

and in directions where the general health, knowledge, comfort and convenience might be improved, we, too, would extend the functions of the state. . . . But it seems to us the vice of socialism in all its degrees is its want of radicalism, of going to the root, . . . (page 60): As for thorough going socialism, which is the more to be honored as having the courage of its convictions, . . . jumping to conclusions without effort to discover causes, it fails to see that oppression does not come from the nature of capital, but from the wrong that robs labor of capital by divorcing it from land, and that creates a fictitious capital that is really capitalized monopoly.

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In harmony with all the foregoing was Henry George's action at the two Singletax conferences of 1890 and 1893 (of which we told in *The Public* of September 1, 1911\*), when he wrote the final paragraph of the *Singletax Platform* at the first Conference and opposed its alteration at the second.

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Also in harmony with the foregoing quotations is his discussion of the principles of Production† in the "*Science of Political Economy*," which did not go to the printer until after his death in 1897. Considering in that work, and at another stage of his inquiry, what was called "scientific socialism" at the time he wrote, he criticized this as having "a tendency to confuse the idea of science with that of something purely conventional or political," as taking "no account of natural laws, neither seeking them nor striving to be governed by them," as being without religion and in tendency atheistic, and as having "no system of individual rights whereby it can define the extent to which the individual is entitled to liberty or to which the state may go in restraining it."

\*See current volume, page 903.

†See "*The Science of Political Economy*," book iii, chapters ix, x, xi, xii, pages 371 to 415.

## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

### SIGNS AND OMENS IN NATIONAL POLITICS.

Washington, D. C., November 4.

It was my good fortune to reach Washington from my long speaking tour of the western country in time to hear the arguments in the two cases involving the validity of the Initiative, Referendum and Recall principles in the Oregon constitution.

One case came up through the refusal of the Pacific States Telephone and Telegraph Company to pay certain taxes under an Initiative law, and the other through the objection of one Frank Kiernan of Portland, a taxpayer, to the issuance of bonds for the building of a bridge, which also involved the Initiative principle.

The case of the telephone company was poorly presented to the Court; but that of Kiernan was well and forcibly presented, Mr. Duniway, the attorney, in closing asserting that as a tax question the case was insignificant, but that as a governmental question it very closely concerned many of the States.

This fitted into the line of argument the attorneys for the State of Oregon had intended to take. Their contention was that both cases were political and not judicial. Attorney General Crawford, of that State, made a most admirable opening and was assisted very ably by City Attorney Grant of Portland and Assistant City Attorney Benbow, and also by Mr. Jackson H. Ralston of Washington, D. C., and Hon. George Fred Williams of Boston.

From the nature of the questions from the Bench to counsel it appeared pretty evident that the Court regarded the cases as political. If it shall hold so it will decide that they are out of its jurisdiction.

There are many here in Washington who, for other reasons, believe this will be the Court's course. Regarding the Court as human after all, they believe it will not care to run counter to strong public opinion by deciding against the Initiative, Referendum and Recall so soon after the notoriously unpopular decisions in the Standard Oil and Tobacco cases. The Court, therefore, is expected to consult prudence and, while not declaring in favor of the Initiative, Referendum and Recall, at least to take to the woods and assert that it has no jurisdiction.

If the Court should however assume jurisdiction and declare against those principles it seems certain from what I saw and heard in the whole western part of the country, that something like a political revolution will occur west of the Mississippi, and that the flames of the revolution will leap across the Mississippi and fast spread toward the Atlantic.

And why not? These principles reduced to their lowest terms are nothing more or less than the assertion by the body of the people of the right of self rule.

But my reading of the Court as I sat there listening to the arguments was, that no matter what the eminent citizens sitting on that Bench may think about these principles, and especially about the principle of Recall as it applies to judges, they will keep "hands off"—at this juncture at least.

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The strong popular feeling for the Initiative, Referendum and especially the Recall, I am persuaded had much to do with the cold reception Mr. Taft met with from Michigan westward. The veto of cotton, wool and the free list had cut deep, but the veto of the Arizona Statehood bill because of its recall constitutional provision was a peculiar affront, because to get it had cost and was costing the West much. It would appear that he has learned his lesson from his western trip and that he now intends to take a marked change of course. My information is that his message to Congress will anticipate radical action by the House of Representatives; that he will try to blanket the House on the tariff issue by again insisting that no action can properly be taken by that body until the Presidential Tariff Board examines conditions and reports,

and he will at the same time send to Congress, or give notice that he will later send to Congress, information from that Board on wool and cotton that will justify him in calling for material reductions in the wool and cotton schedules.

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There is no doubt that the House would meet such a political move as it met the Reciprocity move by the President; that is, pass wool and cotton schedules more or less in conformity with the Presidential suggestions and thus make a double-barrelled attack upon the "stand pat" Senate.

But if the Democrats in control of the House are wise they will go further. They will take up the iron and steel schedule also and make a material cut. In that act they can claim the support of Mr. Taft, for while the President may not in his message advise such action, but may, on the contrary, expressly advise against any tariff action outside of wool and cotton schedules until his Tariff Board shall report further, the House can cite the attack of Mr. Taft's legal adviser, the Attorney General of the United States, upon the steel trust in the suit of the government under the anti-trust law against the United Steel Corporation. Among the grounds for that suit Attorney General Wickersham recites the testimony before the Stanley committee, to the effect that more than a fifth of all the products of the steel trust are sold abroad in competitive markets at prices far below those at which the same products are sold in our protected markets. Attorney General Wickersham did not point to the conclusion that the tariff is, therefore, unnecessary for the protection of the steel industries, but the House can do exactly that from that same testimony.

If the House shall take this course in respect to the iron and steel schedule the Administration will have great difficulty in avoiding it. In leading such an attack, as in leading in other moves of the House, Mr. Speaker Clark, will,—tactically speaking,—be in a most advantageous position. He will have no power to coerce with positions on committees or by exercise of powers that Speakers hitherto have had. But he possesses that far better power—a great personal influence. Whenever he shall decide to call another to the Chair and himself go down on the floor and enter debate he can make that influence felt inside the House and over the country. No man in Congress has so keen a sense of the critical moment and such marked ability to state the case in a brief, condensed speech made up of clear, simple, direct sentences and homely illustrations. And no one is better understood by "the boys up at the fork of the creek." Those who are ignoring Mr. Speaker Clark as among the few that will be considered as possible candidates for the Democratic nomination should think of these circumstances.

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Putting aside the Democratic candidate, the question is who is to be the Republican candidate? Some wise people say that Mr. Taft is sick of it and will not try to be. I doubt it. Others say that the Powers who make Presidents have decided that Mr. Taft is impossible,—that he has destroyed himself

with both the Progressives on the one side and with the Interests on the other; and that, therefore, it will be necessary to choose another man; and that that other man is to be Mr. Justice Hughes of the Supreme Court and formerly Governor of New York. The Powers do not like Hughes and because they did not like him before, they put him on the Supreme Court's shelf; but it is said that now they are disposed to think they had better put Hughes in the Presidency and run the chances with him afterwards, than face certain defeat and perhaps utter ruin without him. The plan talked of is to have the New York Republican delegation declare for Vice President Sherman as its choice for the Presidency, and then suddenly, at the psychological moment, to shift from Sherman to Hughes.

It is known that Hughes likes the bench and perhaps likes it more because it is a life position. It is believed that the Presidential nomination would have to be made to look as if it carried with it a certainty of election to induce him to risk the fight. But this some people think may possibly be made so to appear. It is clear that should the Powers succeed in making Hughes the candidate, the Democrats will have a formidable opponent. Mr. Justice Hughes is a man of brains and a very capable campaigner.

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But not to lose sight of President Taft, it appears to me that he will in his coming message take a radical position not merely upon the tariff issue, but also in respect to some of the matters of investigation by the House. Chief of these is the Alaska question. I shall not be surprised if the President shall declare for a leasing policy in Alaska in respect to the mineral deposits still in possession of the government. Doing this, he will attempt to steal the political thunder of Chairman Robinson of the Committee of Public Lands in the House. I also half expect the President to declare in some form, possibly nebulous, for government ownership and operation of railroads in Alaska, which has been much talked of on the Democratic side of the House, which Secretary Fisher of the Interior Department has shadowed forth in his recent speeches since returning from a visit to Alaska.

This Alaska policy by the President would aim to draw the teeth of the Alaska investigation begun before adjournment and about to be resumed by the committee under the adroit and determined leadership of Mr. Graham of Illinois. Such a Presidential policy would certainly reveal galloping progress of official thought here in Washington. It would also make a very strong appeal to the North-western part of the country which has close ties—commercial, industrial, financial and political—with Alaska. It would even influence in a progressive way the western Provinces of Canada, where I found my audiences on this latest tour very keen about the policy at Washington relative to Canada. But of this I shall have to tell in a letter especially on my recent speaking trip.

HENRY GEORGE, JR.

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Newspapers always excite curiosity. No one ever lays one down without a feeling of disappointment.—Charles Lamb.