

A GREAT POSTPONER

Taft For Tariff Revision—At Some Future Date.

BRYAN'S APT DESCRIPTION.

Reforms Advocated by the War Secretary Are Always to Be Accomplished Tomorrow—The Cleveland Mayoralty Fight—Platform of the Contests—Soft Speech and Big Stick.

By WILLIS J. ABOT.
The political world of Washington is wondering how Mr. Bryan found out the weak point of Secretary Taft and with unerring judgment put his finger upon it.

In his speech at Oklahoma City some days ago Mr. Bryan described Secretary Taft in two words, as the "great postponer." Mr. Bryan pointed out that Taft was for revision of the tariff at some future date; that he was for an income tax at some future date; for an inheritance tax, but later; he was for the independence of the Philippines at some future date and that he stood for switchback for Oklahoma and the Indian Territory, but always at some future date.

I have been interested to hear certain things concerning Taft from people here in Washington, most of whom are Republicans, but all of whom applaud the Bryan description of his character. Men who have business with the war department have found out that this good natured gent, jolly, fat secretary of war never determines anything for himself. Always it is to be done tomorrow; as the Mexicans say, "Mañana." It is so in trivial things and in great issues.

Taft's Passion For Postponement.

Some time ago it was rumored in Pittsburgh that the war department had under consideration the elevation of the bridges across the Allegheny river between Pittsburgh and Allegheny. These bridges were private bridges on which a toll was charged. They interfered with navigation. The war department, as everybody knows, has entire authority over the navigable rivers. Attorneys for and against the various interests involved came to Washington. They met Mr. Taft. Always diplomatic, always pleasant, invariably courteous, he said, "I haven't been able to take the matter up yet, but I shall soon." One of these attorneys told me today that he had been engaged in the case spending half of his time in Washington and the other half in Pittsburgh, for something more than two years. He still hopes that the matter will be taken up soon.

When Mr. Bryan described Mr. Taft as the "great postponer" he no doubt spoke only of the secretary's position on public questions. But here in Washington even Mr. Taft's friends admit that if he can possibly postpone a decision on anything even upon a matter which comes to his desk approaching all the subordinates in his department, he will put it off as long as may be.

A striking illustration of this tendency was furnished when he went to Panama on a visitation, of course a member of this administration ever travels except on a crusade, and the president must have from three to five battleships to escort him. There was a little labor trouble at Panama. Some 600 men were discontented, say on the Erie canal work or on a railroad, some responsible officer would have jumped on a train, taken a birth in a sleeping car, found out what the trouble was and either settled it or fought it out. Not so Taft. With dignity and unlimited funds for expenses he goes to Panama and investigates. When he returned to Washington the newspaper correspondents asked him what he was going to do. "I shall report my opinions and put it up to the president."

As a matter of fact, Secretary Taft is the absolutely authoritative head of the Panama canal work. There is no more reason why he should submit the determination of a labor issue there to the president than that he should make his political beliefs and his political utterances wholly subservient to Mr. Roosevelt's views. But he does both.

Burton and Johnson.

The news that Representative Burton of Cleveland is to run as the Republican candidate for the mayoralty of that city against Tom L. Johnson should awaken wide interest. There may be much back of the announcement which does not appear on its face. During the time that Johnson has dominated Cleveland there has been practically no opposition to Burton as a Republican candidate for congress. Some men say that this has been the result of a deal between Burton and Johnson by which the one should go to congress as a Republican and the other continue as mayor. Personally I think this is absolutely untrue. Of all the people in public life who cannot be suspected of political trading Tom Johnson is one. But it is true that Burton has not antagonized Johnson's street railway policy, which is the issue on which the city of Cleveland has been carried three times by its present mayor. Moreover, in his letter expressing willingness to accept the Republican nomination Mr. Burton declared that he would only make the race if assured that the committee in charge of the campaign and the candidates on the ticket with him should not be tainted by any sort of association with traction companies or with other quasi public corporations holding franchises granted by the city. This is an admirable stand for Mr.

Burton to take, but why? Because Tom Johnson, fighting along that line to my certain knowledge for more than twenty years, finally enforced on the people of Cleveland the conviction that public franchises belong to the people and should not be used for private profit. Just exactly as Mr. Bryan has blazed the way followed since by Roosevelt, who has found much political profit therein, so Tom Johnson has lived on the platform which Mr. Burton now uses that his own party should allow him to mount.

But all the same Burton shows courtesy. He has been the leader in the fight on Senator Foraker and Senator Dick. He has been one of the men who advocated the elimination of Foraker from Ohio politics. When he announced his purpose to run for mayor of Cleveland he gave as his chief reason therefore letters he had received from President Roosevelt, Secretary Taft and Secretary Garfield. The last of these dignitaries lives in Cleveland; the other two know nothing about its municipal needs. Mr. Burton seems to be willing to run for mayor on a national platform. Tom Johnson, who has served three terms, is likely to continue as he has already done, making himself the candidate of the people on a platform addressed to the citizens of his own town and on a record of accomplishment and of triumph.

Mr. Roosevelt's Six Speeches.

Upon the very best authority I am informed that the six speeches which Mr. Roosevelt is now writing at Oyster Bay for the purpose of delivery during his western and southern trip in connection with the deep waterways excursion are to make his Provincetown speech sound as mild as the cooing of a sucking dove. Anybody who thought that the president was going to stop scalping because other people scolded took well disappointed. Persons who had a lingering hope of a modification of the form of presidential victory which, as a New York paper said, has made Mr. Hearst's Evening Journal a conservative organ are likely to be amazed. Somehow as the abusive oratory of Mr. Roosevelt becomes more and more extreme one can but remember one of his famous maxims for the guidance of man, miscreant society," he said, "but carry a big stick." If any man has fallen short of living up to this maxim it is the author. No one has known him to speak softly. In his present oratorical assault upon corporations, trusts and monopolies he has exhausted the English vocabulary of vituperation. But no big stick has demolished the men whom he attacked. That "one rich devilish in hell" has not yet been displayed to us. But the language of Jefferson Davis and his rowdy journal has found new place in the speeches of Theodore Roosevelt.

Mr. Perry Belmont's Development.

A long interview with Perry Belmont in Paris has had some currency in the United States this week, though mainly confined to the press of New York and adjacent states. Some portions of it well demand quotation. To my mind, and I speak with some knowledge of the facts and with at least sincere conviction of the deductions drawn from them—his discussion of the concentration of power in the president, his words about the tariff and his plea for the publicity of all campaign contributions are most important. These I quote:

The Concentration of Power.

Gradual concentration and accumulation of power in the hands of our presidents has been such during the last twenty years that our chief executive has been generally considered in Europe and in our own country as a ruler responsible only to public opinion, irresponsible to Congress or to the courts. In his mind are all branches of the federal government. Upon his election he becomes the chosen one who can do no wrong. Criticism of the exercise of the tremendous powers intrusted to him is unpopular and is rarely undertaken, especially at the beginning of an administration, while sharp rebuke and condemnation are frequently visited upon both houses of congress.

If to absolute and unrestrained executive power is added immunity from unprejudiced and honest criticism, it becomes essential that the president shall be possessed of a calm temperament and a stable character. Fortunately the great majority of our presidents have met this requirement.

Tariff Father of Trusts.

While loudly proclaiming its intention to punish the violation of law and abolish special privileges, it cannot be unknown to the administration of we are to believe the president's previous professions as a tariff reformer that, whatever objectionable features there may be in railway management, railway rates and rebates and the so-called trust with the enforcement of existing laws would have given the administration the right, reasonably pointed out by Mr. Bryan and his Democratic followers, and that the trust problem itself is a result of the high protective tariff system.

The National Publicity Law.

From former have been made by the tariff beneficiaries who have stood at the doors of the ways and means committee for their friends and who have for favoring legislation contributed largely to the campaign funds of the Republican party.

Fortunately the national movement for the publicity of campaign contributions is now so advanced that it will have a wholesome influence in the upcoming campaign. But these consolidated interests still constitute the rock upon which the Republican political organization rests.

In 1890 Mr. Belmont, though a long time Democrat and for four years a representative in congress, abandoned the Democratic ticket. Since then he has returned to the party in the fullest sense. Whether he would stand for the free coinage of silver is doubtful, but it is nowise doubtful that no Democrat will be asked to do so in the coming campaign. That Jesus sleeps. The work Mr. Belmont has done in preaching Democracy and particularly in pushing the national publicity law, through which only the control of political parties by monopolistic corporations can be checked, justly earns for him a favorable audience among Democrats.

Washington, D. C.

BARRISTER'S SPEECH

A Young Fellow Makes His Maiden Effort Before the Jury.

"This was a trial in Unicoi county, east Tennessee," said the lawyer, "and the indictment of the defendant was for killing the prosecutor's hog."

"The facts were that the prosecutor lived on the head of a stream, and the defendant lived about a mile or two down the stream, and, in the month of May, the prosecutor's old sow got out and strayed off down the valley and got in the defendant's field and rooted up his corn. The allegation was that the defendant had killed her, mangling her up pretty badly and cutting her up with knives."

"A young barrister, named Smith, who had just gotten his license, was employed to aid the solicitor in the prosecution. The case was set for trial, and the attorney arose and, with a very solemn air, said:

"May it please your honor, and you, gentlemen of the jury, since the days of the assassination of the lamented President of the United States, townsman Lincoln, no such foul crime has stained our country's reputation as the assassination of Jack Edwards' black and white spotted sow. Gentlemen of the jury, and may it please your honor, go with me to the place of the tragedy and contemplate the scene and the circumstances. On that lovely morning in May, when the earth was dressed in her robes of green and the air filled with the smell of sweet-scented flowers and enlivened by the voice of many songsters, as that old sow walked forth in her innocence down that little stream, listening to the music of the waters, little did she dream that before the king of day hid himself behind the western horizon she would become the victim of a foul assassination."

H. S. Williams, one of Concord's rising attorneys, was married last Thursday to Miss Revis, of Cross Roads, Yadkin county.

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