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Taft Recants Former Statements in Authorized Interview

New York, Dec. 1.—In the current issue of The Outlook there appears an article entitled "President Taft's Own View, An Authorized Interview," in which the president discusses current topics with an interviewer, as follows in part: "Speaking of the tariff issue, Mr. President, if you could begin your administration again, would you repeat your Winona speech tomorrow?" the interviewer asked. "In phraseology, no; in effect, yes. Had I known as much as I do now, I should have realized that there are some things one cannot have to do for granted. I dictated that speech to a stenographer on the cars between stations, and glanced through it only enough to straighten its grammar; it was sent out by the press with correspondingly little ceremony, so that papers received it in all sorts of shapes. If I had prepared it two or three weeks before and revised it liberally as I ought to have done, I should have clarified several passages. And, particularly, I should have changed the sentence where I proclaimed the Payne Tariff Act the best ever passed. The comparative would have been a better description than the superlative; for, whatever its shortcomings, the act still contains less than was criticized than its predecessors, and a did, as a whole, revise the existing schedules downward. "I have no fault to find with either Democrats or insurgents for trying to reduce any duties they chose; what I object to is disturbing the business of the country today when there is nothing better than guesswork to proceed upon, and then disturbing it fresh six months later when the best available information is before us. I do not join in the charge of inconsistency against the Democrats for compromising with La Follette on the wool schedule instead of standing by their own figures. If they could not get all the reduction in the tariff they were quite justified in talking what they could get. My chief criticism on their tariff activities last session was that they were willing to hand to me legislation so crude and ill considered that they must have known they had passed to think that I would not possibly approve it. "Is your tariff reduction programme based on the theory that it will bring about a corresponding reduction in the cost of living?" "I think that that effect is greatly overestimated. My chief objection to a needlessly high tariff is that it smashes monopoly. It holds forth a constant temptation to the formation of little trusts, which often are more directly oppressive to the consumer than big ones. "Mr. President, there is your tariff ward. You have been sharply criticized for making it up of men who are not tariff experts." "And that is true; they are not. If I had been appointing a board of tariff experts I could not have got along with less than twenty-five, in order to do justice to all branches of the subject. What I undertook to do was to make up a board of trained investigators, capable of managing a thorough inquiry into costs of production and of analyzing its elements. First, Mr. Taft wrote to friends in leading universities, asking each to give me a list of the economists considered by him best equipped for the task in hand. Professor Emery's name was on all the lists and at the top of half of them, so I made him chairman of the board. Page comes from the University of Virginia; Sanders is an authority on agriculture. Reynolds, in interpreting and enforcing the tariff

laws for four years, had presumably learned the ins and outs of that business; and Howard I regarded as the ablest southern representative in congress in my day. These men made no pretense of being tariff experts; they employ all the expert help they need. "I fully realize, and I wish our people would learn that the present prosperity of the treasury is due in no small measure to the existing tariff, which, notwithstanding all its faults, is a revenue-producer. There is a good deal more that can be said for that act. It gave us a maximum and minimum tariff, a provision which I deem of the highest importance, and which tended to increase our foreign trade substantially. It gave us free trade with the Philippines, which has made the islands more prosperous than ever in their history, without injury to any American industry. It gave authority that I used to create and appoint a tariff board, which, though not the commission I sought, is doing a most useful work; and it imposed a corporation tax, on which I had set my heart, but which at times I despaired of getting through. "Now that you have launched your project for a constitutional amendment, you probably have in mind some particular form of general income tax, to recommend to congress when it is free to act? "In a way, yes. I believe, on principle, in a general income tax. The only good arguments against it are that it is inequitable, and that it offers a temptation to perjury. But I would not resort to the ordinary income tax except in an emergency like war, when I would have had most of those citizens who had most at stake should bear a correspondingly large share of the burden of the common defense. In time of peace I would avoid temptation to perjury and would confine the government to taxes that do not involve such inequitable methods in the collection. "Mr. President, I suppose you have noticed Mr. Bryan's comments on your appointment of Chief Justice White?" "All that I have to say about my judicial appointments is that I have regarded my duty in respect to them as the most sacred with which I am charged, and that I have spared no effort to secure for the seat the best man I could get, with the fullest appreciation of the fact that the federal courts, and especially the supreme court, constitute the chief bulwark of the institutions of civil liberty, created by the constitution. "Now, Mr. President, something of the future. What do you purpose creating as your calendar of unfinished business for the rest of your term?" "In the domestic field, I suppose reductions in the woolen and cotton schedules, and possibly in the metal schedule of the tariff, will go to the top of the calendar. These will be founded, as far as my recommendations are concerned, on the report of the tariff board. I have heard it intimated that congress will not heed the suggestions of an executive board. As to that I have no means of judging in advance. What I shall do is to put the whole thing up to congress, and leave the members to settle with their constituents if they prefer not to act. In the house the democratic majority have always professed themselves ready to accept any reductions they can get, and I am going to take them at their word in good faith. Where the insurgents will stand I am not prophet enough even to surmise. "For another thing, we ought to obtain some legislation which will enable Alaska to develop without infringing on our board policy of conservation. Then there is the question of ratifying the peace treaties with England and France, and the fiscal treaties with Honduras and Nicaragua, which in their way are peace treaties also, as their purpose is to remove one of the most prolific causes of war. "I assume that you know that it has been widely hinted that your tour was the opening of your campaign for reelection?" "Certainly, as is the case with all administrations, much of what I have done since I have been in office has had some political color put upon it by those who were inclined to be critical. The truth is, however, that political considerations have not weighed heavily with me. I have tried to do in each case what seemed to me the wisest thing, regardless of its effect upon my own future. Indeed, in more than one instance I have been perfectly conscious that bad blood would be stirred by some act of mine or some refusal to act. The circum-

stance that the same persons who hail me, after one application of equal justice, as a fastidious conservative patriot, denounce me after the next as an unreasoning radical, does not greatly disturb my equanimity. I set that down as 'all in a day's work.' "I am very grateful for the honors the people have given me. I do not affect to deny the satisfaction I should feel if, after casting up the totals pro and con, and striking a balance, they should decide that my first term had been fruitful enough of good to warrant their enlisting me for another. Any man would be proud of such a verdict. But I have not been willing, nor shall I be, to purchase it at the sacrifice of my freedom to do my duty as I see it. My happiness is not dependent on holding any office; and I shall go back to private life with not less heartburnings if the people, after an unprejudiced review of my administration, conclude that some one else can serve them to their greater advantage." PRESIDENT COON HOWLED DOWN IN ANNUAL ADDRESS Special to The News. Raleigh, N. C., Dec. 1.—President Charles L. Coon, of the North Carolina Teachers' Assembly stirred a sensation last night among the educational forces of the state with his annual address in which, as he expressed it, he undertook to "tell the rude truth" about the educational situation in this state. He was not allowed to conclude, a coterie of men led by a county superintendent clapping their hands whenever he attempted to continue. "If we cannot endure honest criticism from within and without our profession, then we need to be born again and that speedily," Mr. Coon had declared. The teachers and legislators of North Carolina were represented as having put on the state a multi-colored and unharmonious patchwork as an educational garment of divorce and discordant elements. Some of the most glaring legislative blunders of the past year were pointed out, and appointments of county school boards who have power to select almost any sort of person for county superintendent and he undertakes to supervise something about which he scarcely knows the first principles and is totally unfit for. There are two hundred different standards for entrance upon teaching. A teacher in Durham may be declared unfit to teach in Asheville; teaching children may be considered a private business in this state but doctoring pigs and cows and horses is not, declared President Coon. The department of education rules that a teacher can be required to teach sixty-five children before state aid can be invoked in a having two teacher school and in over half the counties such conditions exist. There is no efficient method of making new teachers; average salaries now are worth no more to the teacher than ten years ago; conditions are a constant invitation for the best teachers to leave the profession. President Coon ridiculed the farm life school movement, saying that the one county in that state that had undertaken it under state aid scheme has now only ninety days school terms and the property of the proposed farm life school would be ridiculously near the value of the whole public school property of the country and its salary schedule half that of the county schools. "We have blacksmith life high schools, cement life high schools and fisherman life high schools. "More and more educational patches. The multiplication of small local tax districts without system as a glaring multitude of patches. He declared that it will take a Saul and a small revolution to remake these educational failures into anything like a harmonious system whose parts do not work against each other. "The average pay of \$138.40 per year for the public school teacher was ridiculed. The high school system, the township system and local tax district system tend to make a by-word and jest of that part of the constitution that requires a uniform system of schools. "Mr. Coon outlined a constructive educational policy he advocated. The teacher's assembly should be made a delegated body from the smaller organizations of teachers. There should be a state educational commission of eight members appointed by the governor on recommendation of the teacher's assembly that should control the licensing of all the public school teachers and control courses of study, selection of textbooks, licensing and supervision of teachers and have a continuous professional body. Townships for schools should be re-constructed to afford a seven grade central school for each with subordinate elementary schools with minimum four months' term and longer terms for the central schools; special tax districts should be gradually absorbed into a unified system in which the amount of state aid to be dependent on local effort on the townships. "At this point the interruption came and Mr. Coon was forced to take his seat. Governor Kitchin in introducing Champ Clark the next speaker, took occasion to compliment the speaker, and severely criticized the disturbers. "Champ Clark's speech was concerning the United States in the 20th century. In the course of his address he gave America credit for the 26 republics which now exist and among other things expressed the hope that the Philippines would never become American citizens. Morning Session. Following the Thanksgiving service in the morning by the North Carolina teachers' assembly, in the auditorium the several divisions of the organizations met separately and took up matters pertaining to their particular phase of the work of teaching. The division of primary teachers developed the largest attendance and quickly overran the city court room that had been set aside for their use. First they heard a paper by Miss Milder of Maryland, expert primary teacher, on educational and professional qualifications of the primary

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