

Mr. Roosevelt spoke at Fargo on the 5th, where he stated in answer to a questioner that the expenses of his tour are paid by The Outlook, and where his subject was the labor question. On the 6th he spoke at the Conservation Congress in St. Paul.

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National Conservation Congress.

At St. Paul on the 5th the National Conservation Congress (pp. 708, 758) assembled, with Bernard N. Baker as president in the chair. Gov. Eberhart made an address of welcome in behalf of the State of Minnesota, and was followed by President Taft, Gov. Stubbs of Kansas, Gov. Norris of Montana, Gov. Vesey of South Dakota, and Gov. Deneen of Illinois.

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Mr. Taft is reported to have taken sides cautiously with the State's rights as opposed to the national policy of conservation, thereby placing himself in accord with the corporation leaders who oppose the Pinchot-Garfield (and probably the Roosevelt) plans of national conservation. Mr. Taft took this stand specifically in connection with the subject of drainage, saying:

Suggestions have been made that the United States ought to aid in the drainage of swamp lands belonging to the States or private owners, because, if drained, they would be exceedingly valuable for agriculture and contribute to the general welfare by extending the area of cultivation. I deprecate the agitation in favor of such legislation. It is inviting the general government into contribution from its treasury toward enterprises that should be conducted either by private capital or at the instance of the State. In these days there is a disposition to look too much to the Federal government for everything. I am liberal in the construction of the Constitution with reference to Federal power, but I am firmly convinced that the only safe course for us to pursue is to hold fast to the limitations of the Constitution and to regard as sacred the powers of the States.

Regarding the Alaska coal lands (p. 684) Mr. Taft said that in his judgment they — should be opened and that the Pacific slope should be given the benefit of the comparatively cheap coal of fine quality which can be furnished at reasonable prices from these fields; but the public, through the government, ought certainly to retain a wise control and interest in these coal deposits, and I think it may do so safely if Congress will authorize the granting of leases, as already suggested for government coal lands in the United States, with provisions forbidding the transfer of the leases except with the consent of the government, thus preventing their acquisition by a combination or monopoly, and upon limitations as to the area to be included in any one lease to one individual, and at a certain moderate rental, with royalties upon the coal mined proportioned to the market value of the coal either at Seattle or San Francisco.

In the rest of his speech, Mr. Taft discussed the

general conservation subject with reference to the mineral, forest, oil and gas, phosphate, and water power lands belonging to the national government; and made a detailed statement of the withdrawal policy initiated by President Roosevelt, saying on this point that the precedent Mr. Roosevelt set— was followed by the present Administration. Doubt had been expressed in some quarters as to the power in the Executive to make such withdrawals. The confusion and injustice likely to arise if the courts were to deny the power led me to appeal to Congress to give the President the express power. Congress has complied. The law as passed does not expressly validate or confirm previous withdrawals, and, therefore, as soon as the new law was passed, I myself confirmed all the withdrawals which had theretofore been made by both Administrations by making them over again.

Mr. Taft concluded with a warning that—

the time has come for a halt in general rhapsodies over conservation, making the word mean every known good in the world; for, after the public attention has been roused, such appeals are of doubtful utility and do not direct the public to the specific course that the people should take, or have their legislators take, in order to promote the cause of conservation. The rousing of emotions on a subject like this, which has only dim outlines in the minds of the people affected, after a while ceases to be useful, and the whole movement will, if promoted on these lines, die for want of practical direction and of demonstration to the people that practical reforms are intended.

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The conference gossip of the 5th indicated that not only had delegations from the Northwest been packed with corporation representatives opposed to national conservation, but that this was true also of the delegations from Wisconsin, Illinois and New Jersey. On the 6th Mr. Roosevelt, who made the speech of the day, seemed to allude to this when he said:

Open opposition we can overcome, but I warn you especially against the men who come to congresses such as this, ostensibly as disinterested citizens, but actually as the paid agents of the special interests. I heartily approve the attitude of any corporation interested in the deliberations of a meeting such as this, which comes hither to advocate, by its openly accredited agents, views which it believes the meeting should have in mind. But I condemn with equal readiness the appearance of a corporate agent before any convention who does not declare himself frankly as such.

In this speech Mr. Roosevelt touched the question of State versus national regulation, putting himself in opposition to President Taft in this wise:

One of the most important conservation questions of the moment relates to the control of water-power monopoly in the public interest. There is apparent to the judicious observer a distinct tendency on the part of our opponents to cloud the issue by raising the question of State as against Federal jurisdiction.

We are ready to meet that issue if it is forced upon us. But there is no hope for the plain people in such conflicts of jurisdiction. The essential question is not one of hair-splitting legal technicalities. It is simply this: Who can best regulate the special interests for the public good? Most of the predatory corporations are inter-State or have inter-State affiliations. Therefore they are largely out of reach of effective State control and fall of necessity within the Federal jurisdiction. One of the prime objects of those among them that are grasping and greedy is to avoid any effective control either by State or nation; they advocate at this time State control simply because they believe it to be the least effective. In the great fight of the people to drive the special interests from the dominion of our government, the nation is stronger and its jurisdiction is more effective than that of any State. The most effective weapon against these great corporations, most of which are financed and owned on the Atlantic coast, will be Federal laws and the Federal Executive. That is why I so strongly oppose the demand to turn these matters over to the States. It is fundamentally a demand against the interest of the plain people, of the people of small means, against the interest of our children and our children's children, and it is primarily in the interest of the great corporations which desire to escape all government control.

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Republican Politics in Kansas.

The party council of the Republican party of Kansas (p. 755) met at Topeka on the 30th, and having elected Senator Bristow as permanent chairman, adopted a platform in which they declare:

Desiring to express our pride in the traditions of our party we feel that respect and veneration for those traditions and for the history we have made may be most adequately and fittingly expressed by turning our faces forward rather than backward. Therefore we bind ourselves to specific future performances rather than to ask for votes by reason of our past achievements, however great these may be.

With that preamble, and having endorsed "such efforts as President Taft has made to fulfill the promises of the Republican national platform," and pledged "support for all efforts for the enactment of progressive laws," the platform proceeds:

We pledge anew our loyalty to the Republican national platform of 1908 and bind ourselves to carry its declarations, accepting the policy of protection as outlined in our party platform as the established policy of the nation and binding our members of Congress in both Houses to vote steadfastly and without reference to any other instructions for a revision of the tariff law of 1909 using as a basis for fixing duties the difference between the cost of production at home and abroad with a reasonable profit for American manufacturers. We do not recognize the revision of the tariff of 1909 as a satisfactory fulfillment of the tariff pledge of the Republican platform, and we therefore pledge the people of Kansas that the Republican Senators and Congressmen from this State shall work and vote for legislation that

will create an independent non-partisan tariff commission with ample power and sufficient appropriation to ascertain accurately the difference between the cost of production at home and abroad and, after having obtained such information, we hereby pledge our Republican Senators and Representatives to fix immediately the duties upon the basis of this information.

The remainder of the platform consists of specific pledges. Those relating to national affairs bind the Senators and Representatives from Kansas—to vote for a joint resolution that will promote the revision of the tariff, one schedule at a time; to support and vote for a rule that will make the membership of the more important House committees elective instead of appointive; to vote for a law providing for a jail sentence for wilful violators of the anti-trust laws; to vote for such further amendments to the inter-State commerce law as will give power and money to the inter-State commerce commission to ascertain the physical valuation of the railroads; to vote and work for effective laws that will prevent overcapitalization of corporations and will divert all moneys received for the sale of stocks and bonds to actual investments in construction or extension or betterment of property owned by the corporations; to continue the policy of the Republican party now firmly established of caring for the soldiers and sailors of the war of the rebellion and for those who carried the flag of liberty to the oppressed of other lands; to vote on all measures concerning the conservation of our natural resources along the lines advocated by former President Roosevelt, as opposed to the lines laid down by those who are hiding behind the out-worn doctrine of States' rights, and we demand that every possible effort be made to prevent private interests from obtaining unrestricted ownership or unchecked control over the vast mineral and water and timber resources of Alaska; to make every effort to secure the submission to the people of a Constitutional amendment that will provide for the direct election of United States Senators by the people; to support a law that will provide for six year terms for Federal, District and Circuit judges.

Relative to State affairs the platform endorses the administration of Governor Stubbs, and pledges the party to the following:

A law that will place public utilities, railroads, telegraph, telephone, electric light and power companies, street railways, distributors of gas, whether in cities or by pipe line, express companies and common carriers of all kinds, under the control of a State commission having authority over the issues of stocks and bonds, having means and power to obtain the physical valuation of the plants of these corporations, to fix and adjust rates upon their own motion and to regulate rates and services in the interests of the people of Kansas and the investors and employes of these corporations; a law that will compel corporations doing business in Kansas to begin all litigation in Kansas courts and take no refuge in the Federal courts until the litigation in question has been passed upon by the Kansas Supreme Court; a law that will make the second offense against the Kansas prohibitory law punishable by a sentence to