

(ADVERTISING.)

## Extracts From Senator F. M. Simmons' Speech Delivered at Charlotte, N. C. Sept. 12th, 1912.

### His Fight Against Special Interest.

I am charged, as was Craig four years ago, with being the tool of the railroads and the special interests. It is true that I have not abused these interests by day and slept with them by night. But my record, every vote I have ever cast and every speech that I have ever made, shows that when the interest of the people have clashed with those of the railroads, the trusts, or special interests, I have been on the side of the people—not with lip service on the hustings alone, but with sledge-hammer blows and sledge-hammer votes, where votes and blows counted.

When the Aldrich financial bill to strengthen the hand of the great central banks was before the Senate, did I remain silent and content myself with voting against it? No. I was in the thickest of the fight, clashing with Aldrich and the stoutest of its champions.

When the Postal Savings Bank Bill was under discussion I was found fighting for amendments requiring the small savings of the people, gathered up by those depositors, to be kept in the community and loaned to the people for purposes of community development. When upon a flimsy constitutional pretext, against my earnest opposition, an amendment was adopted to transfer these deposits to the great financial centers, I threw away the speech I had prepared in favor of the bill, and, with all the vigor I possessed, denounced it as a betrayal of the people to serve the interest of the bondholders and the money kings; and I voted against it.

#### Always For the People.

I have never cast a vote for the railroads when their interest clashed with that of the people. I voted with their employees and against the railroads for the safety appliances act. I voted with their employees and against the railroads for the employer's liability act. I voted with their employees and against the railroads in opposition to the so-called workmen's compensation act, as did practically all Democrats. I voted against that bill, as did my Democratic colleagues, because it was a railroad and not a labor measure, as it pretended to be, because the compensation it allowed was ridiculously inadequate.

I have voted for every measure to enlarge the powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission over railroads, the telegraph and the express companies. Two or three of the most energetic speeches I have made since I have been in the Senate were in favor of the enlargement of these powers.

#### Rail and Water Rates.

Two years ago I voted to divorce the railroads from production so as to prevent them from engaging in competition with their patrons and shippers.

Years ago I defied the lobby of the great trans-continental railroads in their effort to prevent the construction of the Panama Canal; and I was one of the sixteen Democrats who voted for the treaty looking to the construction of the Panama Canal;

and only a few weeks ago, as one of the conferees on the part of the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two houses on the Panama Canal bill, I united with Senator Bristow, a Republican Insurgent, against our colleague on the conference committee, Senator Brandegee, and overriding the Senate amendments to the House Bill, united with two Democratic conferees on the part of the House, and rewrote the provision in that bill with reference to railroad-owned ships, so as to prohibit any railroad-owned vessel from passing through the Canal or any other water of the United States after 1914, without the approval of the Interstate Commerce Commission based on a finding that the public interests would be subserved and competition not interfered with by a continuance of such ownership.

In its results this was the greatest piece of legislation in the last quarter of a century, and in my career in the Senate I have never done the people a greater service than I did in connection with this legislation in conference. If during my twelve years in the Senate I had done but this one thing, I would feel that my labors in that body had been worth while.

#### American Labor and Foreign Immigration.

There is another matter of great importance to the people of this State and country, especially to the farm and factory laborers, which was bitterly fought by the railroads, the great continental steamship companies and great protected industries of the North and East, to which I have devoted much thought, much time, and much effort, and in connection with which I have antagonized these special interests and accomplished something, I hope, for the people.

I refer to the matter of the restriction of foreign immigration and excluding from our shores the scum of the backward nations of the world.

Every year there are coming to this country from two to three hundred thousand foreigners who can neither read nor write; who come from the countries of the lowest wage scale of Southern and Eastern Europe; who are brought here by the great steamship companies, at the instance of the great railroads and the manufacturers of the North and East, to take the place on these roads and in these factories of the American laboring men. They know nothing about our institutions; they do not seek, after they come here, to learn anything about them. They segregate themselves from our people; they do not acquire our habits; they do not learn our language; they live upon what an American would starve on. Wherever they go they reduce the wage scale and standard of living, and as soon as they have accumulated a few dollars they return to their old homes.

To keep out this undesirable horde in 1906, I introduced in the Senate an amendment to the immigration bill of that year prescribing an illiteracy test, and after I had addressed the Senate in its behalf, it was adopted; but in the House, through

the influence of the steamship and railroad lobby, there was substituted for it an investigating commission. This year, after this commission had reported, recommending the literacy test, another immigration bill was reported to the Senate, but with this test left out.

Upon the petition of thousands of farmers and laboring men, representing Farmers Unions, the lodges of the Junior Order United American Mechanics, Patriotic Sons of America, Locomotive Engineers, etc., I reintroduced that amendment during the late session of Congress. In advocating this amendment I presented to the Senate over six hundred petitions from labor and farm organizations, asking for its adoption by the Senate. It has not yet passed the House, but I believe before the present Congress terminates, on the 4th of March next, that measure will be a part of the law of the land, and this horde that is now flocking to our shores, displacing American labor from the railroads and the factories, reducing the scale of wage and standard of living, will be effectually excluded from our shores.

If in this matter I was not leading a fight for the man who toils and labors against the special interests, then I do not understand the significance of it at all.

#### Against the Aldrich Bill.

Out of the upwards of 3,000 items in the Payne-Aldrich Bill I voted for only thirteen when the bill was in the Committee of the Whole. Not one of these votes carried a protective duty; and all of these, except one, was to reduce Dingley rates about thirty-five per cent, that being about the average rate of reduction made in the Democratic schedule bills we Democrats have just passed; and when the bill was put on its passage in the Senate, I voted against the whole thing. Not only that, but I delivered against the bill a two-hour speech, every sentence of which is an indictment of the protective system of iniquities, discriminations and injustices of its application as exemplified in that measure.

#### Democracy's Definition of a Progressive.

It is said that I may be a fairly good Democrat but that I am not a progressive Democrat, and that only a progressive should be nominated and elected this year to any office.

Well, what is a progressive in politics is a matter of definition, and we have several definitions this year. We have one definition of what is progressive in politics in the attitude of the Insurgent Republicans, led by La Follette and Cummins; we have another definition of what is progressive in politics in the platform of the so-called Third Term or Bull Moose Party, and exemplified in the speeches of Colonel Roosevelt. And we have Democracy's definition of what is progressive in politics. The Baltimore platform is Democracy's definition and chart of what is progressive, not only in things political but things material as well.

On the Democratic definition of what is progressive as contained in that platform I am willing to stand or fall. I challenge my accusers to point to one single measure in that platform, which can by any stretch or strain be called progressive, for which I have not stood and for which I do not now stand.

There are some things some people hold to be progressive such as woman suffrage, the initiative, the referendum and the recall, and the denial of the right of the courts to declare legislation unconstitutional, but these things are not mentioned in the platform; neither is free lumber and Reciprocity mentioned in that

platform among the progressive things for which the Democratic party is standing. If you will name any supposed progressive measure I have not stood for and do not now stand for you will find it is either not mentioned in the Baltimore platform or that it is condemned by that platform.

#### Simmons Asked to Lead the Tariff Fight.

When the country had lost hope and the prediction was freely made, inside and outside of Congress, that there could be no action by the Senate on these bills, (House Democratic tariff bills) I was asked by my colleagues to take charge and lead in this fight.

I recognized the difficulty and the responsibility, just as I did in '98 when I was asked to take charge of the white man's fight in this State. We were then confronted by a fusion majority of 40,000; our people were in despair; but I said to the committee when I took charge: "That wall has got to be battered down and shall be battered down, and the white people of this State restored to its control." So, likewise, when I took charge of these tariff bills, I took charge with the determination that something should be done, if it were in range of human possibility. For weeks I worked quietly, trying to restore emity and co-operation between the Democrats and the Insurgents; and when that was accomplished, and it was announced that we were ready to vote and that we had enough votes, there was great rejoicing among the Democrats in the Senate and the country, and there was consternation among the standpat Republicans. The day came. We lost no Democratic votes except upon one bill; and we had enough Insurgent votes, and the bills went to conference.

#### His Success.

But by reason of the fact that the Insurgents, while voting with us on the main issues, had in co-operation with the Regular Republicans placed upon the bills certain amendments objectionable to the Democrats, these bills apparently went to sleep in conference and the country again lost hope; but, my friends, I did not. I went again to work more diligently, if possible, than before, trying to broaden the alliance between the Democrats and the Insurgents, and to get their help to take these obnoxious amendments from such of these bills as were typical of Democratic purpose and as would best illustrate our position on tariff reform. This work was done with the sanction of the Democratic Steering Committee, and with the help of Senator Martin, chairman of that committee, and when it was accomplished it was ratified by the Democratic caucus amid great rejoicing among the Democrats and consternation among the Republicans. Both Houses ratified the action of the conference in removing these amendments; and we sent the metal and wool bills to the President, who again vetoed them, assigning as the reason, in the one case, that his tariff board has not yet had time to report and advise him; and in the other case, that the bill did not conform to the report of that bob-tailed commission.

My part of this tariff program is written in the Congressional Record. It is known by the country. There may be in this State those who for political reasons find fault; but I have the proud satisfaction of knowing that all of my colleagues in the Senate approve, all of them commend, all of them praise, and what is equally gratifying to me, is their verdict that from beginning to end no mistakes had been made and no