

THE REPUBLICAN RECORD AND POPULAR RULE *

WE come here feeling that we have the right to appeal to the people from the standpoint alike of national and State achievement. During the last eighteen months a long list of laws, embodying legislation most heartily to be commended as combining wisdom with progress, have been enacted by Congress and approved by President Taft. The amendments to the Interstate Commerce law; the beginning of a national legislative programme for the exercise of the taxing power in connection with big corporations doing an interstate business; the appointment of a commission to frame measures that do away with the evils of overcapitalization, and of improper and excessive issue of stocks and bonds; the law providing for publicity of campaign expenses; the establishment of the maximum and minimum tariff provisions, and the exceedingly able negotiation of the Canadian and other treaties in accordance therewith; the inauguration of the policy of providing for a disinterested revision of tariff schedules through a high-class commission of experts which will treat each schedule purely on its own merits with a view both to protecting the consumer from excessive prices and to securing the American producer, and especially the American wage-worker, what will represent the difference of cost in production here as compared with the cost of production in countries where labor is less liberally rewarded; the extension of the laws regulating safety appliances for

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the protection of labor; the creation of a Bureau of Mines—these, and similar laws, backed up by executive action, reflect high credit upon all who succeeded in putting them in their present shape upon the statute-books; they represent an earnest of the achievement which is yet to come; and the beneficence and far-reaching importance of this work done for the whole people measure the credit which is rightly due to the Congress and to our able, upright, and distinguished President, William Howard Taft.

Turning from the nation to the State, we find that during the term of service of Governor Hughes an extraordinary amount of wise and good legislation in the interest of all the people has been put upon the statute-books, and the standard of business integrity and efficiency in the management of the several State departments has been steadily raised. The legislature has passed, and the governor has signed, an act establishing the principle of compensation for injuries to working men in extrahazardous occupations, an act which I trust will steadily be widened in its application, and in connection with which the investigating commission is doing work of extraordinary value; acts requiring sanitary conditions in factories and safeguarding the employees, and limiting the hours of employment for minors; acts strengthening the semimonthly pay law, and providing for the regulation of employment agencies; acts strengthening and extending the provisions of the corrupt-practices law; strengthening the law against race-track gambling; providing for the protection of the forests and the creation of Palisades Park; providing for regulating motor traffic, for regulating telegraph and telephone companies, for effectually supervising insurance companies. For these, and for many similar

laws, and for the executive action which made them effective, our thanks are due to the legislative body and to the unflinching resolution and fidelity to a high standard of duty of Governor Charles E. Hughes.

Of course, with a party so long in control of nation and State as ours has been, there have been individual instances of misconduct and corruption. But there is no need of any other party raising the cry of "Turn the rascals out," for we have turned our own rascals out; and wherever rascality is found to exist in the future, we will be even more prompt to punish any one of our own party adherents than an adherent of another party, because we feel a peculiar responsibility in dealing with the man who not only degrades himself and the public service, but discredits our own party by belonging to it. Any man holding an executive or legislative position who is false to his oath of office, who is guilty of misfeasance or malfeasance, we hold to be a traitor to the whole people; and we have not permitted and will not permit any such man to remain in office where it is in our power to remove him.

I believe in the party to which we belong because I believe in the principles for which the Republican party stood in the days of Abraham Lincoln; and furthermore, and especially because I believe in treating those principles not as dead but as living. We best show our loyalty to the memory of Lincoln, and the principles for which Lincoln stood, not by treating it and them from the standpoint of historic interest in what is dead, but by treating them as vital, as alive to-day, and by endeavoring to meet the problems of the present, the new problems of our day, in exactly the spirit in which he and those associated with him met the new problems of their day. Empty glorification of our past amounts

to less than nothing if we put it forward as an excuse for not doing our duty in the living present. The mighty memories of the past are of use only as they serve to spur us on to work in the present. We can deserve the confidence of the people, not by stating that our forefathers preserved the Union and freed the slaves, but by proving in deed, as well as in word, that we face the problem of dealing with political and business corruption, and of working for social and economic justice and for the betterment of the conditions of life and the uplifting of our people, with the same fervor and sincerity that Lincoln and his followers brought to the great tasks allotted to them in their day. I hold that we show ourselves the best servants of our party when with all our might we strive to make that party the best servant of the people as a whole.

Our first duty is to war against dishonesty. We war against it in public life, and we war against it in business life. Corruption in every form is the arch-enemy of this Republic, the arch-enemy of free institutions and of government by the people, an even more dangerous enemy than the open lawlessness of violence, because it works in hidden and furtive fashion. We are against corruption in politics; we are against corruption in business; and, above all, and with all our strength, we are against the degrading alliance of crooked business and crooked politics, the alliance which adds strength to the already powerful corrupt boss and to the already powerful corrupt head of big business, and which makes them in their dual capacity enemies against whom every patriotic man should stand with unwavering firmness. Let no man say that this is an assault upon the honest business man. That is as foolish as to say that it is an assault upon the upright political leader. The

extent of our veneration for the great name of Abraham Lincoln, a true servant of the people, measures also the extent of our abhorrence for the crooked boss who misleads and misgoverns and corrupts the people; and so the high regard in which we hold the upright and honest business man who reaps a great reward by rendering a great service to the community is the measure of our contempt and abhorrence for that business man, big or little, who wins success by corruption and fraud, who swindles the public instead of serving the public.

In short, our attitude is merely that we stand for honesty as well as for progressiveness and for efficiency; that we believe both business man and politician should be just and upright and honest as well as wise, courageous, and far-sighted. We are against crookedness in the small man, but we are against it just as strongly in the big man. We judge each man by his conduct, and not by his wealth or his social station; and we hold it to be our bounden duty to strive steadily to make and to keep this great American Commonwealth as a true democracy, and steadily to endeavor to shape our legislation and our social conditions so that there shall be a far nearer approach than at present toward equality of opportunity among men. The corporation must be protected, must be given its rights, but it must be prevented from doing wrong; and its managers must be held in strict accountability when it does wrong; and it must be deprived of all secret influence in our public life. We must strive to do away with the social and economic injustice that have come from failing to meet by proper legislation the changed conditions brought about by the gigantic growth of our gigantic industrialism. We of this State must make it our business to help in efficient fashion the country districts, to shape

matters so as to encourage the growth of the farming communities, and to help give the people in these communities the advantages which have come in disproportionate measure to the city rather than to the country during the industrial growth of the last fifty years. We must guard the interests of the wage-worker, the man who works with his hands; we must safeguard the woman who toils, and see that the young child does not toil. We must see that, by far-reaching legislation, the workman who is crippled, and the family of the workman who is killed in industry, are compensated, so that the loss necessarily incident to certain industries shall be equitably and fairly distributed instead of being placed upon the shoulders of those least able to bear them. We must make it a matter of obligation by the State to see that the conditions under which working men and women do their work shall be safe and healthful. So far as by legislation it is possible, we must strive to give to the working man the power to achieve and maintain a high standard of living. Finally, and as a matter of course, we must do everything possible to promote and conserve the business prosperity of the whole country.

We who come together to set the standard of our party have a grave responsibility to that party and to the public. Democracy means nothing unless the people rule. The rule of the boss is the negation of democracy. It is absolutely essential that the people should exercise self-control and self-mastery, and he is a foe to popular government who in any way causes them to lose such self-control and self-mastery whether from without or within. But it must be literally self-control and not control by outsiders. We should at once introduce in this State the system of direct nominations in the prima-

ries, so that the people shall be able themselves to decide who the candidates shall be, instead of being limited merely to choosing between candidates with whose nomination they have had nothing to do.

Our country offers the most wonderful example of democratic government on a giant scale that the world has ever seen; and the peoples of the world are watching to see whether we succeed or fail. We believe with all our hearts in democracy; in the capacity of the people to govern themselves; and we are bound to succeed, for our success means not only our own triumph, but the triumph of the cause of the rights of the people throughout the world, and the uplifting of the banner of hope for all the nations of mankind.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND POPULAR RULE

ESSAYS, ADDRESSES, AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS
RELATING TO THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT
(1910 - 1916)

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