

The Public

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EDITORIAL

Protectionism and Insurgency.

If the Republicans of Iowa are as firmly convinced of the incontrovertible soundness and wisdom of Protection as their platform declares them to be, they are hot upon the highway toward a shocking disillusionment. For in the same platform they point to "the difference between the cost of producing dutiable commodities at home and abroad" as the one important fact to be known, and therefore favor the creation of a non-partisan commission to ascertain that difference and publish the facts. Let this be honestly and efficiently done, and all apparent need for Protection to maintain "American wages," the only consideration in support of Protection that has any value outside the directors' rooms of tariff-sheltered trusts and the confidential intercourse of domineering Standpat leaders, will vanish.

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The difference in the cost of production in this country and abroad once generally known to the American people, it will be obvious to every voter, though a wayfaring fool, that the cost of production is lower in the United States than anywhere else in the world. The reason is that wages of labor are higher everywhere else than here. The notion that American wages are relatively high, rests upon a ludicrously illogical method of comparison. Look at comparative wage statistics in any or all Protection literature, and you will find

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that the *time* consumed in production, and never the resulting *product*, is the basis of comparison. Because labor abroad gets, say, a dollar a day, whereas American labor in the same industry gets, say, two dollars, the conclusion is implied and often asserted, that American industries cannot pay American wages unless competing foreign products are burdened with a tariff high enough to make up for the lower wages abroad. This is like saying that a freight car can't compete with a wheelbarrow because it costs so much more. The comparative *productiveness* of American and foreign labor, the determining factor, is ignored. If American labor at two dollars a day produces, say, twice as much in a day as labor abroad at one dollar a day, why is Protection necessary to maintain American wages?

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That is the question Protectionists will have to answer to a long befooled people, when the Insurgents shall have made common knowledge of the difference between cost of production abroad and at home,—which is one of our reasons for liking the Insurgents in spite of their fatuous confidence in the soundness and wisdom of Protection. We suspect that it is one of the reasons why they are not liked by Aldrich and other shrewd beneficiaries of Protection.

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The Oregon Fight for People's Power in Government.

We advise all persons, wherever they may live, who are interested in clearing the Jungle and killing the Beast that Judge Ben B. Lindsey tells about, to send to W. S. U'Ren, Oregon City, Oregon, for a pamphlet just published as a campaign document in the People's Power fight in Oregon. Although the pamphlet would doubtless be mailed free of charge to any applicant, applicants ought to enclose at least a small campaign contribution to cover the cost of complying with their request. In addition to its local value as a campaign document, this pamphlet is a capital supplement to Senator Bourne's speech (pp. 697, 698); for, as the speech graphically describes the progress Oregon has already made in government *by* the people, the pamphlet—which ought to be got into the hands of every voter in Oregon, of every voter in every State for that matter—describes as graphically the efforts, on the one hand to strengthen the political power of the people and on the other to pull it up by the roots, which are to be voted on at the election in November. No one who reads this pamphlet and Bourne's speech, can be

deceived by the newspaper misrepresentation that has already set in regarding the struggle in Oregon which is now under way.

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Some of the formal features of the Oregon pamphlet are interesting for peculiarities required by the Oregon election laws. For instance, in order to comply with the "corrupt practices law," the pamphlet carries the statement that it "is printed by Multnomah Printing Co., 82½ Front St., Portland, Oregon, and the authors are W. G. Eggleston, of Portland, Oregon, A. D. Cridge, of Portland, Oregon, and W. S. U'Ren, of Oregon City, Oregon." To appreciate this, one must imagine the embarrassments attending the publication in Oregon of a campaign document written for the Interests by some Dugald Dalgetty of the pen.

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Questions of taxation and exemptions are dealt with in the pamphlet, notably and concretely. It shows in detail in this connection the actual taxes for every Oregon county in 1909, under "the general property" tax which prevails throughout the United States, and what they would have been under the "land value tax" which is forging ahead in Canada, Australia, etc., and is likely to be voted on in Oregon upon Initiative petition in 1912. In Baker county, for example, the pamphlet shows that under "the general property tax" farmers' lands were taxed \$79,045, and would have been taxed under "the land value tax" only \$40,319; that farmers' buildings, stock and implements were taxed \$36,171, and would have been taxed nothing; that improved city lots were taxed only \$14,074 and would have been taxed \$30,549; that improvements on city lots were taxed \$29,686 and would have been taxed nothing; that speculators' land in the country was taxed only \$35,184 and would have been taxed \$76,372; that vacant city lots were taxed only \$14,074 and would have been taxed \$30,549; and that franchise corporations were taxed only \$57,025 and would have been taxed \$123,781; and yet that the total taxes were only \$17 more under "the general property tax" than they would have been under "the land value tax." The other counties offer approximately the same contrasts in favor of taxpayers who are users of land, and against those who are only forestallers. This data is accompanied in the pamphlet with an explanation in general terms and by examples, enabling any taxpayer to calculate the difference to himself, in dollars and cents, between the two fiscal policies—"the general property tax" and "the land value tax." This feature of the pamphlet is alone of