

STATE AND NATIONAL ISSUES *

Our opponents say they wish to run this campaign on State issues. Very well, we will meet them squarely on every State issue, and, what is more, we will raise a State issue on which they dare not meet us; but before touching on these, I want you to listen for a moment to what I have to say on the general principle of choosing a man for public office.

The most important thing for you, the citizens of the State, in exercising your choice, is to know how the man you choose will conduct himself in the office to which he is elected. Now, to know this you must not only understand his views and principles, but you must also know how well his practice corresponds with his principles. This is the all-important fact, and yet it is not a fact which needs much elaboration. No amount of argument can prove it or is necessary to prove it. Far more important than the candidate's words is the estimate you are able to put upon the closeness with which his deeds will correspond to his words.

No self-respecting man who is a candidate can state with exact minuteness what his line of conduct will be, because, while he must remain firm throughout in his adherence to the immovable principles of right, yet he must be prepared to meet the constantly shifting conditions of governmental life. It may, perhaps, be said without irreverence that a man should in his public as well as private life strive to conform his conduct to the

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principles laid down in those two ancient guides to conduct, the Decalogue and the Golden Rule.

Now my purpose is, if elected governor, to make entire honesty the first requisite in dealing with every public servant and every public measure. The State has many varied interests, and her needs must be met in many varied ways. There are only a few general rules that can be laid down as to the proper way of meeting them. But this rule of absolute honesty, of absolute good faith, is one that can be applied to every interest with which I shall have to deal. It shall be applied in dealing with the canals; it shall be applied in dealing with the interests of labor; it shall be applied in dealing with the interests of thrift and business energy; it shall be applied in dealing with matters of legislation; in short, it shall be one of the tests applied to everything.

So much for what I say. As for what I will do to make my words good, your knowledge of me and of what I have done in the past, your knowledge as to whether I have or have not lived up to my lights as I saw them and kept faith after taking office as to every principle on which I declared myself before taking office—this knowledge of yours must serve as my justification in asking your support. If you do not believe that I will keep my word, expressed or implied, I do not want your votes. If you do believe it, then I do want your votes.

If there has been or shall be anywhere corruption, I will punish the wrong-doer. I will not punish him to gain political advantage; I will punish him because he has done wrong, and without the slightest regard as to what his party affiliations may be, or as to what social, personal, or political backing he may have.

I shall strive to take care of the State's great interest in a businesslike manner just as I shall strive to see the business and property of the private citizen protected. I will preserve law and order: I will endeavor to see that justice is done to every one, and that no citizen is allowed with impunity to wrong another or to wrong the State.

Our opponents have made three especial points in the matter of State issues, viz., the canals, the excise question, and the National Guard. I shall consider each in its turn, and then I shall touch on a fourth, which they do not venture to raise, viz., the independence of the judiciary.

First, as to the canals. Here all that we have to go on is the report of the commission appointed by Governor Black, which report is in itself the best possible testimony that the administration of the State sought only the closest scrutiny into the management of the canals and the widest publicity for the results of that scrutiny. My opponents can say no more than I say, viz., that I will at once take up the matter, and probe it to the bottom; that wherever there has been mismanagement due to faulty system this shall be corrected, if it is a matter of administration, and laid before the legislature, if it is a matter for legislation, and that wherever there has been misconduct or corruption it shall be punished, no matter who the individual in fault may be. They can say no more than this, and which do you think will keep this pledge best, myself or Tammany? You know well that every honest official whose office is to be investigated hopes for my election, and that every dishonest official hopes for my defeat, because he knows that he might save his head in an investigation conducted only for political purposes.

but that he has no chance at all where the investigation is conducted as I shall conduct it.

The next issue they raise is the excise question. I shall not pretend to say that on all points the present excise law is satisfactory to me. I never expect to see in a State of eight million of people, all including the widest possible diversity of interest, principle, and prejudice, an excise law which can possibly suit everybody. What we have to pass upon is the relative merits of the excise laws which it is possible to secure. Now, I claim with all emphasis that the present law, taken as a whole, is infinitely better than the blackmailing law which it succeeded, or than the blackmailing law which Tammany introduced last year, and which it threatens to have adopted if it succeeds at this election.

The present law has reduced drunkenness; it has helped the honest liquor-seller; it has put a stop to blackmailing by boards of excise, and has largely put a stop to blackmailing by the police; it is enforced by means of a very small number of State officials, and, above all, it has added to the revenues of the State and the counties something more than twelve million dollars, nearly five million dollars of which goes to the State, and the balance of which goes to the counties and relieves local taxation. Under the old law less than three million dollars was raised all told; so now we have just nine million dollars to the good.

If the present law is repealed it will be necessary to raise these nine millions of dollars somehow, and they would have to be paid by the farmer, the mechanic, and the business man, and this would mean that the tax rate would be made half as large again as it is at present. We have this year a very low tax rate, a lower tax rate than we have had for many years. This is

due in part to the economy in the expenditure of the public funds, and in part to the excellence of the present excise law as a means of raising revenue. Whatever is objectionable in the present law is found in even more objectionable form in the law which it superseded and in the proposed law which last year Tammany threatened to produce as a substitute. But its merits are its own. If it can be wisely amended, well and good, but to repeal it, or to do away with its distinguishing features, would be to promote corruption, and to put on the taxpayers, in State and county alike, an intolerable additional burden of taxation.

The third State issue they raise is the National Guard. Well, I believe the National Guard can be improved. I was three years in the National Guard, and during this summer I saw some service in actual warfare. I know what the National Guard needs and wants. I shall take in it no perfunctory interest, but I shall treat it as it deserves to be treated, as one of the most important interests of the State, for upon its efficiency may depend not only the welfare of the State, but even the honor of the nation. I shall try to see not only that the National Guard is well armed and well equipped, not only that it is managed on the best system, but also that its officers are the very best to be had.

I do not believe that the National Guard should in any way be mixed up in politics, and all appointments I have to make to it shall be made solely with the view to the best interests of the Guard and the best interests of the people. I shall apply to the management of the National Guard, to the management of the volunteer soldiery of this State, the principles I applied in handling my own regiment of volunteers in the face of the

enemy. I strove to see that they were well clothed and well fed and well drilled; that they received proper medical attendance, and, in short, were cared for in every way. In making appointments and promotions among the officers and non-commissioned officers alike, I paid heed to but two things, the merit of the men and the interest of the regiment.

These are the three State issues that our opponents raise. We have shown entire readiness to meet them and more than meet them on each and every one. Now we raise a fourth issue, on which they dare not meet us, and that issue is the judiciary. It is axiomatic that our judges should be kept up to the highest possible standard and should, so far as possible, be kept out of politics. I am more delighted than I can say with the course of my party this year in making nominations for the judiciary. Besides nominating excellent Republicans, they have in New York County renominated a lifelong Democrat, who had shown that he was a good and upright judge. I refer to Judge Daly.

But Tammany refuses to renominate him, and our real opponent in this campaign—for, of course, Mr. Croker and not Mr. Van Wyck is our real opponent—explained with great frankness that Judge Daly was not renominated “because Tammany Hall did not receive proper consideration at his hands.” This sets before you on the highest authority the standard of judiciary fitness established by Tammany Hall—the standard to which a judge must conform if he is to receive favor and advancement at the hands of Tammany Hall. Do you want to keep your judiciary clean? Do you want to keep it an honor to the State and to the citizens? If so, you will elect Judge Daly and his associates; and, moreover, you will rebuke the party which has sought

to disgrace Judge Daly because he would not "bend the supple knee that thrift might follow fawning." You can elect Judge Daly and vindicate our judiciary in just one way, and that is by voting to smash the entire Tammany ticket.

The attitude of Tammany toward Judge Daly makes a curious commentary upon what Mr. Croker said in the course of his entirely courteous remarks about myself, when he stated that he thought a judge would make a better governor than a soldier. By the way, Mr. Croker, after very kindly saying that I was a good soldier, added that I had been a failure in every office I had held. Now, the last office I held was that of assistant secretary of the navy during the war when we made ready the navy for the war with Spain. Against Mr. Croker's judgment as to the way I administered that office I am content that you should take the judgment of my chief, Secretary Long, or the heads of the bureaus with whom I was associated, of Admirals Dewey, Sampson, and Schley, and of the captains of the ships who won glory in the East and the West. And I think the Spanish admirals whose fleets went down before Manila and Santiago know whether or not the administration of the Navy Department was a failure.

In this campaign a United States senatorship and thirty-four congressional representatives are at stake, and yet our opponents say that no national issues are involved. Why do they say it? Simply because they do not dare meet the issues involved. They are willing to travel about dishonestly in the canals, but they do not dare to so much as raise a whisper on the question of honest or dishonest finance in the nation at large. They dare not even explain the contradictions between

their votes and their secret hopes two years ago, or tell why they voted for Mr. Bryan and his theories one year after denouncing them that very spring. I hope the hissing is for them rather than for Mr. Bryan. At least he was perfectly frank and they don't dare to be frank.

If we are defeated this year in New York these half-hearted and unwilling friends of the cause of free silver will have struck a telling blow in its behalf. Last spring little Oregon, out on the Pacific coast, in an election just like ours here, went for gold. Nobody said then that no national issues were involved in that election. We hailed it everywhere as a victory for sound finance. Oregon, from the West, sent a gold senator to the United States Senate. Are you willing that New York, from the East, should offset little Oregon's vote by sending to the Senate a man who will vote for free silver?

Finally, remember that whether you will or not, your votes this year will be viewed by the nations of Europe from one standpoint only. They will draw no fine distinction. A refusal to sustain the President this year will in their eyes be read as a refusal to sustain the war, and to sustain the efforts of our Peace Commission to secure the fruits of the war. Such a refusal may not inconceivably bring about a rupture of the peace negotiations.

It will give heart to our defeated antagonists; it will make possible the interference of those doubtfully neutral nations who in this struggle have wished us ill. It is for the sake of peace that I appeal to you to uphold the President's hands so decisively that foreign powers shall give up all thoughts of trying to interfere with us. We want peace, and therefore we must not so vote as to encourage foreign powers to take an attitude which may jeopardize peace.

I see in the audience some of my fellow volunteers, and some of those men who wear the button that shows they fought in the great war compared to which ours was but a small war. I ask you to see that you so vote that the Empire State may be recorded in favor of the President, whose commission is endeavoring to secure to the nation the fruits of the victory purchased by the blood and the suffering of your sons and your brothers in the East and the West Indies. In closing, I appeal to you once again to range yourselves on the side of the forces that stand for absolute honesty in civic matters and for courage and the interest of the flag in all matters affecting the nation as a whole.