

ing to be heard in answer to Mr. Brown (now ex-Judge Brown) that the rule requiring applicants for the floor to give their names upon being recognized by the chair, was strictly enforced. For a time the discussion ran against Judge Brown's position, and then a voice rang out clear and sharp: "Mr. Chairman!" The proprietor of the voice was duly recognized by the chair, whereupon he secured undivided attention by his unique compliance with the rule:

"H. H. Hardinge—single taxer—on deck!"

With this spell-binding introduction, Mr. Hardinge went on for the allotted time, replying to Judge Brown's critics in a concise, penetrating, forceful argument, marked with bursts of eloquence and unique in presentation, which made the occasion one to be remembered. He had brought to bear upon this social question the feeling and the reasoning which have made him not only a mechanic but a master mechanic—not only an artisan but a master of his art.

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The injustice of private monopoly of land was thrust upon Mr. Hardinge's attention when as a boy he was warned off the hillside above the whirlpool rapids at Niagara Falls, upon the occasion of a visit to the Falls while he lived in Canada. This was done by a policeman whose sole duty seemed to be to direct visitors to a gate in the fence, through which they could go down to the rapids free but must pay half a dollar to get back again. As Hardinge's only asset then was a return ticket to Toronto, he did not see the whirlpool rapids until thirty years after, and a sense of the unfairness of private monopoly of this natural wonder rankled him.

His resentment found logical expression in 1893, when a copy of Henry George's "Irish Land Question" fell into his hands. This systematized his protest for him, on broad principles, which his logical mind instantly recognized, adopted and comprehensively applied.

Describing his temperament himself with an allusion to his adoption of Henry George's views, Mr. Hardinge has recently said: "I have been a rebel for about twenty-five years—a methodical one for seventeen."

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One of the first to help organize the People's party in Illinois, Mr. Hardinge won second place at the election of 1894 as its candidate for State Senator in a four-sided contest. He was with the Independence League in 1908 on local issues, but against it and for Bryan on national issues.

Otherwise Mr. Hardinge has never been in politics, nor is he at all interested in party conflicts except as a necessary means to a larger end.

He is now varying his work at his business with lecturing under the auspices of the Henry George Lecture Association, of which Frederick H. Monroe of Palos Park, Illinois, is the manager. Mr. Hardinge is an extemporaneous speaker who sometimes does not catch his best swing, especially if he has no opposition to face, but who, when the occasion inspires him, seldom fails to carry conviction and arouse enthusiasm.

There is nothing of the conventional speaker about him. He thinks out loud and argues as he goes along. Always logical, mercilessly so, always good natured, frequently witty and eloquent, he is prolific also of illustrative ideas and has a happy faculty of lightly turning arguments one way and another and inside and out, so as to exhibit them thoroughly and subject them to one of the decisive tests of all argument—the saving sense of humor.

In economics Mr. Hardinge is a single taxer, and while neither a politician nor a religionist he is a fundamental democrat both in politics and in religion.

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## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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### "THE RETURN FROM ELBA."

Sioux City, Iowa, Dec. 6, 1909.

A newspaper correspondent of repute, who accompanied President Taft on his cross-country trip, informs the readers of a prominent weekly publication—I allude to Samuel G. Blythe and the Saturday Evening Post—that the Western country, personally friendly and well-disposed toward the President, has suspended judgment as to his administration, and is hoping against hope that it will prove satisfactory. Mr. Blythe admits that grave questions have arisen as to Mr. Taft's freedom from domination by selfish influences, but declares that the West still trusts in his ability to work out the problem of administering the nation's affairs in the interest of the entire people, as opposed to the interest of the predatory few.

What this distinguished correspondent says may be true of the far West; but it is not true of the middle West. Particularly is it untrue of Iowa. This storm center of insurgency is not in a state of suspended judgment touching Mr. Taft. It has made up its mind, and the conclusion reached is adverse to the President. The average Iowa farmer who voted for Taft has become convinced, in sorrow and regret, that Mr. Taft is the President of the old machine crowd of his party. In due season, when nominations for 1912 are to be made, the voice of Iowa and of other mid-Western States will be lifted in behalf of some other aspirant.

Theodore Roosevelt, in his personality and his policies, embodied the political ideas of the average man in the Missouri river valley. No man in our history captured their hearts and their imaginations as he did. It is beside the question to discuss whether the unbounded confidence reposed in him was justified by the facts of his public career, or to argue the soundness or unsoundness of his political philosophy. The truth remains that the farmers of this great region believed, or rather believe, that Roosevelt stood as a rock against the encroachments of privilege and greed; and that confidence, instead of being impaired, has been strengthened by the fact that his chosen successor, to all appearances, has gone over bodily to the opposition.

These people took Taft on Roosevelt's guaranty. That he was the man selected by Roosevelt to carry out the Rooseveltian policies was sufficient. They knew little or nothing about him personally. When he assumed office it was natural that they should watch with jealous eye to see if he would remain true to the Roosevelt principles; and they have been disappointed almost from the first day of his administration.

Confidence in Taft received its first jar when the newspapers announced that notorious anti-Rooseveltians were being made welcome at the White House. Then came the consciousness that ultra-conservatism of the corporation lawyer brand was to control in the councils of the cabinet. Following that swiftly was the news that Taft had been party to the re-election of Speaker Cannon, regarded in the mid-West as the head devil of the old machine oligarchy. By the time the special session of Congress met, public trust of Taft had already begun seriously to weaken.

Then came the tariff struggle. All through the long days of last summer there was a feeling that the President was letting his campaign promise of revision downward go by default, while he played golf. Hope flamed up a little when, toward the close of the debate, he proclaimed with a show of firmness that his pledge must be redeemed. But it died again when he accepted the pitiful compromise bill and tried to seduce Western Congressmen and Senators from their insurgent allegiance into voting for it. From that time on the mid-Western insurgents—who compose the bulk of their party hereabouts—have reckoned Taft as hopeless.

And if the tariff fiasco were not enough to destroy his popularity, the President himself furnished the material to complete the task. It came in his speeches during his tour. He started at Boston by praising Aldrich, leader of the tariff betrayal—Aldrich, who out here typifies everything that is repugnant to the Rooseveltian policies to which Taft was pledged. Coming West, the President seized an opportunity afforded him at Winona, Minn., to praise the only Minnesota Congressman who violated the party's tariff pledge, and virtually to read out of the party the Senators and Congressmen who stood steadfast.

That was the capsheaf. It ended forever any hope of Mr. Taft's being able to win back the confidence of those States which trust and approve the leadership of Cummins and Dolliver, Bristow and Mur-

dock, Clapp, Nelson and La Follette. The contempt which he heaped upon those men will be resented by their constituents to the last day of his public life.

Elsewhere on his trip Mr. Taft merely added to the unpopularity of his course and confirmed the judgment of condemnation which his Winona speech brought down upon him. He seized every occasion to hob-nob with the most offensive machine characters which his party can boast, and to disparage and ignore independent popular leaders. The impression he gave was that the old dollar-dominated regime of Mark Hanna had been restored in all its fullness, and that the day of Theodore Roosevelt was over. That is the view the middle West took of his course. It is a view, moreover, which cannot be eradicated by anything short of a miracle.

Now that he is back at Washington Mr. Taft has gone still further. He has written a letter to William Dudley Foulke of Indiana, which has been widely commented on in the middle West, belittling and denouncing the insurgent movement, scolding Mr. Foulke for allying himself with it, and bearing down hard on the old key of "party solidarity" and "submission to the will of the party majority."

The idea that this letter conveys to one acquainted with sentiment in these mid-Western States—States so essential to Republican national success—is that Mr. Taft is stupid. Inconceivable as it may seem, he has failed utterly to grasp the significance of the strength and militancy of the insurgent movement. If he understood it in the remotest degree, it is incomprehensible that he should openly flout it, even if he intended ultimately to crush it. The Foulke letter was the fatuous act of a man who does not know and who cannot learn what the rank and file are thinking about and talking about.

Washington correspondents report that the President is so highly pleased with his composition that he has shown it with pride to many of his callers. It is trite, perhaps, but nevertheless it is appropriate here to quote the old proverb that "whom the gods would destroy they first make mad."

Many minor causes have contributed to the undoing of Mr. Taft in the middle West. The Ballinger-Pinchot affair is a running sore. Insurgents believe that Mr. Ballinger intends handing over to land-grabbers as much of the public domain as he can, and to despoil the water-power resources of the country. They feel that Mr. Taft's quiescent attitude toward this cabineteer indicates that he is either in sympathy with his plans, or too dull and easy-going to checkmate him and get rid of him. The semi-official announcement that insurgent Senators are to be deprived of important patronage hurts the President and strengthens the Senators. The intimation that a "conservative" is to get the vacant place on the Federal supreme bench irritates. A thousand and one little things piled together make of themselves a mountain of distrust and aversion. The "Taft smile" even has become a subject of sardonic comment.

In a previous article in *The Public* (p. 942) I endeavored to emphasize the strength of the insurgent movement in the middle West, and to point out that, for various causes, it includes the vast majority of the Republican rank and file. These people are keenly alive to what is going on in national politics—more so than the people of any other section of the Union. To a great extent the press of this section is with them, fighting their battles and enlightening them as to the true significance of what is occurring daily at the nation's capital. They are not easily deceived. That they retain undiminished confidence in Roosevelt may argue, to some people, that the task of blinding their eyes is not an impossible one; but the fact is nevertheless true that they have not been deceived in Mr. Taft's intentions and alliances for a single moment since he was inaugurated.

Nothing short of a complete reversal of Mr. Taft's policies and a complete, open and public severance of his alliance with the machine element of his party, represented by Cannon and Aldrich, can win the middle West back to him. As matters stand now these people are awaiting with impatience the time when he can be supplanted with another. "The return from Elba" looms large in their imagination. The rank and file of the insurgents—probably not their leaders—hope that Roosevelt will be a candidate against Taft for the nomination in 1912. They cherish no resentment toward him for Taft's conduct. They feel that he, like themselves, bought a gold brick; and they ask nothing better than an opportunity to demonstrate at the polls their trust in him.

If Roosevelt is not a candidate the insurgents will find another one. They may have several. Beyond all peradventure the middle Western States in the next Republican national convention will cast their votes against the incumbent. If he should be nominated despite them, a political cataclysm may be expected. Once under way political revolutions move swiftly; and this insurgent movement, as Mr. Taft will ultimately learn to his sorrow, is terribly in earnest.

D. K. L.

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## NEWS NARRATIVE

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To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

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Week ending Tuesday, December 7, 1909.

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### Congress.

The first regular session of the 61st Congress (p. 778) assembled on the 6th. And on the 7th the President's message was read.

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### The Nicaraguan Situation.

Secretary Knox has taken a step with reference

to Nicaragua (p. 1163) which is reported from Washington to have won him, from the South American representatives there, the title of "Dictator and Lord High Executioner of Latin-America." This is due to the extraordinary document with which he has suspended diplomatic relations with Nicaragua. In transmitting passports on the 1st to Felipe Rodriguez, the Nicaraguan charge d'affaires, he wrote a long explanatory letter. From this letter one may gather the reasons for the warlike attitude of the Administration. Alluding to an international understanding made in 1907 between Central American republics to refrain from invasion of one another and to submit difficulties to arbitration instead of warfare, Secretary Knox's letter charges President Zelaya of Nicaragua with bad faith. It charges him also with overthrowing republican institutions except in name. Appeals to the United States have been made, the letter continues, by a majority of the Central American Republics, and now a great body of the Nicaraguan people appeal through revolution. It further charges that President Zelaya has killed two Americans who were officers in the revolutionary service, complains that the American Consulate at the Nicaraguan capital is menaced, and announces that—

from every point of view it has evidently become difficult for the United States further to delay more active response to the appeals so long made to its duty to its citizens, to its dignity, to Central America and to civilization. The government of the United States is convinced that the revolution represents the ideals and the will of a majority of the Nicaraguan people more faithfully than does the government of President Zelaya, and that its peaceable control is well-nigh as extensive as that hitherto so sternly attempted by the government at Managua. There is now added the fact, as officially reported from more than one quarter, that there are already indications of a rising in the western provinces in favor of a presidential candidate intimately associated with the old regime. In this it is easy to see new elements tending toward a condition of anarchy which leaves, at a given time, no definite responsible source to which the government of the United States could look for reparation for the killing of Messrs. Cannon and Groce, or, indeed, for the protection which must be assured American citizens and American interests in Nicaragua.

For these reasons diplomatic relations are severed by President Taft through Secretary Knox, but the Nicaraguan representative is assured of access to Secretary Knox in these terms:

Although your diplomatic quality is terminated, I shall be happy to receive you, as I shall be happy to receive the representative of the revolution, each as the unofficial channel of communication between the government of the United States and the de facto authorities to whom I look for the protection of American interests pending the establishment in Nicaragua of a government with which the United States can maintain diplomatic relations.