

The Public

**A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making**

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EDITORIAL

The Insurgents and Reciprocity.

That the Insurgent Republicans have lost ground politically in consequence of their attitude toward the Taft reciprocity agreement is sadly true. But it does not follow that they are therefore chargeable with disloyalty to principle. The truth of the matter is quite the other way. Should it turn out that they have in the long run lost ground, their sacrifice will have been a sacrifice to principle. It is a bad principle, to be sure—bad in civic morals and utterly unsound in economics,—but a principle nevertheless which has deceived its hundreds of thousands. It has been the Republican principle for all the life of that party since the early eighties.

La Follette and his associates cling to it, and in good faith we have no doubt. They have played false with no one. When they became Insurgents, it was not on the free trade question. It was on the question of revising the whole tariff downward, and not as freetraders, but as protectionists. When, therefore, the reciprocity treaty came, with its sacrifice of the farmer to free trade, as they (being sincere protectionists) believed, they stood out for the principle of protection with which that agreement is clearly at variance. They were true to the party creed. It is they, not President Taft and his advisers, who are loyal to principle, unless he is not a protectionist any longer but a free trader.

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Senator Borah stated the matter with absolute fairness when he declared in a Senate speech on the 29th that—

the establishment of free trade in agricultural products is either a denial of the principles for which the Republican party has heretofore stood, or a coarse and brutal betrayal of the most loyal constituency the party organization has ever had.

The reciprocity agreement is in fact a denial of the Republican principle to which Senator Borah alluded; but it is the denial and not the principle that is sound. Farmers are betrayed by protection, not by the reciprocity agreement. The Insurgents may see this if they look economic principle square in the face. If they then adopt a policy as loyal to the true principle, by turning toward which President Taft has begun restoring himself to popular favor, as they are now loyal to the false principle, whereby they are helping him politically and to their own political undoing, they will all the more likely find themselves in the political saddle once more. It is not disloyalty to principle that is losing them ground in politics; it is loyalty to a false principle, the falseness of which the people are getting wise to.

* *

Labor Cost of Production.

We are often asked for information on the question of differences in the labor cost of production in the United States as compared with other countries. We know now of nothing better to recommend than the speech of William C. Redfield in Congress on the 12th of June. The burden of Congressman Redfield's speech is that with proper equipment and good management "a high wage rate means inevitably a low labor cost." In other words, efficient manufacturers make more in a country of high wages than they could in one of low wages.

* *

A Woman in Danger.

In the Province of Ontario there is a despairing woman in jail—Angelino Napolitano. She awaits a ceremonial hanging. For that relic of barbarism survives in Ontario, along with the other Provinces of Canada and in most of our States. Our laws cling to it with brutal tenacity, under the influence of men and women who think they thereby serve their God.

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This woman's hanging has been postponed until some day in August. Not in mercy to her, not for humanity's sake, not for love of God or man; but that she may give birth to a child before she hangs. More humanely might any babe be buried

in its mother's grave, confined in her womb, than carry through life the sense of outraged affection it would inherit from having been born at the foot of its mother's gallows stair. With greater safety to society, too. A very angel must such a person be not to hate his kind with murderous hatred; a prodigy of mental stamina, to escape the horrors of homicidal insanity. But this is the welcome our Canadian neighbors are officially preparing for that unborn child.

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And dreadful as it would be if the woman were bad, incredibly cruel as her execution would be if she were a criminal—this woman whose hanging is postponed so that a babe may be torn from her breast as the deadly noose settles upon her shoulders,—it becomes unspeakably wicked if the truth about her case is as it is reported. These reports are to the effect that the act for which she is to be hanged by the Province of Ontario was in the highest degree commendable. To kill in self-defense is not murder. It is no crime at all. And shall not homicide by a woman in defense of her chastity rank at least as high? Of this woman it is reported, and there has been no contradiction, that she killed her husband to prevent his forcing her into prostitution. He had already made a "white slave" bargain with that purpose in view. If this explanation of the homicide for which she is under death sentence be true, the Canadian authorities should be deluged with letters in her behalf. The womanhood of both countries, of all countries, should make her release their duty. To hang a woman is repulsive under any circumstances; to hang a woman for killing a "white slave" dealer who had already sold her and whose marital relation to her placed her in his power, would deservedly bring down universal execration upon every official responsible for it.

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Law-Making Judges.

Harper's Weekly digs down to the bottom of the question of recalling judges. To the insistence of a correspondent that the Recall is necessary to avoid the danger to democracy of giving irresponsible law-making power to any class, the candid Weekly replies: "Is there not some novelty in the idea that the common run of people are so much more trustworthy than the judges?" There you have undisguised the answer to the judicial recall idea. There is no other answer in substance. The common run of people must have somebody to make their laws, they being themselves unworthy as compared with—well, with judges where there are no dukes.