

HOW MANY PARTIES

Mr. De Hart, in one of his articles some weeks ago, said that "there cannot be but two great political parties in a country at a time" and assumed that the question is settled. Now, why only two? After all the smoke is cleared away, we find that men are obliged to exercise their sovereign powers through the medium of a political party. With what one shall they affiliate? Plainly the one which to them seems most likely to protect them in "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

But the pursuit of happiness, resent the statement as we may, cannot be divorced from the pursuit of things which man needs or wants—in short, the accumulation of property. Hence, under all, political parties must have an economic foundation. The fact that in the past only two great parties have existed, is proof only that there were two great divisions of property, each struggling for political dominion. For convenience of expression these may be termed agricultural and manufacturing. The war between the two great divisions of property still continues, although a very one-sided contest because the democratic party, as it now exists, has failed to show that it can be depended upon to represent the agriculturists—and the republican never pretends to, except at election time.

With the growth of socialism, however, a new factor enters, and the coming struggle, as The Independent views it, will be a three-cornered fight, with the profit-takers represented by the republican party (manufacturing); the rent-takers represented by the democratic party, or some other built upon its foundation (agriculture); and the wage takers represented by the socialist party.

Simply because men have heretofore aligned themselves with one or the other of two great parties, is not proof that they will always do so. Men are learning more about matters political every day, becoming "class conscious" as the socialists say. The big capitalists have never been anything else. But the farmers are learning a few lessons themselves, and while they may agree with Mr. De Hart's conclusions as to the relative merits of tariff tweedledee and tweedledum, not many of them, at least here in the west, when they get at the root of the matter, will be willing to give their life-long political antagonist, the manufacturer, a leaf in order that he may give them a crumb in return.

There is nothing of sectional or class hatred in this. Adam Smith contended that the individual in an orderly pursuit of his own interest thereby promoted the good of all. So collections of individuals, known as a political party, will promote the good of all by pursuing, in an orderly, honest way, their collective interest. There is no reason why an agricultural party should waste any tears over the manufacturer—he has shown remarkable ability in taking care of himself.

Along this line Mark Foster touched the keynote last week ("The Point of Attack," p. 13) when he said:

"It is true, though, as Mr. De Hart says, that protection is the settled policy of this country and for us to fight against it is a waste of effort. What we should do is to ignore the tariff, and continue to fight for public railroads, scientific money, and free land.

"At the same time we should point out that while all conservatives admit business interests need protection, and it must be had through legislation, tariff protection does not apply to workingmen and farmers, and these classes must therefore have protection by other means."

A protective tariff is essentially favorable to the manufacturing interests, but, with some trifling exceptions, it is not possible to benefit the agricultural interests by such a measure. It is true that incidentally some benefits may accrue to stock growers by a tariff on cattle, to sugar beet growers by a tariff on sugar, and so on; but much of this advantage is transferred to the manufacturer's pockets by means of rebates on exports, like, for example, the tariff on hales. Agricultural interests, as Mr. Foster points out, must "have protection by other means" than a tariff. This they can secure through the populist demands for reform in "money, land and transportation," which grow out of the necessities of the agricultural interests and which, if enacted into law, would benefit agriculturists more than any other class.

Let the manufacturers have their protective tariff, if it is necessary for their welfare; but let them secure it by their own voting strength. Their "protection" against the invasions of

pauper-made foreign goods (made in lands where the "enlightened" gold standard prevails) must not be used as a means of domestic robbery—and government railroads and government money will go a long way towards preventing this evil. At any rate, inasmuch as the manufacturing element looks after its interests 365 days in every year, it is time that the agricultural element did a little more looking after its own interests. "Live and let live" is a very good motto—but so is "charity begins at home."

STATE TAXES 1904

The corporation republican legislature of 1903, having made total appropriations of \$3,740,280.70 to be expended during the biennium which will end March 31, 1905, (which must be paid out of the state tax levies of 1903 and 1904), and having enacted a new revenue law in order to permit the big corporations to escape paying their fair share of the taxes, has presented a situation which is anything but encouraging to the "redeemers." Already the republican organs are busying themselves with apologies.

The appropriations of 1903 aggregate nearly a million and a half greater than the appropriations made by the populist legislature of 1897, and it stands to reason that if this immense sum is to be met without an enormous increase in the state's floating debt, state taxes must be increased very materially. The state levy for 1903 averages something like 30 per cent higher than that of 1903, and The Independent cannot see how the levy of 1904 can be much less than double the amount levied in 1902. Here are the reasons:

Section 134 of the new revenue law, which becomes effective this year, provides that—

"The rate of the general state tax shall be sufficient to realize the amount necessary to meet appropriations made by the legislature for the year in which the tax is levied, and an additional sum not exceeding 20 per cent of the amount of any existing state indebtedness, and not exceeding in all 5 mills on the dollar valuation."

Now, without making an exhaustive examination of the appropriations made last year, The Independent figures that about \$817,000 is against funds other than the general fund, leaving the net general fund appropriations about \$2,923,000 for the two years, to be covered by the tax levies of 1903 and 1904.

Last year the state board made a general fund levy of \$1,135,721.69, which would leave, in round numbers, \$1,787,000 to be levied this year for the general fund simply to cover the appropriations, and without considering the 20 per cent of "any existing state indebtedness."

We know that the "existing state indebtedness" on November 30, 1903, aggregated the sum of \$2,263,177.21, and it is reasonable to suppose that it will not be any smaller by the time the levy of 1904 is made. Twenty per cent of that would mean an addition of \$452,000, making the total general fund levy \$2,239,000, without considering the levies for state university and temporary school fund.

It is reasonable to suppose that the levies for temporary school and state university will be about the same as last year—say, \$387,000. Hence, the possible—and probable—tax levy for the year 1904 will look something like this:

For general fund.....\$2,239,000
For other funds..... 387,000

Total\$2,626,000

This will mean that state taxes this year will be 72 per cent higher than in 1902, or nearly two and a half times as great as in 1902, or more than twice as much as under the biggest levy ever made by the populists.

"Vote 'er straight."

The Independent believes Chancellor Andrews misjudged the temper of Nebraska people when he solicited Rockefeller's contributions. One can readily understand the Chancellor's feelings in seeing the University grow under his magnificent administration, and how he might swallow his pride and ask for alms to secure what he believed to be a much needed building. But those Nebraskans who have endured the grasshoppers, drouths and panics did it by living in the sod house until they could afford to build a better one; while their neighbors who wanted to grow rapidly, and borrowed money to build fine houses, have long since gone through the courts of mortgage foreclosure and are on the frontier trying to begin over again. Hence, there is no enthusiasm over the project to build up the University faster than the state itself improves, especially when the

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funds to be used are quite generally regarded as "blood money."

Notes From New York

The number of cattle that can be put in a car is limited by law in New York, but the number of human beings is not so limited. In Europe the same consideration for human beings is demanded of the corporations for human beings as for cattle. The corporations own the government here, but over there the government owns the corporations.

There were 441 new national banks created last year, every one of which will be a little center of activity to keep the party in power that grants special privileges to the few. Each one of these can take their capital, put it in bonds and then take the bonds down to Washington and get all the money they have invested back and get interest on the bonds also. That is a nice little privilege. Another item in the comptroller's report shows that while the banks increased their capital only \$48,180,000 their loans increased \$201,000,000. So the banks not only got double interest on their capital, but they loaned and got interest on nearly five times as much money as they put into the business. The banker winks his left eye and the mullet heads continue to "vote 'er straight."

The innate villainy of the tariff grafters never had a better demonstration than the recent bill introduced by Senator Frye compelling all traffic between the Philippines and the United States to be carried in American ships. If that law is passed, there would be an immediate rise in freight and the farmers of America would have an additional bill to pay for binding twine in addition to the extravagant charges now made by the trust.

The present plan of the ship subsidy schemers is to get congress to aid speculators to buy foreign built ships and tax the people to run them. That some such scheme as that will be put through the first congress after the next presidential election no well posted man about New York doubts.

The New York papers are now saying that if the Panama canal is not as dead as Julius Caesar it is certainly as dead as Numa Pompilius after Cassius tried his dagger on him. The

Independent remarked some years ago that an isthmian canal would never be built while the trans-continental railroads owned so many United States senators.

The thing that has occupied the most space in the New York dailies during the last week, after the discussion of a bolt from the democratic party, has been Christian science. Several long editorials have appeared on the subject in papers that have generally been satisfied with a quip, a sarcasm or an unfriendly jibe. They all now say that that cult has passed the stage of ridicule and is something that must be reckoned with as a prominent part of the religious movement of the day. The New York Sun, which has heretofore treated the movement only with sarcasm, had columns of fairly commendatory matter about the great million dollar First Church of Christian science at 96th street, of which I wrote something the other day. The Sun says: "Their number is constantly growing and, apparently, with rapidity. Its temples of worship, built by its devotees, are many and frequently imposing. In one way and another it has affected religious thought far beyond the limits of the Christian science cult specifically." Being in the neighborhood of this building, which commands the highest plaudits of experts in architecture, I called upon the superintendent. The readers of The Independent will be interested in a description of how a million dollar church is run. This church is open every day in the year. The permanent, paid employes, consisting of engineers, electricians, the men who look after the great organ and those engaged in keeping everything spotlessly clean, number twelve. Besides these there is a large corps of volunteers on duty. The reading room is an elegantly furnished parlor and there are always a number of well dressed and cultured ladies present to welcome every caller and make him feel instantly at home. They "entertain" as the ladies do in their own homes along Fifth avenue and with just as much elegance and grace. The echo organ and chimes were played while I was in the church and it was the sweetest and most wonderful musical effect I ever heard, either in this country or Europe. The church is very high and what in other churches is a vaulted useless space, has been cut off with a medium high ceiling, supported by beautiful arches and the