

EDUCATIONAL SERIES

LEST WE FORGET

Commoner readers will doubtless be interested in the following reproductions of articles that appeared in The Commoner during the presidential campaign of 1908:

WHO WILL BE THE VICTIM?

It is plain that Candidate Taft has framed up a great bunko game for somebody. Who is to be the victim? Will it be Theodore Roosevelt, or will it be the system?

Mr. Roosevelt selected Mr. Taft as the man to further his policies as president. He directed the work of securing delegates and packing the national convention for him. He will naturally expect Mr. Taft to stand on his policies if elected.

The policies of Mr. Roosevelt are thoroughly hated by the system, the chief members of which are Mr. Harriman, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Rogers. They want those policies put down just as soon as they can be. They are rejoicing because Mr. Roosevelt is to retire from office on the fourth of next March.

Yet these same men of the system declare that the nomination of Mr. Taft for president is perfectly satisfactory to them, and that so far as they are concerned a better choice could not have been made.

Why does the system want Taft? Has he given the word that the system will be immune from punishment for misdeeds if he wins the election? It would seem that the system would want such an assurance before putting its O. K. on a candidate, and opening its strong box besides to assist him in his campaign.

If Mr. Taft is going to be for Mr. Roosevelt he is going to be against the system. If he is going to be for the system he is going to be against Mr. Roosevelt.

Someone is going to be bunkoed. Who is it to be?—Buffalo (N. Y.) Times.

SOMEBODY WILL BE FOOLED

As the republicans frame the situation somebody is to be fooled mightily. Who is it likeliest to be, Rockefeller and company, who will provide the sinews of war, or the masses of the people, who are expected to provide the votes? That is the sum of it, whichever way we take it, or consider it.

We are promised a change of policies. Of which policies—the policies of the republican president, or the policies of the republican congress? The republican party can not be true to the one without repudiating the other. It can not at one and the same time keep step with Roosevelt, the radical, and Cannon, the standpatter; with tariff reform and the gospel of protection; with the trusts of the east and the farmers of the west; with the people and the system. In one word, republicanism for all its arts and resources can not serve both God and Mammon.

When the republican congress refused to enact a law of publicity, under whose operation blackmail could no longer be levied upon any interest by the managers of either organization, it proclaimed the purpose of the republicans to lay tribute upon the corporations and to fry the fat out of the manufacturers, again to sell the foreign embassies to the millionaire and promises of no real interference to the trust magnates, as a return for the means of corrupting the ballot box and buying the election.—Louisville, Courier-Journal.

BOGUS REVISION

Interview in New York Sun, November 14, 1905, with Representative Babcock, of Wisconsin:

"What would revision by the coming congress, through the committees of house and senate, as now constituted, amount to? Those committees are dominated by men who favor the high protection idea, Chairman Payne and Representative Dalzell and Grosvenor would head the republican subcommittee to draw the bill, and none of them would support such a measure, as the republican friends of revision want."

The men who control legislation in 1908, as Mr. Babcock says, controlled in 1905.—From The Commoner of October 16, 1908.

THE INCOME TAX

In its issue of July 14, the New York World prints an editorial entitled, "Abandoning the Income Tax." The World editorial follows: "The World can understand the silence of the republican platform in regard to an income tax. The republican party represents the plutocratic elements opposed to such a tax. The men who would contribute most to the support of government under such a system of taxation are republicans. Most of the men who own franchises, who have special privileges and constitute the real capitalist class are republicans. Men like Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Harriman, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Schiff are naturally against an income tax; and the republican platform, with fine disregard of all Mr. Roosevelt's shrieks about swollen fortunes, expresses by its silence their disapprobation of such a system of raising revenue. But why should the democratic party have thrown it over? Mr. Bryan himself voted for an income tax while a member of congress. He always professed to believe that a law could be drawn which the supreme court would sustain, just as it twice sustained previous acts providing for an income tax. To wait for a constitutional amendment is to wait for years, perhaps for a generation. A tax on the hundreds of millions of annual income of the wealthy would go far toward relieving the burden of taxation now borne by people with small incomes or almost no incomes at all. There is no more just or equitable way of raising public revenue. The democratic party ought to have taken a strong

position on this question. What excuse can it make for surrender?"

One of the planks in the democratic platform is as follows:

"We favor an income tax as part of our revenue system, and we urge the submission of a constitutional amendment specifically authorizing congress to levy and collect tax upon individual and corporate incomes, to the end that wealth may bear its proportionate share of the burdens of the federal government."

When, in 1896, the democratic platform favored income tax legislation without waiting for an amendment it was charged that the party intended to pack the court. Now when an amendment is asked for, the World calls it an abandonment of the income tax. It is hard to please some people.—From The Commoner, July 24, 1908.

NOT AFRAID OF THE "BITE"

"The speech may sound somewhat unfavorable from the railroad point of view, but Wall Street believes that Secretary Taft's public bark does not necessarily portend a serious bite later on."—From the Stock Market Report printed in the New York Journal of Commerce (Rep.) Issue of July 28, 1908, page 3.

"DELIVERING THE GOODS"

The Fort Worth (Texas) Record of September 6, 1908, printed the following editorial:

"Scattered over the editorial page of the New York Herald the following line in italics appears several times: 'Mr. Bryan promises us tariff reform. But can he deliver the goods with a republican house of representatives and a republican senate?'"

"The Herald is openly fighting Mr. Bryan, but the intended attack upon him in this query is pretty much of a boomerang. Its logical answer makes more for Mr. Bryan than against him. The republican party is pledged to tariff revision, yet the Herald asks, Can Bryan bring tariff revision with the handicap of a republican senate and house? Does that mean that a body of republican lawmakers means that there shall be no tariff revision? Does it mean that the republican promise for tariff revision is meaningless? Very evidently the Herald so believes. Nor is the Herald alone in that belief.

"And if Mr. Bryan, democrat, can not deliver the goods of tariff revision in spite of a republican congress, how will Mr. Taft be able to accomplish the feat? The Herald's argument is so loose and vulnerable as to be unworthy any paper which aspires to the position in politics and journalism which the Herald assumes to fill.

"But the answer to the question is that in the gathering together of the body of men who will make the next congress there has been in many cases a sacrifice of party affiliations for the naming of the better man. Also, the men who will form the next congress are in many cases more patriotic than partisan. There are republicans who will stand with the democrats for tariff revision in spite of all powers against it, because tariff revision is a matter greater than party at this time. It is going to be a pretty difficult job if Mr. Bryan is elected to prevent tariff revision."

THE REPUBLICAN TARIFF PLANK

In its issue of September 14, 1908, the Portland Oregonian, a republican paper, attributed to Mr. Bryan the following statement:

"In all tariff legislation the true principle is best maintained by the imposition of such duties as will equal the difference between the cost of production at home and abroad, together with reasonable profit to American industries."

In its issue of October 2, 1908, the Omaha Bee (republican) credited Mr. Bryan with the same statement.

As a matter of fact, the paragraph attributed to Mr. Bryan was taken really from the republican national platform.

The Oregonian and the Bee both pointed out as generally suspected then and very apparent now that this statement was merely a "catch-all" it would be interpreted to suit standpatters or revisionists.

FAIR WARNING

Editorial in The Commoner, June 26, 1908, a few days after the republican national convention: "The republican platform deals with the tariff question in a way that closes the door of hope to the tariff reformer. It authorizes 'a revision of the tariff by a special session of congress to be held immediately following the inauguration of the next president.' Revision does not necessarily mean reduction. In fact, Secretary Taft has himself said that he thought some of the schedules were too high and others too low. There is nothing in the republican platform to give any assurance that the average tariff will not be higher after revision than before. An attempt is made to lay down the principle upon which the revision will be conducted, but the principle is not a new one, it is merely a re-statement of the principle upon which the present high duties were established. When has the republican party asked for more than 'the difference between the cost of production at home and abroad?' That is all that it has asked for for ten or fifteen years, and yet while it only asked for that it has built up prohibitory duties. The new platform not only asks for a tariff sufficient to recover the difference in cost of production at home and abroad, but it also asks for 'a reasonable profit to American industries.' If, on the pretense that they were giving us a tariff only sufficient to cover the difference in cost of production, the republicans make it high enough to cover the entire cost of labor twice over, how much more will they add to satisfy this new demand for 'reasonable profit to American industries?' The trouble is that they start out with

the proposition that we must have a protective tariff and then they ask the manufacturers how much they need and, as the manufacturers accompany the answer with a campaign contribution, the ordinary taxpayer gets little consideration. The government has been made a private asset by the protected interests and they have capitalized their ability to control the law making power. The fat has been fried out of the beneficiaries of the high tariff and the beneficiaries have then been given a chance to recoup themselves out of the pockets of the people. Public opinion has been corrupted by the studious circulation of the idea that the taxing power can be farmed out to a comparatively small fraction of the population and the rest of the population must pay constant tribute to the few.

The platform as written is indubitable proof that the republican party does not expect to give the country any real reform. The platform is, in fact, a contract, signed and sealed, between the republican party and the exploiting interests, guaranteeing that nothing shall be done to free the people from graft and extortion; it is an admission that the money to carry on the campaign is to be drawn from the "system" and that means that the "system" will be in control after the election. The "system" is run on business principles and when it puts up its money to carry an election, it is sure to be quite careful about the security taken.

WHEN WILL THEY HAVE ENOUGH?

The Chicago Tribune, now an ardent supporter of Taft and Sherman, printed in its issue of February 15, 1900, an editorial that will be interesting at this time. This editorial was entitled "When Will They Get Enough?" The Tribune pointed out that in the preceding year the Carnegie company made \$20,000,000 and said: "And yet Mr. Carnegie is not satisfied." The Tribune directed attention to the fact that the Standard Oil company had at the time this editorial was written just declared a quarterly dividend of \$20,000,000, "and yet," said the Tribune, "its directors are not satisfied. They wish congress to pay subsidies to the ocean-going vessels in whose earnings they have a share." The Tribune added:

"If there are any other American corporations whose profits were \$20,000,000 last year or promise to be \$80,000,000 this year, it may be taken for granted that the men at the head of them are no more satisfied than the Carnegies and the Rockefellers and are no more scrupulous as to the methods of adding to their possessions. There seems to be no limit to the rapacity of corporations which have been built up at the expense of the public by excessive tariff protection, by illegal railroad discriminations, or official favoritism. The men who rule these corporations may not want the earth, but they certainly want the United States and the abundance thereof. They and their allies on land and sea are working at the entire subjugation of the government, so that they may add more millions to their present annual revenues of \$20,000,000 in the case of the Carnegie company and \$80,000,000 in the case of the Standard Oil. They try to put their creatures in all official places which touch their interests at any point. They demand subsidies for their ships. They insist that the money of the government be deposited in banks in which they are heavily interested, so they may be able to control the stock markets and to lend to the taxpayers the money which the latter have contributed to defray government expenses. Their demands are usually complied with. There are three things that are never satisfied; yes, four things say not 'it is enough.' That may have been the case in the Hebrew days. Today they are the Standard Oil company, the Carnegie company, the sugar trust, the International Navigation company, the National City Bank and other colossal corporations which overshadow the government itself and are never satisfied. When will they have enough?"

"When will they have enough?" That is a curious question to be asked by an editor who must certainly understand that so long as human selfishness prevails men who are given the opportunity to prey upon the people will exercise their privilege to the limit.

This particular Tribune editorial was written in 1900. Since then the trust system has grown stronger and stronger. It has piled burden after burden upon the consumer and no serious effort has been made to protect the people.

These men will never have enough if their own wishes are considered. They have already had more than they are entitled to and the people have carried more burdens than they should carry. The people need protection and they need an administration that may be depended upon to provide that protection.

What a striking picture is drawn by the Chicago Tribune!

That paper admits that "there seems to be no limits to the rapacity of corporations which have been built up at the expense of the public by excessive tariff protection, by illegal railroad discriminations or official favoritism." And yet, we find the Tribune today giving support to a party that boasts of its inclination toward "excessive protection," a party that derives its campaign funds from these greedy and grasping corporations. This republican paper says that these great concerns are "working at the entire subjugation of the government so that they may add more millions to their present annual revenues of \$20,000,000 in the case of the Carnegie company and \$80,000,000 in the case of the Standard Oil company." And yet we find the Tribune working shoulder to shoulder with these men who it has charged with a disposition to subjugate the government.

The Tribune charges that these men "try to put their creatures in all official places which touch their interests at any point." Yes, and the Tribune is every day calling upon the people to vote for the candidates supported by these interests. Confessing that these "colossal corporations overshadow the government itself and are never satisfied" the Tribune is now supporting a party which if successful at the polls will see to it that the government does not overshadow these colossal corporations.—From The Commoner of October 16, 1908.