
EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

**THE DIRECT LEGISLATION CAMPAIGN
IN ARKANSAS.**

Little Rock, Ark.

It would be illuminating indeed for all good Republicans in Northern States, who regard direct legislation with suspicion on the ground that it is a "Bryan Democrat scheme," to visit Arkansas just now, where an amendment to the State constitution providing for the Initiative and Referendum is an active issue to be decided by the voters at the polls September 12. For Arkansas is as insanely Democratic as Pennsylvania is Republican, and the aforesaid Republican conservative who thinks with his prejudices instead of his brains would be astonished to find a persistent opposition to the Initiative and Referendum by Democratic politicians.

Strangely enough, these valiant champions of "un-terrified Democracy" are opposed to direct legislation, to judge from their talk, for the identical reasons which lead the followers of Lincoln to combat it; to-wit, "the people are not intelligent enough," "it is a Populist idea," "the Socialists are for it," "the Niggers could vote;" and then follows the wearying list of the terrible things—the confusion, anarchy and all—which might happen if these "dangerous powers" were given to the people.

This is the underground talk which is spread among the upper classes. When it comes to the common people more adroit methods must of course be adopted. Here appear, then, the ancient and formidable objections to "this particular amendment," set forth with due gravity by most eminent and praiseworthy pillars of the law, the church and society, all of whom are heartily "in favor of the principle"—but! "the percentages on petition are too low," "the majority required to enact a law by the initiative is entirely too small," it contains the constitutional initiative which would allow most direful things to happen to our "organic law" and upset that venerable and sacred document, the constitution.

Further still an alarming "joker" has been discovered. It is set up that under this amendment towns could "vote in" whisky, gambling, horse racing, etc., in spite of State laws; and a prominent religious editor has been induced to come out against "Amendment 10" on the ground that it is a "gamblers' and saloonkeepers' scheme." Since the "wet" vote of the State will go solidly against the amendment, it is sadly amusing to see this ardent champion of prohibition solemnly calling out in a recent editorial, "Men of God, rally and defeat Amendment No. 10!" when the amendment itself is the only hope he can have to achieve State-wide prohibition. Which again demonstrates the political acumen of the average preacher, long on moral enthusiasm and short on economic facts and political maneuvering.

The real sources of all this opposition, here as elsewhere, are the big corporations, through their adroit lawyers and political tools. The leading Democratic newspaper of the State, "The Gazette," of Little Rock, is the subservient tool of the privileged

interests and is in violent opposition to the amendment; and in charming corporation consistency it is chanting the editorials of the Plunderbund organ of the northwest, "The Oregonian" of Portland, against the whole system. Fully two-thirds of the newspapers of the State are silent or in opposition, but the other third are doing fairly good work. Not more than 25 editors are intelligently and valiantly fighting for the amendment.

A good force in the struggle is the influence of Governor Donaghey, who has not only passively but actively supported the Initiative and Referendum throughout his political career. The labor unions give their usual support, but the most potent favorable factor and the one on which victory depends is the Farmers' Union. This organization has over 1,300 local bodies in the State with a large membership. But like all farmers, they are slow to act, and whether they can be stirred into enough activity to win is problematical.

The amendment must receive for its adoption a majority of the votes cast at the election, and the uncast vote may be responsible for its defeat, since the amendment will be supported by at least two to one by the intelligent citizens who vote upon it.

The indications are that it will be adopted or defeated by a narrow margin, and the deciding factor will probably be the effect which the "joker" scare has upon the temperance people.

The Democratic State committee has done nothing for the amendment, nor will, and as far as they are concerned it will be lost in the scramble for office.

GEORGE JUDSON KING.

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**THE INTERNATIONAL FREE TRADE
CONGRESS.**

Antwerp, Belgium.

The second International Free Trade Congress (vol. xii, p. 1153) was held here August 9 to 11. Nearly every important European and many other countries were represented, and of the nearly 700 accredited delegates, about 400 were in attendance. Of Great Britain's 60 or 70 delegates present, at least 20 were representatives of the United Committees for the Taxation of Land Values and of the English and of the Scottish Leagues for the Taxation of Land Values. Those present from the United States included R. R. Bowker, Mr. and Mrs. Louis R. Ehrlich, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fels, Byron W. Holt, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hoopes, Mr. Harvey N. Shepard and daughter.

Papers were presented on six different topics. Dr. Carl von Tyszka, of Germany, discussed price statistics showing the heavy burden that Protection is placing on the working people of Germany. As a result there has been a fall in the per capita consumption of the higher forms of food and an increase in that of the lower forms.

Professor Lujo Brentano, of Munich, made an address, showing that out of 45 millions paid by the German people as increase in food prices only five go to the national revenue, the remaining 40 going to the landed or protected interest. Prices of land have, consequently, risen enormously. Protection,

then, by increasing the rent of agricultural land has made it progressively harder for the cultivator.

Senator Pulsford, of Australia, submitted a paper showing that an abundance of crops and the tariff of 1901-2 had "swept out of existence all duties between the various States," and Protection is apparently not causing much suffering. He noted, however, that there is a tendency under the recently increased customs rates, to substitute inferior for superior goods.

Dr. B. Basket, of England, after commenting on the recent remarkable declaration of the farmers of Canada that they were unwilling to seek any advantage in tariff favors which would involve the raising of food prices to the mass of the British people, proposed that the Congress send a message of congratulation to these enlightened farmers. It was agreed to unanimously.

On the second day some striking testimony as to the results of Protection were given by several European speakers. Mr. B. Rosenfeld, who owns earthenware factories both in England and Austria, forcibly contrasted the commercial conditions of the two countries. Austria has heavy duties on every kind of machinery, and yet in spite of the Protection thus enjoyed by home manufacturers, his firm was able to send English boilers for their Austrian works at a lower cost than Austrian boilers could be got for. And yet his English workmen received one-third more in wages than his Austrian workmen.

Mr. George N. Barnes, the English labor leader, in the course of a lively speech, defended "dumping" as a benefit to his country. The more such countries as Germany and America dumped their goods in England the better it was for everybody but the monopolist. As a working engineer he held to the principle of free trade because it gave the workers cheaper and better food, prevented the growth of trusts and promoted international peace.

Mr. Joseph Fels, of Philadelphia and London, declared that owing to the tariff of 5 cents a pound on borax in America, there was a great difference between the prices of borax in England and America. As a result he had at times found it cheaper to purchase American borax in England, ship it back to America, manufacture it into soap and get the duty back in the form of a drawback when the soap is exported. In one instance he bought 50 tons (long) in England at 14 pounds per ton (3.1 cents per pound) when the price quoted to him in America was 7 cents per pound. Since making this statement Mr. Fels has been informed by the agent of the borax trust—the Borax Consolidated of London—that he did not buy United States borax in England but borax from South America. The fact that the American brand—the "20-mule team"—had been used on the borax sold in England had deceived Mr. Fels. However, as the Borax Consolidated is an international trust and includes the United States trust, it is immaterial whether the borax bought by Mr. Fels was produced in North or South America. The essential fact is that the trust charges 4 cents more per pound for its borax in protected America than it does in free-trade England.

Miss Dorothy Hunter, who is a prominent English Free Trade propagandist, assured the meeting that the British working classes were in no danger of fall-

ing back on Protection. The Protectionists, however, were active and were using the most contradictory arguments, promising the city artisans that Protection would not raise prices, and promising the farmers that Protection would increase the price of their wheat. Protectionism, she declared, amidst loud applause, only appealed to selfish feelings and local interests, whereas Free Trade made for peace, social progress and universal brotherhood.

As chairman of the Tariff Reform Committee of the Reform Club, I presented a paper, sketching the recent history of Protectionism in the United States. I expressed the opinion that the American had, at last, a surfeit of Protection. I quoted statistics showing the tremendous increase in the cost of living since the passage of the Dingley bill in 1897, and criticised the Lodge Committee for not going back more than ten years in its endeavor to learn the causes of the advance in prices. I referred to the Insurgent movement which promises soon to control the Republican party, and also stated that the farmers, who had hitherto been the mainstay of Protection, are beginning to see what a farce it is. I expressed the opinion that the United States would give a good account of itself on the tariff question in the next few years.

The Reform Club had invited the Congress to hold its next meeting (1912) in New York. This proposition, however, on being put to the vote was lost. The majority preferred either Denmark or Holland, in one of which countries (the choice to be made later by the permanent committee) the next Congress will be held.

From a Single Tax standpoint the most interesting and important event of the Congress was the attempt of the officers to prevent discussion of Mr. Verinder's paper, and the successful attempt of Mr. Fels, Mr. Paul and other land value taxers, to force the Congress to permit such a discussion.*

While it is undoubtedly the intention of some of the officials of the Free Trade Congress to exclude all Single Tax papers from future Congresses, it is on the other hand reasonably certain that the Single Tax camel, having gotten its nose into the Free Trade tent, will soon be in possession of the entire Free Trade camp. That is the logic of the situation.

BYRON W. HOLT.

*Report by Mr. Holt and Mr. Hoopes of the International Single Tax Conference at Antwerp, and its action here alluded to, will appear in the next Public.—Editors of The Public.

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What does it matter if the United States is the only civilized country outside of Spain and Bulgaria which does not have a parcels post? We are not compelled to follow the lead of other countries. We are perfectly able to map out our own course of action. Even if we had not the company of Spain and Bulgaria, still we have both the right and the stamina to stand alone and the money to back it up with a big navy if necessary. What does it matter if other countries carry parcels at a much lower rate than we do? We are a Republic, and they are not. Being a Republic, we can charge ourselves as much as we please and it's nobody's business if we do.—Puck.