

NOTES FROM WASHINGTON

Side-Tracking of the Shipping Bill to Make Way for the Army Bill.

PASSAGE OF THE FORMER PREDICTED.

Interviews with Leading Merchants Show Them to Be in Favor of the Subsidy-Drift of Sentiment in the South Regarding the Measure is Also Favorable.

[Special Correspondence.]

Washington, D. C., Jan. 16.

The talk current among senators and representatives recurs to the shipping bill more frequently than to any other pending measure, not even excepting the army reorganization bill, that is plodding its weary way through the intricacies of filibustering tactics on the part of the populist element of implacables, who, at the earnest and emphatic solicitation of their constituents, will retire from the public gaze and disappear from the public thought in another six weeks. It is amazing the extent to which sentiment has undergone a change regarding the shipping bill during the past ten days, especially since its active opponents seem to be entirely confined to the trio who will soon attach the blessed "ex" to their present titles.

The shipping bill was promptly side-tracked when the senate resumed its sittings after the holiday recess, in order that the decks should be cleared for the uninterrupted consideration of the army bill. Despite this, and notwithstanding the delay in the final consideration of the latter, which is under public discussion, it actually receives little if any more space in the press of the country than is accorded to the shipping bill. It is the persistence of the discussion of the latter, all over the country, that is attracting the serious attention of members. They seem to have passed the point of summarily rejecting it, or saying that its passage "is impossible," and to have reached the stage of the most "careful consideration." There is in this the greatest encouragement to the friends of the bill who have all along insisted that all it needs is intelligent consideration to insure its passage with large majorities in each branch.

The point seems to have been reached, now, when no reputable leader in either branch of congress can be induced to say that the shipping bill will not be passed at the present session, while by far a majority of those who consent to be interviewed freely predict its ultimate passage.

Two notable contributions to the subject, during the past week, are the interviews published in the New York Mail and Express in which some of the leading merchants of the city are quoted as strongly in favor of the bill's passage. The effect of the distribution of that strong expression upon the congressional mind was decidedly marked. The other contribution was that of the Manufacturers' Record, of Baltimore, which is concededly the most progressive trade paper published in the south. It contained several pages of interviews with leading southern business men in which they warmly urged the passage of the Nicaragua canal and ship subsidy bills. This symposium of expressions has also been widely circulated among members, and it begins to be seen that southern representatives fail to represent up-to-date opinions and desires.

Apropos of this, and just to show the drift of sentiment in the south, it is worth recording that toward the close of the present month a "maritime congress" is to be held in Georgia, a "call" for which has been formally issued by Gov. Candler of that state. Its deliberations may result in a denunciation of subsidies for any industries, but if they do it will be the first, as a long series of strong resolutions have already been adopted formally urging congress to pass the ship subsidy bill, such representative business organizations as the Richmond chamber of commerce, the Norfolk Business Men's association, the Cotton Spinners' association, the Southern Industrial association, and a host of others, all of recent date, joining most heartily in favor of the early passage of the ship subsidy bill and calling upon southern senators and representatives to support it.

A typical southerner, who passed through this city the other day, and who positively refused to permit the use of his name, discussed the shipping bill from a new point of view. Said he: "I have been asking some of my southern business friends what we would do if our rice were not protected, or, if you choose, 'subsidized,' by a protective tariff; and I have put the same question to them regarding sugar. They have not yet answered me. I have asked others to tell me the difference between subsidizing fast mail trains, such as pass through our southern country daily, and the subsidizing of fast steamships, and they seem lost for a reply. I've asked a number of others why they so readily fall into the habit of subsidizing cotton factories, in the way of granting them free sites, exemption from taxation, and other 'special favors,' or, as it seems to me, 'straight bounties,' whereby the 'many are taxed for the benefit of a few.' 'I do not expect,' said my friend, whose name is well known all over the south, and whose identity will be clear when these questions are read, 'that my southern business friends will continue nearly so hostile to shipping subsidies when they begin to consider those lavishly bestowed in their back yards, as it were.'"

J. B. M.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

Prosperity Is Too Much for the Chronic Calamity Howlers.

The word "reorganization" is maddening to Bryanite ears. It suggests that there is a screw loose in the democratic platform or intelligence. A retrospect or a prospect is all the sworn brethren of the Peerless are willing to treat themselves to at present. That sprouting journalist is unchanged, as everybody knows. He is going to talk and write until he dies. So he is perfectly happy whether the democratic party agrees or not with his theory that 'tis better to be licked and licked than ever to have won at all by giving up the principles of Chicago and Kansas City.

Hon. John W. Kern, democratic candidate for governor of Indiana last year, rises from the waters of woe and egorgritates a catalogue of the hosts of imperialism. It is long, but it is worth the price of admission:

"(1) A large majority of the so-called independent newspapers of the country, while protesting feebly against the open outrages committed against constitutional government, cringe with disgusting servility before it and yield their unflinching allegiance in the supreme hour of contest.

"(2) The most of the clergymen of the land, whose salaries depend upon the bounty of the social royalty built up by this power, and who, while pretending to preach Christ and Him crucified, are in every campaign apologizing, in God's name, for the Golden Rule, and justifying murder, conquest and rapine carried on by imperialistic power in the various parts of the world.

"(3) The entire lot of that great body of human beings commonly known as snobs, who are the camp followers of wealth, and who are always ready to sacrifice country and principle for the little social recognition they can obtain by crawling on their bellies in the presence of the vulgar rich.

"(4) A very large number of business men who, while before the threats of financial panic which confront them in every campaign.

"(5) A vast number of unthinking, but well-meaning men who have neither time nor inclination to look beneath the surface of events, or who are so busy in the business of money getting as to forget their country and the duties of patriotism.

It seems as if a slide were removed and you saw the lava seething inside of Mr. Kern's head. He has arranged to have the democratic party grapple with imperialism, and tear "the mask of hypocrisy from the canting preachers who affect to see the hand of God in every damnable outrage perpetrated by the temporal powers who serve for hire." He also proposes to turn the light on "the crawling, fawning snobs who sacrifice principle for social recognition," and he promises himself the happiness of seeing "the miserable reptiles shrink and wither into nothingness." Heat rather than light is Mr. Kern's element. The democratic party can scarcely attract converts by the scorching and searing process. But how familiar these eruptions of Kernese look!

Hon. Robert Treat Paine, Jr., who personally represents the declaration of independence, and was the Bryanite candidate for governor of Massachusetts last fall, tells the Maine democratic club with a charming and even pathetic candor that "we are handicapped by the prosperity enjoyed."

How can people enjoy prosperity when they hear the rattle of the dictator's chariot and the clanking fetters of the martyr of liberty in the Philippines? But they do enjoy it, such is the base commercialism of the human constitution. Take off the handicap, bring the country to rags, and the democratic party will be ready to run the race. In the words of the unknown, but deep-revolving bard:

"Nothin' doin', Give us ruin."

A staff correspondent of the Kansas City Times, a high old cockerone of the Bryanites, sends the same message from Washington. He gives a conspectus of democratic sentiment as he finds it at the capitol:

"Suppose that the trust falls, that the wonderful conditions which have enabled the railroads to declare dividends change; that the competition among these great railroad systems becomes so strong as it is daily and yearly becoming stronger, and the business which has largely been increased by abundant crop yields and general prosperity becomes less; the railroads are unable to pay a dividend upon their stock and a few of the trunk lines fail to pay the interest on their watered bonds, those interested will likely begin to look into these affairs and receiverships and foreclosures might follow. While the conditions of the country at present preclude the probability of a panic, conditions might occur which might cause the greatest one within the next four years in the history of the country. In their wild greed for gain it is not doubted that the great corporations of the country have overstepped the bounds of safe business policy and the pendulum might swing back. In case it does the republican party is without an argument and Mr. Bryan would undoubtedly be the logical candidate for president."

The logical candidate of a smash-up. Hurrah for the panic party and the panic candidate! It takes democrats to say the worst things about the democracy.—N. Y. Sun.

The policy of protection to American industries, to American capitalists and workmen in its entirety may sometimes have an ugly look to some persons. Bricks, however, cannot be taken out of an arch without making the arch unsafe. Protection as a government policy is an arch. Deep channels in the lakes and good harbors belong to the policy of protection as much as do tariff duties on iron and steel. Subsidies to ocean ships mean protection to an infant industry, and the promotion of that industry to a point where it can do a large and profitable business.—Cleveland Leader.

Mr. Bryan declared in his latest speech that the attitude of the banks on the gold standard "is not opposition to silver, but opposition to money." The idea is original, except so far as it implies that a 50-cent dollar is just as much entitled to be called money as a 100-cent dollar.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

RESTRAINING THEIR GRIEF.

Democracy's Ill-Concealed Joy at Being Rid of Mr. W. J. Bryan.

Glad alacrity is but half concealed by the sweet resignation with which the news of Mr. Bryan's retirement is received by democratic partisans. The way the proprietors are kept reminds us of the exemplary conduct of the relatives at certain funerals. Everyone knows that the supernal flight of the dear departed is a relief to the distressed survivors of his family. But mourning garments are put on, and a judicious sorrow is indulged, though the funeral baked meats are to furnish forth a marriage table. And perhaps the more imaginative, emotional and venturesome spirits may even go so far as to extol the virtuous life just closed and exhibit a violence of feeling. It is almost like the real thing.

In using the simile, however, we do not express the opinion that the late candidate is dead politically or without friends. He will probably employ his paper to rehabilitate his political fortunes, and there is a sincerity in the regard that is felt for him by the democratic masses. He still has strength enough to be a leader, but he cannot be the supreme leader he once was because of the great barrier of facts now raised behind him. The lieutenants are tired of running their heads against that stone wall, and hence their acquiescence, their well-composed sorrow.

No amount of personal liking for a man will reconcile one to repeated drubbings on his account and infinite prospects of more drubbings for a continued an unreasoning fidelity. The democracy has been kicked and cuffed and pounded at all kinds of elections during the last five years simply because it stood for Bryanism, so that its loyalty finally is worn out. Senator Bacon spoke only part of the truth when he said that the result last November "naturally ended Mr. Bryan's official position of leadership which the democratic nomination gave him." That result was merely the culmination of the series. It was foredoomed by antecedent events which made the fight hopeless. So, in spite of many circumstances which told against the republicans, McKinley's plurality was increased by more than 230,000.

The defeated Bryan of 1900 must thank the prophet Bryan of 1896. Everything the latter foretold came false, and people had no more confidence when they crossed his circle than when they cross the palm of a gypsy. The man was repudiated because his principles had been repudiated by the actual developments in the country. The lieutenants rejoice at his withdrawal because they know that it is impossible to separate him from the principles. They bow to the common sense of the great electorate and turn their back on soothsaying.—Chicago Times-Herald.

PRESS OPINIONS.

Mr. Bryan possibly read the complete election returns just before announcing that he was a private citizen.—Chicago Record (Ind.)

State department reports show that our commerce with Denmark has trebled since 1896. McKinleyism!—Iowa State Register.

All the republican leaders in the senate, Senators Allison and Aldrich included, now express the firm conviction that the shipping bill will pass before adjournment.

Mr. Bryan says that the democratic party was never in better fighting trim than it is to-day. If he is really out of it, it probably never was.—Indianapolis News (Ind.)

Scratch a man who is opposed to the army bill and you will find one who believes that the way for the nation to perform its duty is to run away from it.—N. Y. Mail and Express.

The thanks which democratic papers are showering on Mr. Bryan for relinquishing his claim on the party shows they feel he could not have been unhorsed had he not got out of the saddle himself. He may mount again after walking a while.—Indianapolis Journal.

The United States as a business corporation seems to be in good condition. With each month it owes less and has more money in the cashbox. In a private establishment that result would be attributed to good management. Even Mr. Bryan could not give a satisfactory reason why this condition in a commonwealth should not be credited also to good management.—Troy Times.

"In the south free silver as an issue is dead. The free silver plank in the Kansas City platform was repugnant to all the southern delegates, but it was not strongly opposed for the reason that Bryan was the only apparent nominee and it was his desire that the plank be inserted. At the next national convention of the party we of the south will insist upon a logical, substantial platform to suit the party and not the wishes of one man."—Holt Smith.

Of course the bill before congress making silver dollars redeemable in gold will call out opposition from the silverites. They will say that this degrades silver to the level of merchandise. In a certain degree they will be correct in this assertion. Silver is practically only taken money. The fact that it is receivable by the government for taxes and duties gives it its vogue. When it becomes exchangeable into gold at the option of the holder, as it will before this session of congress ends—for this proposition to redeem it in gold will pass—the silver dollar will be raised to the same level as the greenback or the treasury note, and the silver episode in American financial history will be closed.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

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