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POLITICAL ANTHOLOGY

By RAYMOND A. WAGNER, *of the Denver Bar*

SOMEWHAT more than a year ago the Great White Father of the United States went on a hunting trip to capture the elusive American Voter. He had three strings on his bow: a promise, an apology and a prophecy. The promise was that there would be a "chicken in every pot" at some time in the not too distant future. As time went on and the chicken failed to make its appearance, he answered belligerent inquiries by saying, "Things might have been worse," and thereafter he wound up by a stirring prophecy that if the voter permitted himself to be captured by the opposition, "The grass will grow in the streets of a hundred cities, a thousand towns. The weeds will overrun the fields of a million farmers, their churches, their hospitals, their school houses will decay." When the voter became aware of the fact that the chicken was not going to materialize, he felt that he had been fooled, and it was no fun, either. He thereupon surrendered to the Democratic Medicine Man, who, in his turn, became the Great White Father.

It might be noted that grass did not grow in the streets. In fact, to avoid any suspicion in that respect, Mr. Roosevelt forthwith prescribed not only grass preventives, but offered bounties for plowing up wheat, corn and cotton so that there would be a miraculous return to prosperity. He gave other prescriptions to hasten the miracle. It is not my purpose to show that the Medicine Man's prescriptions are good, bad or indifferent, because only time can prove the results attained; but I do wish to point out that they have but little similarity to the measures recommended by his Democratic forbears, which emanated from such well known principles as states' rights, low tariffs, the theory that great business trusts are evil things, and that the United States Government is essentially a "hard money government."

I have applied the descriptive word, "anthology"—"a collection of flowers"—and I am about to offer you some of the flowers of political literature, not only from the past but from the present as well.

So far as tariffs are concerned, the Industrial Recovery Act provides that:

"On his own motion, or if any labor organization or any trade

or industrial organization, association or group which has complied with the provisions of this title shall make complaint to the President that any article or articles are being imported into the United States in substantial quantities or increasing the ratio to domestic production of any competitive article or articles, and on such terms or under such conditions as to render ineffective or seriously to endanger the maintenance of any code or agreement under this title, the President may cause an immediate investigation to be made by the United States Tariff Commission, which shall give precedence to investigations under this subsection, and if after such investigation and such public notice and hearing as he shall specify, the President shall find the existence of such facts, he shall, in order to effectuate the policy of this title, direct that the article or articles concerned shall be permitted entry into the United States only upon such terms and conditions, subject to the payment of such fees and to such limitations in the total quantity which may be imported (in the course of any specified period or periods) as he shall find it necessary to prescribe in order that the entry thereof shall not render or tend to render ineffective any code or agreement made under this title."

I have always assumed that the Democratic Party supported the idea of tariff for revenue only. Perhaps I am wrong, for the Congressional Record discloses that on February 24, 1933, Senator Ashurst of Arizona insisted in Congress that:

"For more than a generation, opponents of the Democratic Party have attempted to staple to that party the epithet, 'Free Trade.' The Democratic Party never was for free trade. It was James Madison, a great Democrat, who assisted in writing the Federal Constitution, who was for eight years Secretary of State under President Thomas Jefferson, and who was afterwards for eight years President of the United States, who piloted through the first Congress of the United States the first bill ever passed, and it was a tariff bill. The preamble of that tariff bill, guided, as I said before, through the Congress by the genius of James Madison, recited substantially the following: 'Whereas, it is necessary for the support of the Government, for the discharge of the debts of the United States and encouragement, protection, etc., that duties be laid on goods, wares and merchandise imported.'

"The Democrats should assert themselves, and vehemently, to point out these facts. The lack of a tariff on copper is one of the results of free trade against which I inveigh upon every proper opportunity."

It may be that in 1908 the Democratic Party was not aware of James Madison's protective instincts, because at that time one of the planks in the Democratic platform favored:

"Immediate revision of the tariff by the reduction of import duties. Articles entering into competition with trust controlled products

should be placed upon the free list. Material reductions should be made in the tariff upon the necessities of life, especially on articles competing with such American manufactures as are sold abroad more cheaply than at home; and gradual reductions should be made in such other schedules as may be necessary to restore the tariff to a revenue basis."

William Jennings Bryan had the depression of 1907 in mind when, in commenting on the tariff plank in the platform, he complained that,

"The whole system is vicious. Business should not be built upon legislation; it should stand upon its own merit, and when it does stand upon its own merit we shall not only have purer politics, but we shall have less fluctuation in business conditions and a more equitable distribution of the proceeds of toil. * * *

"When a community has attempted to collect taxes for the aid of an industry, even when the industry was to be located in the community, the highest court in the land has declared such a tax to be larceny in the form of law. If a city government cannot rightfully tax all the people to bring an industry into the city, where such benefits as are conferred are more easily seen and more universally enjoyed, who will say that a farmer in the Missouri Valley can be rightfully taxed to support an industry in a distant state?"

With respect to trusts, the law now provides:

"While this title is in effect * * * and for sixty days thereafter any code, agreement or license approved, prescribed or issued and in effect under this title and any action complying with the provisions thereof taken during such period shall be exempt from the provisions of the anti-trust laws of the United States."

Grover Cleveland on September 8, 1888, in his letter accepting the nomination for the presidency, attacked trusts in the following words: "Such combinations have always been condemned by the Democratic Party." And the platform of the party in that year agreed with Cleveland, in its statement that:

"Judged by Democratic principles, the interests of the people are betrayed when, by unnecessary taxation, trusts and combinations are fostered, which, while unduly enriching the few, they combine to rob the body of our citizens by depriving them, as purchasers, of the benefits of natural competition.

"With an unalterable hatred of all such schemes, we count the checking of their baleful operations among the good results promised by revenue reform."

Monetary policies of the present administration are well reflected in the action which divorced America from the gold standard, and this policy is emphasized now in the attempt

to place a value upon the standard itself, which is the gold dollar. About 1841, Andrew Jackson wrote a letter explaining his ideas about money.

"Ours was intended to be a hard money Government," he said. "The duty of the Government is to leave commerce to its own capital and credit, as well as all other branches of business, protecting all in their legal pursuits, granting exclusive privileges to none. Foster the labor of our country by an undeviating metallic currency for its surplus, always recollecting that if labor is depressed neither commerce nor manufactures can flourish, as they are both based upon the production of labor * * * either from the earth or the mineral world. It is unjust * * * by legislation to depress labor by a depreciation of the currency with the idea of prospering commerce, etc., when it is, in reality, injured by it."

As late as May 6, 1933, Mr. Roosevelt appeared to be in entire accord with Jackson, because on that date he issued a joint statement with one of the delegates from Italy, to be issued at the World Economic Conference. The president there asserted that:

"If normal life is to be resumed, the World Economic Conference must be made a success. It must not only meet soon, but come to its conclusions quickly. * * * We are in agreement that a fixed measure of exchange valuations must be reestablished in the world, and we believe that this measure must be gold."

"States Rights," the doctrine that each state should control its own affairs and that the National Government should simply be a unifying force, has been one of the rock-bottom bases of the Democratic Party since its inception. It is needless for me to indicate here the centralization in the Federal Government under the N R A, the A A A and the national system of unemployment agencies, which has been instituted under the present administration. You will recall that in Jefferson's first inaugural, that brilliant statesman was of the opinion that there should be maintained, "the support of the State Governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns and the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies." He was also firmly convinced of the necessity of "the encouragement of agriculture and of commerce as its handmaid," but it needs little imagination to assume that he would not be in favor of the present attempts to assist agriculture, because in 1798 he complained that Washington was becoming altogether too

arbitrary, and he remarked that, "Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want bread." I must give credit to DICTA for unearthing this fair flower of Jeffersonian Democracy.

Jefferson was not alone in his belief that in matters primarily involving the states, the Federal Government should not interfere, and he gains ample support from Andrew Jackson, whose second inaugural address, delivered on March 4, 1833, contained the following paragraph:

"My experience in public concerns and the observation of a life somewhat advanced confirm the opinions long since imbibed by me, that the destruction of our State Governments, annihilation of their control over the local concerns of the people, would lead directly to revolution and anarchy and finally to despotism and military domination. In proportion, therefore, as the general government encroaches on the rights of the states, in the same proportion does it impair its own power and detract from its ability to fulfill the purposes of its creation. Solemnly impressed with these considerations, my countrymen will ever find me ready to exercise my constitutional powers in arresting measures which may directly or indirectly encroach upon the rights of the states or tend to consolidate all political power in the general government."

He then proceeds to a statement of the incalculable importance of the union of these states, but it would be impossible to misconstrue his conceptions as to their independent rights. These theories were still bright and untarnished when Grover Cleveland delivered his fourth annual message to Congress in December, 1888. In the course of his address he said:

"This devotion will lead us to resist strongly all impatience of constitutional limitations of Federal power and to check persistently the increasing tendency to extend the scope of Federal legislation into the domain of state and local jurisdiction upon the plea of subserving the public welfare."

Al Smith, still a Democrat—although it is impossible to predict how long he will remain such, as he has now become a bloated plutocrat—recently opined that "private initiative may sometimes need the curb and bit of government control, but the Government is at its best when it supplements and cooperates with private industry."

When President Roosevelt was Governor of New York he became an honorary member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Hobart College, and a speech which he gave on that

occasion (June 10, 1929) expressed his views clearly on the increasing centralization of power in the Federal Government.

"This address," he asserted, "is by no means a plea for a return to the States Rights theories of fifty or seventy-five years ago. It is intended, however, to call definite attention to the political tendency towards concentration. It is perhaps inaccurate to call it a tendency towards concentration. It would be more accurate to describe it as the gradual building up of power in the federal government because of the lack of interest on the part of the individual in local government. In other words, we are drifting into federal centralization, not because we are in favor of it but because it is the inevitable result of our own failure better to conduct our local governing functions.

"If there is failure on the part of a state to provide adequate educational facilities for its boys and girls, an immediate cry goes up that a department of education should be established in Washington. If a state fails to keep abreast with modern health provisions, immediately the enthusiasts turn to the creation of a department of health in Washington. If a state fails adequately to regulate its public service corporations, the easiest course is to ask the Interstate Commerce Commission or the Federal Trade Commission to take jurisdiction. * * *

"It is my hope and my belief that the trend to greater individualism and simplicity in the educational world will be followed as in the past by changes in social, economic and political thought. * * *

"On you of the younger generation falls the immediate responsibility. On the one hand, you have the right to allow the drifting to consolidation and centralization of government to continue. If you do this you do so with your eyes open to the fact that it is a new experiment, that it may work, but that no stages of the world's history give examples where it has worked. Every previous great concentration of power has been followed by some form of disaster. During the time of centralization all has seemed happy and prosperous. The mass of citizens have had food, have had clothes, have had occupation and have had abundant pleasures. It is unnecessary for me to cite the examples of Greece, of Rome and of the 16th century."

It might be inquired as to the result of these changes and to what other tenets those now being advanced might bear some relationship. It might, therefore, not be out of place to give you some of the measures advocated by the Socialist Party. The 1932 "Socialisms" include the following recommendations:

First—A federal appropriation of \$5,000,000,000 for immediate relief for those in need, to supplement state and local appropriations.

Second—A federal appropriation of \$5,000,000,000 for public works and roads, reforestation, slum clearance and decent homes for the workers, by federal government, states and cities.

Third—The six-hour day and the five-day week without a reduction of wages.

Fourth—A comprehensive and efficient system of free public employment agencies.

Fifth—Government aid to farmers and small home owners to protect them against mortgage foreclosures and a moratorium on sales for non-payment of taxes by destitute farmers and unemployed workers.

Sixth—Adequate minimum wage laws.

These measures have not been adopted in all of their details, but they do reflect, to some extent, the policies of the present administration.

All of the ideas advanced, whether of the old Democracy or of the new Democracy, are no doubt calculated to bring about a realization of true Jeffersonian Democracy, which Jefferson himself defined as, "A wise and frugal Government which shall restrain men from injuring one another and leave them otherwise free."

Unquestionably, a great many benefits have accrued as a result of the reforms adopted by the present government. The farmer is enjoying more prosperity than he has known for many years; the effect of the Government's monetary policies, clearly intended to be of a temporary nature only, has been to cause an influx of gold into the country and a revival of trade.

As stated before, it is not my object to prove that the doctrines which have recently been formulated are beneficial or otherwise. I have attempted only to indicate what I consider to be an ancient truth—and I believe that it applies to all political parties—that party principles are primarily for use once every four years in campaign declamations, and an entirely new set of rules may be established when the party is actually confronted with the necessity of administering the government. In any event, I trust that the American people will be more moderate in their attitude towards the Chief Executive, and I believe everyone shares the hope of William Hard, noted Washington correspondent, that we, as a people, will refrain from lauding a President to the skies for the first six months of his term and then proceed to "nail him to the mast" for the remaining three and a half years that he is in office.