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HARRISON'S LETTER

Accepting the Republican Nomination for President.

HIS VIEWS ON THE TARIFF.

The President's Showing on the Effects of Reciprocity—A Reference to Commissioner Peck's Report. American Tin—Free Elections and Other Issues Discussed.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 6.—The following is President Harrison's letter accepting the Republican nomination for the office of President of the United States:

WASHINGTON, Sept. 3, 1892.

Hon. William McKinley, Jr., and others, committee, etc.

GENTLEMEN: I now avail myself of the first period of relief from public duties to respond to the notification which you brought to me on June 20th of my nomination for the office of President of the United States by the Republican National Convention, recently held at Minneapolis. I accept the nomination, and am grateful for the approval expressed by the convention of the acts of the administration. I have endeavored, without wavering or weariness, so far as the direction of public affairs was committed to me, to carry out the pledges made to the people in 1888. If the policies of the administration have not been distinctively and progressively American and Republican policies the fault has not been in the purpose, but in the execution. I shall speak frankly of the legislation of Congress and of the work of the executive departments, for the credit of any successes that have been attained is in such measure due to others, senators and representatives, and to the efficient heads of the several executive departments, that I may do so without impropriety.

A vote of want of confidence is asked by our adversaries, and this challenge to a review of what has been done we promptly and gladly accept.

The great work of the Fifty-first congress has been subjected to the revision of a Democratic house of representatives and the acts of the executive department to its scrutiny and investigation. A Democratic national administration was succeeded by a Republican administration, and the freshness of the events gives unusual facilities for fair comparison and judgment. There has seldom been a time, I think, when a change from the declared policies of the Republican to the declared policies of the Democratic party involved such serious results to the business interests of the country. A brief review of what has been done and of what the Democratic party proposes to undo will justify this opinion.

The Currency.

The Republican party, during the civil war, devised a national currency, issued and redeemable by the government and of national bank notes, based upon the security of United States bonds. A tax was levied upon the issues of state banks and the intended result, that all such issues should be withdrawn, was realized. There are men among us now who never saw a state bank note. The notes furnished directly or indirectly by the United States have been the only and the safe and acceptable paper currency of the people.

Our money is all national money—I might almost say international money, for these bills are not only equally and indiscriminately accepted at par in all the states, but in some foreign countries. The Democratic party, if entrusted with the control of the government, is now pledged to repeal the tax on state bank issues, with a view to putting into circulation again, under such diverse legislation as the states may adopt, a flood of local bank issues. Only those who in the years before the war experienced the inconvenience and losses attendant upon the use of such money, can appreciate what a return to that system involves. I am sure our people will not consent to the reactionary proposal made by the Democratic party.

The Ocean Carrying Trade.

Few subjects have elicited more discussion or excited more general interest than that of a recovery by the United States of its appropriate share of the ocean carrying trade. This subject touches not only our pockets, but our national pride. Practically all the freights for transporting to Europe the enormous annual supplies of provisions furnished by this country and for the large return of manufactured products have for many years been paid to foreign ship owners. Thousands of emigrants annually seeking homes under our flag have been denied the sight of it until reaching Sandy Hook, while increasing thousands of American citizens bent on European travel, have each year stepped into a foreign jurisdiction at the New York docks. The merchandise balance of trade which the treasury books show is largely reduced by the annual tribute which we pay for freight and passage monies.

The great ships—the fastest upon the sea—which are now in peace profiting by our trade, are, in a secondary sense, war ships of their respective Governments, and in time of war would, under existing contracts with those governments, speedily take on the guns for which their decks are already prepared, and enter with terrible efficiency upon the work of destroying our commerce. The undisputed fact is, that the great steamship lines of Europe were built up and are now in part sustained by direct or indirect government aid, the latter taking the form of liberal pay for carrying the mails, or of an annual bonus given in consideration of agreements to construct the ships, so as to adapt them for carrying an armanent, and to turn them over to the government on demand, upon specified terms. It was plain to every intelligent American that if the United States would have such lines, a similar policy must be entered upon.

A special interest has been taken by me in the establishment of lines from our South Atlantic and gulf ports, and, though my expectations have not yetbeen realized, attention has been called to the advantages possessed by these ports and when their people are more fully alive to their interests, I do not doubt that they will be able to secure the capital needed to enable them to profit by their great natural advantages. The Democratic party has found no place in its platform for any reference to this subject and has shown its hostility to the general policy by refusing to expend an appropriation made during the last administration for ocean mail contracts with American lines. The patriotic people, the workmen in our shops, the capitalist seeking new enterprises, must decide whether the great ships owned by Americans which have sought American registry, shall again humbly ask a place in the English naval reserves, the great ships now on the designers' tables go to foreign shops for construction, and the United States lose the now brightening opportunity of recovering a place commensurate with its wealth, the skill of its constructors and the courage of its sailors in the carrying trade of all the seas. Another related measure as furnishing an increased ocean traffic for our ships and of great and permanent benefit to the farmers and manufacturers as well, is the reciprocity policy declared by section three of the tariff act of 1890 and now in practical operation with five of the nations of Central and South America, San Domingo, the Spanish and British West India islands and with Germany and Austria under special trade arrangements with each.

Reciprocity.

The removal of the duty upon sugar and the continuance of coffee and tea upon the free list, while giving great relief to our own people by cheapening articles used increasingly in every household was also of such enormous advantage to the countries exporting these articles as to suggest that in consideration thereof reciprocal favors should be shown in their tariffs to articles exported by us to their markets. Great credit is due to Mr. Blaine for the vigor with which he pressed this view upon the country. We have only begun to realize the benefit of these trade arrangements. The work of creating new agencies and of adapting our goods to new markets has necessarily taken time, but the results already attained are such, I am sure, as to establish in popular favor the policy of reciprocal trade based upon the free importation of such articles as do not injuriously compete with the products of our own farms, mines or factories, in exchange for the free or favored introduction of our products into other countries. The obvious efficacy of this policy in increasing the foreign trade of the United States at once attracted the alarmed attention of European trade journals and boards of trade. The British Board of Trade has presented to that Government a memorial asking for the appointment of a commission to consider the best means of counteracting what is called the commercial crusade of the United States. At a meeting held in March last of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Great Britain, the President reported that the exports from Great Britain to the Latin-American countries during the last year had decreased $23,750,000, and that this was not due to temporary causes but directly to the reciprocity policy of the United States. Germany and France have also shown their startled appreciation of the fact that a new and vigorous contestant has appeared in the battle of the markets and has already secured important advantages. The most convincing evidence of the tremendous commercial strength of our position is found in the fact that Great Britain and Spain have found it necessary to make reciprocal trade agreements with us for their West India colonies, and that Germany and Austria have given us important concessions in exchange for the continued free importation of their beet sugar. A few details only as to the increase of our trade can be given here. Taking all the countries with which such arrangements have been made our trade to June 30, 1892, had increased 23.78 per cent.—with Brazil the increase was nearly 11 per cent.; with Cuba during the first ten months our exports increased $5,702,193, or 54.86 per cent. and with Porto Rico $590,959, or 34 per cent. The liberal participation of our farmers in the benefits of this policy is shown by the following report from our consul general at Havana under date of July 26 last: "During the first half year of 1891 Havana received 140,056 bags of flour from Spain and other ports of the island about an equal amount, or approximately 280,112 bags.

"During the same period Havana received 13,976 bags of American flour and other ports approximately an equal amount, making about 28,000 bags. But for the first half of this year Spain has sent less than 1,000 bags to the whole island, and the United States has sent to Havana alone 168,487 bags and about an equal amount to other ports of the island, making approximately 337,000 for the first half of 1892."

Partly by reason of the reciprocal trade agreement, but more largely by reason of the removal of the sanitary restrictions upon American pork our export of pork products to Germany increased during the ten months ending June 30 last $2,025,074, or about 32 per cent.

The British Trade Journal of London, speaking of the increase of American coal exports and of the falling off of the English coal exports to Cuba, says:

"It is another case of American competition. The United States now supply Cuba with about 150,000 tons of coal annually, and there is every prospect of this trade increasing as the forests of the island become exhausted and the use of steam machinery on the sugar estates is developed. Alabama coal especially is securing a reputation in the Spanish West Indies, and the river and rail improvements of the southern states will undoubtedly create an important gulf trade. The new reciprocity policy by which the United States are enabled to import Cuban sugar will of course assist the American coal exporter even more effectivey than the new lines of railway."

The Democratic platform promises a repeal of the tariff law containing this provision, and especially denounces as a "sham reciprocity" that section of the law under which these trade arrangements have been made. If no other issue were involved in the campaign, this alone would give it momentous importance. Are the farmers of the great grain-growing States willing to surrender these new, large and increasing markets for their surplus? Are we to have nothing in exchange for the free importation of sugar and coffee, and at the same time to destroy the sugar planters of the South and the beet sugar industry of the northwest and of the Pacific coast; or are we to have the taxed sugar and coffee which a "tariff for revenue only" necessarily involves, with the added loss of the new markets which have been opened? As I have shown, our commercial rivals in Europe do not regard this reciprocity policy as a "sham," but as a serious threat to a trade supremacy they have long enjoyed. They would rejoice, and, if prudence did not restrain, would illuminate their depressed manufacturing cities, over the news that the United States had abandoned its system of protection and reciprocity. They see very clearly that a restriction of American production and trade, and a corresponding increase of European production and trade would follow; and I will not believe that what is so plain to them can be hidden from our own people. The declaration of the platform in favor of "the American doctrine of protection" meets my most hearty approval. The convention did not adopt a schedule but a principle that is to control all tariff schedules.

There may be differences of opinion among proetctionists as to the rate upon particular articles necessary to effect an equalization between wages abroad and at home. In some not remote national campaigns the issue has been—or, more correctly, has been made to appear to be, between a high and a low protective tariff—both parties expressing some solicitous regard for the wages of our working people and for the prosperity of our domestic industries. But under a more courageous leadership the Democratic party has now practically declared that if given power it will enact a tariff law without any regard to its effect upon wages or upon the capital invested in our great industries. The majority report of the committee on platform to the Democratic national convention at Chicago contained this clause:

"That when custom house taxation is levied upon articles of any kind produced in this country the difference between the cost of labor here and labor abroad, when such a difference exists, fully measures any possible benefits to labor and the enormous additional impositions of the existing tariff fall with crushing force upon our farmers and workingmen."

Here we have a distinct admission of the Republican contention that American workmen are advantaged by a tariff rate equal to the difference between home and foreign wages and a declaration only against the alleged "additional impositions" of the existing tariff law.

The overwhelming rejection of these propositions, which had before received the sanction of the Democratic national conventions was not more indicative of the new and more courageous leadership to which the party has now committed itself than the substitute which was adopted. This substitute declares that protective duties are unconstitutional. high protection, low protection, all unconstitutional. A Democratic congress holding this view cannot enact, nor a Democratic president approve, any tariff schedule, the purpose or effect of which is to limit importations or to give any advantage to an American workman or producer.

Reciprocity, of course, falls under this denunciation, for its object and effect are not revenue, but the promotion of commercial exchanges, the profits of which go wholly to our producers.

Report of Protected Products.

An examination into the effect of the law upon the prices of protected products and of the cost of such articles as enter into the living of people of small means, has been made by a Senate committee composed of leading Senators of both parties, with the aid of the best statisticians, and the report, signed by all the members of the committee, has been given to the public. No such wide and careful inquiry has ever before been made. These facts appear from the report:

First—The cost of articles entering into the use of those earning less than $1,000 per annum has decreased up to May, 1892, 3.4 per cent, while in farm products there has been an increase in prices, owing in part to an increased foreign demand and the opening of new markets. In England during the same period the cost of living increased 1.9 per cent. Tested by their power to purchase articles of necessity the earnings of our working people have never been as great as they are now.

Second—There has been an average advance in the rate of wages of .75 of 1 per cent.

Third—There has been an advance in the price of all farm products of 18.67 per cent., and of all cereal 33.59 per cent.

The ninth annual report of the chief of the bureau of labor statistics of the state of New York—a Democratic officer, very recently issued, strongly corroborates, as to that state, the facts found by the senate committee. His extended inquiry shows that in the year immediately following the passage of the tariff act of 1890 the aggregate sum paid in wages in that state was $6,377,925, and the aggregate production $31,315,130 in excess of the preceding year.

In view of this showing of an increase in wages, of a reduction in the cost of articles of common necessity, and of a marked advance in the prices of agricultural products, it is plain that this tariff law has not imposed burdens, but has conferred benefits upon the farmer and the workingman.

Tin and Terne Plates.

The official returns to the treasury department of the production of tin and terne plates in the United States during the last fiscal year show a total production of 13,240,830 pounds, and a comparison of the first quarter, 826,922 pounds, with the last, 8,000,000 pounds, shows the rapid development of the industry. Over 5,000,000 pounds during the last quarter were made from American black plates, the remainder from foreign plates. Mr. Ayer, the treasury agent in charge, estimates, as the result of careful inquiry, that the production of the current year will be 100,000,000 pounds, and that by the end of the year our production will be at the rate of 200,000,000 pounds per annum.

Other Protected Industries.

Another industry that has been practically created by the McKinley bill is the making of pearl buttons. Few articles coming to us from abroad were so distinctly the product of starvation wages.

But without unduly extending this letter I cannot follow in detail the influence of the tariff law of 1890. It has transplanted several important industries and established them here, and has revived or enlarged all others. The act gives to the miners protection against foreign silver, and to the wool growers protection for their fleeces and flocks, which has saved them from a further and disastrous decline.

The appeals of the free trader to the workingman are largely addressed to his prejudices or to his passions, and not infrequently are pronouncedly communistic. The new Democratic leadership rages at the employer and seeks to communicate his rage to the employe. I greatly regret that all employers of labor are not just and considerate, and that capital sometimes takes too large a share of the profits. But I do not see that these evils will be ameliorated by a tariff policy, the first necessary effect of which is a severe wage cut and the second a large diminution of the aggregate amount of work to be done in this country.

The Southern States.

The southern states have had a liberal participation in the benefits of the tariff law, and, though their representatives have generally opposed the protection policy, I rejoice that their sugar, rice, coal, ores, iron, fruits, cotton cloths and other products have not been left to the fate which the votes of their representatives would have brought upon them. In the construction of the Nicaragua canal, in the new trade with South and Central America, in the establishment of American steamship lines, these states have also especial interests, and on these interests will not always consent to be without representation at Washington.

Shrewdly, but not quite fairly, our adversaries speak only of the increased duties imposed on tin, pearl buttons and other articles by the McKinley bill, and omit altogether any reference to the great and beneficial enlargement of the free list. During the last fiscal year $458,000,772 worth of merchandise, or 55.35 per cent. of our total importations, came in free; (the largest per centage in our history) while in 1889 the per cent. of free importation was only 34.42 per cent. The placing of sugar upon the free list has saved to the consumer in duties in fifteen months, after paying the bounties provided for, $87,000,000.

The "Market of the World."

One of the favorite arguments against a protective tariff is that it shuts us out from a participation in what is called with swelling emphasis the markets of the world. If this view is not a false one, how does it happen that our commercial competitors are not able to bear with more serenity our opposed surrender to them of the "markets of the world?" And how does it happen that the partial loss of our market closes foreign tin plate mills and plush factories that still have all other markets? Our natural advantages, our protective tariff and the reciprocity policy make it possible for us to have a large participation in the "markets of the world," without opening our own to a competition that would destroy the comfort and independence of our people. The resolution of the convention in favor of bi-metalism declares, I think, the true and necessary conditions of a movement that has upon these lines my cordial adherence and support.

The Free Coinage of Silver.

I am thoroughly convinced that the free coinage of silver at such a ratio to gold as will maintain the equality in their commercial uses of the two coined dollars would conduce to the prosperity of all the great producing and commercial nations of the world. The one essential condition is that these dollars shall have and retain an equal acceptability and value in all commercial transactions. They are not only a medium of exchange, but a measure of values, and when two unequal measures are called in law by the same name, commerce is unsettled and confused and the unwary and ignorant are cheated.

The monetary conditions in Europe within the last two years have, I think, tended very much to develop a sentiment in favor of a larger use of silver, and I was much pleased and encouraged by the cordiality, promptness and unanimity with which the invitation of this government for an international conference upon this subject was accepted by all the powers. We may not only hope for, but expect, highly beneficial results from this conference, which will now soon assemble. When the result of the conference is known, we shall then be able intelligently to readjust our financial legislation to any new conditions.

Free and Unmolested Elections.

In my last annual message to congress I said:

"I must ... entertain the hope that it is possible to secure a calm patriotic consideration of such constitutional or statutory changes as may be necessary to secure the choice of the officers of the government to the people by fair apportionments and free elections. I believe it would be possible to constitute a commission, non partisan in its membership, and composed of patriotic and impartial men, to whom a consideration of the questions of the evils connected with our elections system and methods might be committed with a good prospect of securing unanimity in some plan for removing or mitigating those evils.

The constitution would permit the selection of the commission to be vested in the supreme court, if that method would give the best guarantee of impartiality. This commission should be charged with the duty of inquiring into the whole subject of the law of elections as related to the choice of officers of the national government, with a view to securing to every elector a free and unmolested exercise of the suffrage and as near an approach to an equality of value in each ballot cast as is attainable. The demand that the limitations of suffrage shall be found in the law, and only there, is a just demand, and no just man should resent or resist it.

Alabama's Recent State Election.

It seemed to me that an appeal to our people to consider the question of readjusting our legislation upon absolutely fair non-partisan lines, might find some effective response. Many times I have had occasion to say that laws and election methods designed to give unfair advantages to the party making them, would some time be used to perpetuate in power a faction of a party against the will of the majority of the people.

Of this we seem to have an illustration in the recent state election in Alabama. There was no Republican ticket in the field. The contest was between white Democrats. The Kolb party say they were refused the representation guaranteed by law upon the election boards; and that when the courts by mandamus attempted to right this

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