TAFT ANSWERS COL. ROOSEVELT

President Exposes Duplicity of His Old Friend.

REPLIES TC EVERY CHARGE.

Produces Proof That Roosevelt Deliberately Misrepresented Him In This Campaign—Declares Him Menace to Republic and to Prosperity.

President Taft in three speeches in Massachusetts on April 25 personally answered the misrepresentations of Theodore Roosevelt of the position of the president with respect to the issues of this campaign, with respect to his administration and of himself personally. The president said he regretted the necessity of speaking plainly about his "old friend," to whom he frankly admitted a personal obligation. The president said, however, that the situation created by Mr. Roosevelt's personal attacks on him and his administration made further silence intolerable.

The basis of the president's reply to Mr. Roosevelt was the well known "square deal" maxim of Mr. Roosevelt. As he answered each Roosevelt charge the president inquired, "Have I had a square deal?" In order these subjects were treated by the president.

Misrepresentation of the President's Speeches.

First.—Under this heading President Taft declared that Mr. Roosevelt had deliberately misrepresented him when he said, "Mr. Taft defines the issue when he says that our government is and should be a government of all the people by a representative part of the people."

"The excerpt which Mr. Roosevelt uses is taken from my speech at Toledo," said the president. "It is garbled. I did not say this 'should be a government of all the people by a representative part of the people. I said it 'is a government of all the people by a representative part of the people,' and it is. I pointed out that this government of ours is a government by the adult voting males in order to show the necessity for constitutional restrictions to protect the nonvoters among the people against the possible injustice and aggression of a majority of the voters. Was it honest, was it fair in Theodore Roosevelt to seize one sentence from a speech to garble it and then give it a meaning which he knew from the context it could not bear? Do the people of Massachusetts think that this is a square deal?"

Unfair Charge as to Bosses.

Second.—In reply to the charge that "bosses" were supporting his candidacy President Taft pointed out that William Flinn of Pittsburgh, "one of the worst municipal bosses that the history of that state knows;" Walter Brown of Ohio, "the only boss in full commission in the state," and William Ward of New York were supporting Mr. Roosevelt. Senator Crane of Massachusetts, whom Mr. Roosevelt has mentioned, President Taft said, had "three times been invited by Mr. Roosevelt into his cabinet" and that Mr. Roosevelt had invited him to manage his presidential campaign in 1904.

"When I consider the eagerness with which Mr. Roosevelt has accepted in his various campaigns the assistance of Mr. Aldrich, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Penrose, Mr. Quay, Mr. Platt, Mr. Foraker and many other men," said the president, "I do not hesitate to say that it involves the most audacious effrontery on his part to attack me because men he characterizes as bosses are now supporting me. This is peculiarly unfair on his part in view of his well known political history and is another instance of his departing from the rule of a square deal."

False Statements In Lorimer Case to People of Illinois.

Third.—In this connection President Taft said Mr. Roosevelt had made it appear that a vote cast for Taft in Illinois would be a vote for Lorimer. "I have not seen Mr. Lorimer for two years and have had no communication with or from him," he said. "I did not ask his support. He did not tender it to me. Any influence he may have given in my favor was not because he liked me, but because he felt more bitter toward Mr. Roosevelt." The president then quoted in full a letter he had himself written to Mr. Roosevelt on Jan. 6, 1911, in which he outlined the steps he was taking to have Lorimer unseated in the senate and stating that Senators Root, Burton, Nelson and others had become interested at his suggestion. He pointed out to Mr. Roosevelt how they could best work together on the case.

"I make this letter public only to show that of all the people in the world Theodore Roosevelt ought to have known and did know that I was not a partisan of Lorimer, did not sympathize with him and never gave Mr. Roosevelt or any one else the slightest reason to suppose I had changed my mind. I submit to the people of Massachusetts that, with his intimate knowledge of the facts, Mr. Roosevelt's linking of my name with Lorimer's for the purpose of inducing the people of Illinois to vote against me on account of their feeling against Senator Lorimer was not giving me a square deal.

Change of Front on Reciprocity.

"Fourth.—Mr. Roosevelt," said the president, "now seeks to take advantage of the supposed feeling among the farmers of the country against the reciprocity agreement with Canada which I made and induced congress to adopt, but which Canada finally rejected. I would not object to this as a legitimate argument in a political controversy against me and in his favor if the fact were not that I consulted him ten days before I made the agreement, stated the arguments pro and con, especially the effect of it on agricultural products, and asked him to confer with his colleagues on the Outlook as to its wisdom and public benefit and let me know his and their judgment. He replied approving the agreement in the most enthusiastic terms and complimenting me for having brought it forward."

The president then made public a letter of his own to Mr. Roosevelt, dated Jan. 11, 1911, and a reply from Mr. Roosevelt the following day. In his letter the president declared he signed the Payne tariff bill not only because it was a better law than the Dingley law, but because it was a concession by the Republican party that downward revision was necessary and because the old doctrine that what was needed was a Chinese wall had been departed from.

Admitting that while it might temporarily have a tendency to reduce the cost of food products, the president said he believed it would in the end tend to a stability of food prices. The president said also, "We shall get a revision, not as heavy a one as I would like, but a substantial one and equivalent certainly to the French reciprocity treaty (between Canada and France) and probably more—on manufactures." He also pointed out that Canada's entire business after the adoption of the treaty would then be conducted through the United States. To this letter Mr. Roosevelt replied:

It seems to me that what you propose to do with Canada is admirable from every standpoint. I firmly believe in free trade with Canada for both economic and political reasons. As you say, labor cost is substantially the same in the two countries, so that you are amply justified by the platform. (Republican, 1908.) Whether Canada will accept such reciprocity I do not know, but it is greatly to your credit to make the effort. It may damage the Republican party for awhile, but it will surely benefit the party in the end, especially if you tackle wool, cotton, etc., as you propose. Ever yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

"I submit that Mr. Roosevelt's course on reciprocity is not in accord with the square deal," said the president.

Charges of Fraud.

Fifth.—Concerning the charge that he had "received stolen goods," the president characterized the charge of Mr. Roosevelt and Senator Dixon as "insulting" and "hysterical." He pointed out that the charge with reference to Kentucky had been shown to be untrue in the Kentucky convention itself, where the charges were withdrawn; that in New York the Roosevelt committee had a recourse to the courts, but did not take it, and that in Indianapolis the charge of fraud was made "before the polls were opened."

"The truth is," said the president, "that it has been perfectly evident from the first that the deliberate plan of Senator Dixon has been to claim everything exultingly and with the utmost confidence and to meet the reports of the election of adverse delegates by directing in advance the bringing of trumped up contests. It is hardly necessary to say that this is not in accordance with the square deal.

The Unfounded Charge as to the Use of Patronage.

"Sixth.—I do not deny," said the president, "that under the present system of appointments federal officeholders will be interested in politics and take part therein and will support those to whose appointment they attribute their preferment. Under present conditions, however, and under the policy which has been pursued in this administration there are in office today at least 70 per cent of those who were in office by appointment under Theodore Roosevelt. In view of his candidacy it is natural that a great number of these officeholders should favor him rather than me, and such is the fact, and Mr. Roosevelt cannot be ignorant of it. In spite of the very great activity of a number of such officers against me, not a man of them has been removed."

The president then cited the fact that federal referees in control of patronage in Alabama, Louisiana and Texas besides even governors of states supporting Mr. Roosevelt, all had their officeholders opposing the president. In view of his extreme fairness in the matter the president said: "The influence of federal officeholders in the Chicago convention will be less effective for any one candidate than ever before in the history of the party." The president then inquired if his treatment on this issue by Mr. Roosevelt was a sample of the square deal.

Roosevelt and Cannon.

Seventh.—President Taft said Mr. Roosevelt had charged that "I deserted the progressives and became a reactionary."

He told how, with the approval of Mr. Roosevelt, he had had a meeting with Joseph G. Cannon, the then speaker of the house, with a view to bringing about a revision of the tariff. This occurred before his own inauguration and after he had ascertained that Mr. Cannon could not be defeated for speaker in the house. At that meeting Mr. Cannon promised to help Mr Taft "redeem the promises of the Republican platform." Subsequently Mr Taft interviewed the Republican members of the house commitee on ways and means to the same end. Mr. Roosevelt also approved of this step. Reviewing the passage of the Payne law, the president then said:

"Has Mr. Roosevelt ever condemned the Payne bill? Does he say he would not have signed it if it had been presented to him under the conditions that I had to meet? He has never said that as far as I know, and the New York platform of 1910, adopted by the convention of which he was a part, indorsed the Payne bill and approved its passage."

The president inquired if this was a square deal. He then reviewed some of the progressive achievements of his administration and went over the amendments to the interstate commerce law in detail, pointing out in each instance that practically every single objection Mr. Roosevelt now made to that law he has himself recommended, including the commerce court.

Repudiates His Own Trust Record.

Ninth.—Stating that he had taken frequent pleasure in upholding President Roosevelt's prosecution of illegal trusts, the president said: "Now find Mr. Roosevelt coming the other way, denouncing the anti-trust law and denouncing prosecutions under it. He says that the decree in the Standard Oil case is ineffective, that the price of stock has gone up and that my administration is to be condemned because the decree was confirmed by the supreme court. The truth is that the decree as finally entered and enforced was drawn exactly as Mr. Roosevelt's attorney general in the bill, which by direction of Mr. Roosevelt he filed against the Standard Oil company, had asked that it be drawn."

The president then declared that both the decision against the Standard Oil company and the tobacco trust had been more effective than Mr. Roosevelt would admit and that competitive conditions had been restored and better prices were now being paid than ever before to the tobacco growers and the producers of crude oil.

Concerning Mr. Roosevelt's proposed plan to abolish the anti-trust law and regulate the trusts, he said he had offered no constructive plan whatever except for the president to separate the "good" from the "bad" trusts, a process which offered no stability to business and "amounted to nothing in the end but the establishment of a benevolent despotism."

Who Represents the Interests In This Contest?

Tenth.—In reply to the charge that he represents the interests in this contest, the president said the record of his administration afforded the best answer. His long record of prosecutions, without fear or favor, he said, "must show to a fair minded public that this administration has no favorites among lawbreakers or those seeking special privileges."

A Menace to the Whole Business Community.

"Eleventh.—One of the real reasons why Mr. Roosevelt ought not to be selected as a candidate of any party is the natural distrust the whole business community will have in respect to the measures which Mr. Roosevelt will propose in order to effect a revolution in the interest of social justice which he advocates so strongly and defines so vaguely," declared the president. Stating that Mr. Roosevelt's pronouncement with respect to the control of business at first met with favor among certain business interests, the president said the program outlined by his Columbus speech had so greatly alarmed business that it could only contemplate the danger to the security of all business by his threatened undermining of our constitutional government and his attack upon the independence of the judiciary.

"I affirm that the nomination of Mr. Roosevelt would extend through the business community a feeling of such distrust as to the future as to interfere with the good times which, if business is let alone and present conditions continue, will expand into the most encouraging prosperity, and this will bring happiness to wage earners who are more injuriously affected by disturbance of business than any other members of the community."

President on Third Term.

In conclusion the president took up the "third term" issue. Quoting Mr. Roosevelt's announcement that he would "under no circumstances" be a candidate again, the president said:

"If he had frankly announced that he had changed his mind no one would be disposed to hold him to a promise of that sort merely because he had made it. The promise and his treatment it only throw an informing light on the value that ought now to be attached to any promise of this kind he may make for the future. The important fact is that his declaration was the statement of a principle essential to the welfare of the republic."

The president then reviewed Mr. Roosevelt's various claims for support on the ground of merit and concluded that he had offered no substantial, constructive remedy for any evil of which he complained. "We are left to infer, therefore, that 'the job' which Mr. Roosevelt is to perform is one that may take a long time," said the president, "perhaps the rest of his natural life. There is not the slightest reason why, if he secures a third term and the limitation of the Washington, Jefferson and Jackson tradition is broken down, he should not have as many more terms as his natural life will permit. If he is necessary now to the government, why not later?"

Then the president concluded by saying: "One who so lightly regards the constitutional principles and especially the independence of the judiciary, one who is so naturally impatient of legal restraints and of due legal procedure and who has so misunderstood what liberty regulated by law is could not safely be intrusted with successive presidential terms. I say this sorrowfully, but I say it with the full conviction of its truth."

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