houses in Wall street, "will be to benefit the people without disturbing commercial conditions."

"To that end radical laws to prevent railroad combinations and against organizations formed to control food, fuel and clothing products will be recommended to congress by the president. Every effort will be made to have laws embodying the president's recommendations passed at the coming session.

"In addition the president will ask Attorney General Knox to institute additional suits to prevent gigantic combinations of railroad lines. The attorney general is now considering a number of combinations with a view of bringing legal action against them.

"The close advisers of the president