

Champ Clark's Letter

Republicans Who Dissent From the Prosperity Claim in Special Session and Financial Legislation

[Special Washington Letter.]
NOT only the statesman, but everybody else, appears to be engaged in devising ways and means of "cutting the Gordian knot"—that is, in cutting one of our Gordian knots. Rev. H. L. Atkinson, pastor of the Christian church at Geneva, O., proposes that we cede the Philippines to Japan in exchange for the service of Japanese coolies in digging the isthmian canal by either the Panama or Nicaraguan route. He argues that the United States has no need of the Philippines except for coaling stations, which could be reserved in the trade; that Japan, with 45,000,000 in a territory the size of California, needs room for expansion; that the Philippine climate is better adapted to Japs than to Americans; that the Japs would give the islands good government; that Japanese laborers would not die so numerous as our laborers in digging the great ditch, and that to be rid of the archipelago would strengthen the prestige of the United States among the nations. All of which has been forwarded to President Roosevelt. If Brother Atkinson can induce the government to adopt his plan, millions of Americans yet unborn will arise and call him blessed and he will be entitled to a monument tall as Washington's.

Wherefore?
 There is considerable talk of holding the next national Republican convention in New York, which would be a most unusual occurrence considering the fact that President Roosevelt is almost certain to be nominated. The convention is generally held in a city remote from the principal candidate or candidates. The explanation is suggested that Colonel Roosevelt is really looked upon rather as a western than an eastern candidate, and that if the convention is located in New York it will be for the purpose of increasing his strength in that vicinity.

A Warning Voice.
 The Washington Post claims to be an independent paper. It believes religiously in the high protective tariff and the single gold standard. Nevertheless it sounds this friendly warning to the Republican Mark Tapleys who are looking so cheerfully to next year's elections:

There will be much discussion during the approaching session of congress concerning the tariff and the finances and reciprocity and other grave questions of state. Politicians from the rural districts will orate solemnly upon the relations between the United States and the rest of the world, and issues warranted to stir the popular heart will be forged with tremendous blows upon the legislative anvil.

The leaders of both parties will be wise, however, if they will realize that the average citizen does not feel the slightest interest in abstract propositions. The Republican party lost the election which followed the enactment of the McKinley tariff bill—overwhelmingly lost it, in fact—because of the rapid and universal increase in the cost of the necessities of life. Conditions which exist today recall that famous campaign. It is a fact that the salary of the wage worker now procures for him the minimum of necessary things. The cost of living is abnormally high. The grocery bills and the meat bills are out of all proportion to reason. The man who would live decently on a small salary, who would provide sufficient food and proper clothing for his family, finds it impossible to save.

There would be some satisfaction for the wage worker if he knew that the money thus wrung out of his pocket went into the purse of his fellow laborers throughout the country, but he knows that labor does not get the benefit. He might even be complacent if the proprietor of the corner grocery profited by the high prices, but he knows that the merchant is selling on the smallest margin of profit. With neither the producer nor the merchant benefiting from the rise in prices the question is naturally being asked, Who is the beneficiary? If there shall be a very general belief that the extortioner is a syndicate or corporation which controls the output of beef or sugar or canned goods or other necessary of life, there will be a swing of the political pendulum equal to that which brought the Democrats into power some years ago. To the average citizen the price which he is compelled to pay for the things which go upon his table or upon his back is of more vital and personal concern than the enactment of financial legislation or a policy for the Philippines. The constantly increasing cost of living is a political factor not to be overlooked.

The Turk Must Go.
 Some years ago Denis Kearney of the San Francisco said lots made the atmosphere of the Pacific coast vocal with the shout, "The Chinese must go!" Now everybody who loves justice and common decency is thinking if not saying, "The unspeakable Turk must go from Europe!" and the sooner the better. He is a lumberer of the ground, a public nuisance which should be abated, an anachronism no longer to be tolerated. Let him go and not stand upon the order of his going.

"A Pertinent Modification."
 Under the above caption Marso Henry Watterson remarks:

President Roosevelt has referred to the finding of the antitrust commission as authority settling legal principles precisely as if it were the decision of a regular court of last resort. In this connection the Springfield Republican makes a rather neat point with reference to the removal of Miss Todd as postmaster in a Delaware town. By a slight modification it makes the finding of the strike commission read as follows:

"It is adjudged and awarded that * * * there shall be no discrimination against or interference with any government employes who is not personally agreeable to Senator Atkinson of Geneva."

Not Unanimous.
 Republican harmony, according to Republican orators and writers, is so thick you can cut it with a knife.

Let's see. Senator Aldrich is whooping it up for his bill, while Uncle Joe Cannon, the next speaker, is poking fun at "rubber currency." Mr. Fowler of New Jersey is prowling over the country making speeches wherever he can induce anybody to hearken to his gentle voice. On the last occasion when he orated an irate Republican banker was about to make it "a personal matter with him." Secretary of the Treasury Leslie M. Shaw has been overworking his vocal apparatus in favor of the Aldrich bill or something much like it, and the Republican organ of Iowa, the Des Moines Register and Leader, says:

At the outset it may be admitted that no sentiment has been developed in favor of a currency based on bank assets that encourages the belief that legislation will be enacted in the near future. The discussion is therefore wholly academic. There is not even enough sentiment in favor of an emergency currency, such as Secretary Shaw has suggested, to secure its adoption—at least, there has been no public expression of it. But in the end some change is going to be made in our banking laws, and some leeway is going to be granted to banks to meet emergency demands for money, for other countries have proved that an elastic currency satisfies a real demand of business, and government bonds are going to prove less and less adequate as the basis of our bank issues.

"A Bluff."
 Hon. John H. Clarke, Democratic nominee for United States senator from Ohio, has challenged Hon. Marcus A. Hanna, Republican nominee for United States senator from Ohio, to a joint debate. Hanna replies that "it's a bluff!" Wonder if Senator Hanna never heard that the proper thing to do with a bluff is to "call it?"

Leze Majesty.
 Is the Chicago Inter Ocean good authority for Republicans or not? If certainly ought to be, for it is one of the most rampant Republican organ grinders in the land. Consequently all persons whose names, especially the Republican readers of these letters, are cordially invited to carefully and prayerfully peruse the following excerpt from the Inter Ocean on the subject of prosperity:

Yet it may be doubted if one-half the heads of American families are in as favorable a position as they were in 1897. The third party—the majority who are neither capitalists nor able to fortify themselves behind labor union walls—is today giving more proportionately than in 1897, while getting only the same. When capitalists combine to raise prices, reduce expenses or anticipate profits, it is this third party that pays the higher prices, stands the reduction of expenses and converts the anticipated profits into actual ones.

The plain truth is that fully one-half the workers of the United States—the men whose incomes are from \$300 to \$3,000 a year, the men who are neither in trade nor labor unions—have not been getting their share of the national prosperity. They are working for the prosperity of capital and organized labor, but no one is working for them, and under this burden they are becoming exhausted.

Now, if some unwashed Democrat or wild eyed Populist had said that it would be leze majesty, or misprision of treason at any rate, but what will the whippers in and whoopers up for the Republican party do to the Chicago Inter Ocean? Will they read it out of the party? Will they denounce it as a traitor to the country? Will they suppress it? They will be compelled to discipline it in some way, for to permit such talk as that to continue to proceed from Republican organs will certainly land the G. O. P. in the soup tureen.

Hearst.
 The Washington Post contains the following as to William Randolph Hearst's status as a presidential candidate:

"It begins to look as though Mr. William R. Hearst were going to be the choice of all the prominent labor leaders for the presidency," said Mr. E. R. Buckalew of San Francisco at the Riggs House. "I travel a good bit over the country and find that the young editor is a red-hot favorite with organized labor everywhere. There are many big cities where his name is a household word, and if he were the nominee of any big party he would get the solid support of the wage earners. In fact, it isn't at all improbable that he will be voted for anyway, even though the Democratic nomination goes elsewhere. There is bound to be a big labor party in this country some day, as a separate political organization, and it may come quicker than any of us now think possible."

Senator Hoar's Proposition.
 Senator Hoar has made a statement to the effect that a tariff revision should take place immediately after a presidential election and not just before it, in order that congress may be working under fresh instructions from the people. The senator is evidently losing the power of memory. Republican congresses are not in the habit of following the instructions of the people. In 1874 congress was instructed overwhelmingly to take the soldiers out of the south. In 1876 the people elected Tilden president, but congress routed in Hayes, who was not elected president any more than he was elected abkhond of Swat. Republican congresses were instructed in 1882 and 1890 to do certain things which they did not do. Remembering these things, nobody will believe that any Republican congress will pay any attention to the people, and every one will believe that Senator Hoar knew that when he was talking on the subject. The only way to get the tariff revised is to turn the Republicans out.

ponder of sweetness and light as he is ought to have a re-election without opposition if his party elect a majority of the next New York legislature, which God forbid! But the signs of the times indicate that that will not happen. It is whispered that Mr. Secretary of War Elihu Root has fixed his covetous eye on Chauncey's senatorial togs and chair. Too bad! We are informed that Senator Dewey is in love with the life and experience of a senator and, in Oliver Twist, crying for more. There are eighty nine other more or less aged and august personages in and around Washington in the same frame of mind. No doubt the senate takes kindly to Chauncey, for he is the most amiable and winsome of mortals. It is really a pity that Senator Dewey wastes his time in the senate. Mr. Root and scores of other New Yorkers would make as good senators as any Republican can make, but Senator Dewey could, if he only would, write the finest and most interesting book of reminiscences ever printed.

Rare Delicacy.
 Hon. John H. Clarke, Democratic candidate for the senate in Ohio, possesses rare delicacy and a high sense of responsibility to the people. In the following statement he proposes to do just what John Quincy Adams did when he was elected to the senate:

I promise you that if I am elected to the senate of the United States before I take my seat I shall dispose of every share of stock and of every business interest the value of which can be affected by my vote in the senate. This is no mere ante-election promise, but is simply saying that I will adopt the standard of conduct that was familiar with members of the United States senate prior to fifty years ago, before that body had become commercialized and sordid, as we see it so largely is today.

Rough on Odell and Root.
 The Philadelphia Public Ledger contains this article, which is not at all complimentary to Governor Odell and Mr. Secretary of War Elihu Root:

Is there any document on earth, except the Bible, which those who are supposed to be familiar with know less of than they do of the constitution of the United States? A member of the cabinet, sailing for Europe the other day, in answer to a question as to the possibility of his being a candidate for the vice presidency, remarked that the constitution forbade the selection of both president and vice president from the same state. It does nothing of the kind, and it would seem that a great constitutional lawyer and high federal official like Secretary Root ought to know it. On Tuesday the governor of New York, who has peculiar rhetorical ideas, but has been supposed to be strong on facts, in the course of that remarkable address at Geneseo observed, "It required the force and the genius of a Jefferson to make our constitution." Jefferson was not a member of the convention which made the constitution and was not even in the country when its discussion was going on.

Small Things.
 He who said "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves" was a wise man. He had in mind the value of small things. A poet has expressed the same idea in these lines:

A pebble in the streamlet scant
 Has turned the course of many a river;
 A dewdrop on the baby plant
 Has dwarfed the giant oak forever.

Once when I was debating with General Charles Henry Grosvenor he was enlarging on the universal prosperity in 1892 and the consequent happiness of the people. I interrupted him to ask how it happened, then, that the voters of the land repudiated General Benjamin Harrison's administration by such an overwhelming majority. He replied, "The Homestead riots defeated the Republicans in 1892." History repeats itself not only sometimes, but frequently. President Roosevelt is popular, and yet the Miller incident may do for him what the Homestead riots did for President Harrison. Nous verrons.

Important if True.
 Whether the St. Louis Globe-Democrat possesses inside information I don't know. This G.-D. Washington special to the G.-D. may be properly classed as "important if true:"

Representative Joseph G. Cannon, destined to be the next speaker of the house of representatives, is in Washington. He has been consulting with officers of the administration and having quiet talks with members who mysteriously "happen" to visit Washington at this time. Several of his conferences have been with Secretary Shaw. From these it appears that the prospect of financial legislation at the coming session of the congress is exceedingly slim.

It is a matter of comment that within the last few weeks the secretary of the treasury has been going ahead in his own way in handling the financial situation and without law or regulation has found means for accomplishing much which the proposed legislation would legalize and which an amendment in both houses of the congress has objected to.

All these things the next speaker of the house of representatives has been watching, and it is understood that the ideas of Mr. Cannon and the secretary regarding the creation of an emergency circulation under conditions that will make it elastic agree fully. They also agree that the possibility of securing the sort of legislation they desire and think wise is very remote. Under the circumstances they do not believe that it is good policy to precipitate the financial question at the short extraneous session. The best guarantee that they will have their way in this regard is to be found in the assertion that Mr. Cannon has decided to appoint but three committees for the extra session. These will be the ways and means, mileage and accounts "which but these three committees there is no prospect of a financial bill coming to the house.

Adieu, John.
 Almost everybody in this country will be delighted to hear that Hon. John Barrett is "far away on the billow" en route to his South American diplomatic post. How the South American will regard his approach is another matter. It is to be fondly hoped that the ship on which he sails will have on board no wireless telegraphic machinery and that she will touch no port until John reaches his destination. What America needs is a month or two of perfect Barrett-less rest.

Champ Clark

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