

The Forum.

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REPUBLICAN PROMISE AND PERFORMANCE.

A LARGE majority of the people voted against the Republican Party and its political creed at the last election, and it owes its present supremacy in the executive department of the government entirely to the practical operation of the State rights principle embodied in the federal Constitution. The result of that election was not an expression of the will or the judgment of the greater number of the voters in the United States, but it was an expression of the will and judgment of a majority of the intermediate electors appointed by the several States, each one acting separately and for itself alone. Not only did the Democratic candidate for president receive more votes than the Republican candidate, but the Democratic minority in the House of Representatives represents nearly 100,000 more voters than are represented by the Republican majority in that body. In view of these well-known facts, the statement made by Senator Dawes, in the March number of the FORUM, that the Republican Party had been recalled to power "by the voice of the people in November, 1888," constitutes a very flimsy foundation for the argument he makes to prove the right and duty of his party to force its extravagant and unjust financial and revenue policy upon the country.

It is true, as stated by the Senator, that the issue between

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the two parties was clearly and sharply defined in the last campaign; but it is not true that the Democratic policy went down "before the current of popular disapproval." The Republican Party was contending for the offices, and it got them. The Democratic Party was contending for a great principle which lies at the foundation of every government that recognizes the right of the citizen to the earnings of his own labor, and it received the approval of a majority of the people. Why it was that the offices were given to one party and the approval to the principles of the other, is a question that could be easily answered by a reference to the manipulation of voters by political managers in certain close and doubtful States; but as the purpose of this paper is to inquire how the Republican Party has exercised and proposes to exercise its power, rather than to expose the methods by which it was acquired, this question need not now be considered.

The statesmen of Great Britain and Canada will be astonished to learn from Senator Dawes that the present administration, "by its firmness in asserting treaty rights," has "restored security to the fishermen in the prosecution of their lawful calling" in Canadian waters. What treaty rights? The treaty of Washington, the one that defined our fishing rights in those waters, was terminated at the suggestion of a Republican administration before a Democratic president was elected, and the notice of termination was so framed that it took effect in the midst of the fishing season, thus leaving our people and their vessels at the mercy of the Dominion authorities. The *modus vivendi* agreed to by Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Bayard to remove the difficulties and embarrassments resulting from this inconsiderate action, still exists without change in any respect, and there have been no seizures of American vessels or trespasses upon the persons or property of our citizens since that arrangement was made. That administration negotiated a new treaty which would have amply secured every right or privilege we were justified in claiming, but a Republican Senate rejected it for partisan reasons. The President then asked for additional powers to enforce our demands, but the same Republican Senate refused to grant them; and there the matter still rests. Notwithstanding the lavish promises made before the election, the present administration has

done nothing. It has not "restored security to the fishermen," because they were as secure under the *modus vivendi* when it came in as they are now.

The Senator's reference to the Behring Sea controversy is equally unfortunate. When he speaks of our "indispensable control" over that sea, he asserts, by implication at least, a claim which the merest tiro in international law knows cannot be maintained, and which the present administration completely abandoned when it released, without trial or investigation, the British vessels seized under its own orders for alleged violations of our rights. The President's proclamation was a very solemn and formidable document, and there were perhaps a few persons in remote parts of the country who thought he was in earnest; but when the crisis came he backed squarely down, and all the Senator now ventures to claim for him is that these alleged trespasses upon our jurisdiction have been "made matters of record for that day of reckoning which is sure to come." Why the day of reckoning did not come immediately after the commission of the offenses, we are not informed, and probably never shall be.

If the administration intends to insist that the part of the Pacific Ocean known as Behring Sea belongs exclusively to the United States under the treaty with Russia and the law of nations, it was its plain duty to have these British vessels and their cargoes taken into port and libeled for violation of our statutes and the President's proclamation. The question would then have been decided by our own admiralty courts, and if it were determined in our favor, the duty of the President thereafter would have been plain and simple. But he has chosen to release the vessels without bond or pledge, and therefore the question, instead of being settled, is more complicated and embarrassing than it was before.

The boasted Americanism of the present administration has been further illustrated in a most striking manner by its voluntary co-operation with the Empire of Germany and the Kingdom of Great Britain in the selection and appointment of a king to rule over the Samoan Islands. The Republican President and Senate have not only assumed the right to participate with England and Germany in establishing a monarchical government over

those islands, but they have undertaken to bind the taxpayers of the United States to pay a part of the expenses of maintaining that government. By the terms of the so-called "general act" agreed upon at Berlin, and ratified by the Senate, the three powers mentioned have established a joint protectorate over the Samoan Islands and provided for the appointment of executive and judicial officers of their own selection, the organization of commissions and courts, the imposition of customs and internal taxes upon the people, the settlement of disputed claims to land, and the general regulation of the domestic affairs of the petty kingdom. The administration has entered into this "entangling alliance" with Great Britain and Germany without a shadow of authority, for it will scarcely be contended that the executive and the Senate have the right, in the exercise of the treaty-making power, to establish, or to aid in establishing and maintaining, governments in parts of the world beyond our jurisdiction. But the general act is not a treaty in any proper sense of the term. It is a system or plan of government agreed upon by outside powers, and imposed upon Samoa to promote their own interests in that country; but whether it will tend to promote the interests of the United States, is a question which the future must determine. It is more than probable that the preponderance of English and German influence in the administration of Samoan affairs will result ultimately in the termination of the treaty of 1878, by which we acquired the right to enter and use the port of Pago-Pago, and to establish on the shores of that island a depot for coal and other naval supplies; and it is certain that by the express terms of the general act, that part of our treaty with Samoa which exempted the cargoes of American vessels from the payment of import or export duties, is abrogated, and that hereafter such cargoes will be taxed to the same extent as goods imported from or exported to other countries.

As the law providing for the meeting of the Pan-American Congress, and the law admitting the four new States into the Union, were both passed and approved during the last Democratic administration, it is not easy to see how they can be justly set down to the credit of the present one.

Although the Senator's article purports to be a review of the

record made by the Republican administration during the year it has been in power, he finds so little actually accomplished that he is compelled to devote a large part of his space to promises and predictions. Among other things he says:

“The Republican Party declared unequivocally for tariff reform, and for a reduction of the treasury receipts to those actual expenditures that a rigid economy alone will justify.”

If the Senator really believes that this pledge will be redeemed in accordance with the obvious meaning of its terms, he has that kind of faith that removes mountains. Up to the present time there are certainly no indications that the revenue will be reduced as it ought to be, or that economy will be practiced in any department of the government. On the contrary, it is evident that if the policy so far pursued is continued, the whole revenue that can be collected under the laws as they now exist will be insufficient to meet the extraordinary demands that will be made upon the treasury. The surplus will be reduced, but taxation will be increased on many important articles. A mere enumeration of the bills now pending in Congress for the appropriation of money and for the creation of liabilities to be discharged in the future, would be sufficient to show the extravagant policy of the party in power; and it is evident that if only a small percentage of these bills should be passed, the existing surplus would be exhausted and a reduction of the revenue postponed for many years. If any considerable number of them are passed, additional taxation will be necessary, or the public debt will have to be increased.

But whatever may be done by the present Congress in regard to pensions, subsidies, bounties, and other projects now pending for the expenditure of the public money, it is safe to say that if any changes are made in the revenue laws they will increase the rates of duty wherever an increase will impose additional burdens upon consumers, and reduce the rates only in cases where reductions will not affect importations or materially diminish prices. Such a “re-adjustment of customs duties as will produce the most effective protection to American products and labor,” according to the Republican theory of protection, will necessarily reduce the revenue by prohibiting importation of dutiable

goods, but it will not reduce taxation upon the people. It will in fact increase taxation, but the tribute paid by the consumers will go into the private coffers of the domestic producers, and not into the public treasury. In the end, however, it will be of no real benefit to anybody; for while it will largely enhance the prices of finished products, and thus impose upon the domestic consumer a burden he ought not to bear, it will also increase the cost of production and exclude our manufactures from all the markets of the world except our own. The Republican tariff policy, as defined and advocated by Senator Dawes and the school of economists which now dominates that party, has already reduced many of our most important manufacturing industries to the verge of bankruptcy, while its disastrous effects upon the agricultural interests of the country have been so general that the wail of the farmer is heard in every part of the land. There has never been a time in our history when there was so much discontent and so little prospect of improvement as there is now, among those classes that ought to be prosperous. It is not the wage-earner alone that sends his petitions and complaints to Congress and its committees. Nearly every trade, occupation, and profession is organized to formulate and present its demand for relief, and the Republican Party responds to their appeals by proposing to extend and strengthen the protective system of taxation under which they have been reduced to their present condition. This, and the appropriation of public money out of the treasury for the benefit of a few favorite classes, is the only remedy it proposes. The evils resulting from thirty years of protection are to be cured by more protection, and the overburdened taxpayers are to be relieved by having their forced contributions given away to wealthy individuals and corporations engaged in the foreign carrying trade. The farmer will continue to sell his products in a cheap market and to buy his supplies in a dear one. He will see his competitors in South America, Australia, India, Hungary, Russia, and other parts of the world constantly and rapidly encroaching upon the foreign markets in which he sells his surplus, and he will be powerless to make head against them, because the laws of his own country forbid him to exchange his products for the things he needs, and to

bring them here unless he pays a tax upon them equal, or nearly equal, to their cost abroad. The American manufacturer will find his boasted home market not merely unwilling, but unable, to take his goods at the high prices which are necessary to compensate him for the increased cost of production due to the taxes on his raw materials; and as he is excluded from all other markets, he will be compelled to close his works or gradually to consume his capital. Many have already reached the point where they must choose between these alternatives, and if the present system is continued, and made more restrictive, as advocated by Senator Dawes, the number will be greatly increased in the near future. While high protective duties have undoubtedly in many cases enabled the producers of the protected articles to realize enormous profits upon their investments, the mere fact that prices are higher here than abroad does not always indicate that large profits are being made. Under our system, high prices, or comparatively high prices, are absolutely necessary in order to enable our manufacturers to carry on their business, because their material costs them more than it costs any other producers in the world; and as long as it is taxed as it now is, this will continue to be the case. It is not the wages of labor in this country that increase the cost of production, for all the reliable evidence upon the subject goes to show that, although wages by the day or week, as the case may be, are higher here than abroad, yet the actual cost of the labor to the employer, compared with the amount and value of its products, is less in the United States than elsewhere. What the laboring man most needs is steady employment, and this protection cannot give him. That policy which encourages trade, facilitates the exchange of commodities, and opens the markets of the world to his products, is the best policy for him, because it widens the area of consumption and increases the demand for his labor. Unless a small market is better than a large one, the restrictive policy of the Republican Party cannot be permanently beneficial either to the capitalists engaged in productive industries or to their employees. It is not an American policy, but a Chinese policy, that Senator Dawes and his party are advocating; and its real character and purpose cannot be concealed by reiter-

ating the charge that its opponents propose to give to foreigners "the possession of our markets and the control of our labor." If partial commercial isolation is good for the country, total isolation must be better; and the Republican Party, with complete control of the government in all its departments, performs less than its whole duty, according to its own theory, when it stops short of absolute prohibition of international trade. There are very few, if any, articles of necessity that cannot be produced here, if a sufficient amount of money is expended in their growth or manufacture; and as protection is supposed to help everybody, including even the consumer who is compelled to pay the increased cost of production, why should we not be required to provide for all our own wants regardless of the expense?

But Senator Dawes, instead of following his own argument to its logical conclusion, actually repudiates the foundation upon which it rests, and insists that our trade with foreign nations ought to be promoted by "the rehabilitation of our merchant marine," and by the establishment of closer relations with the republics of South America, which, he says, would result in "the increased interchange of commodities that constitutes profitable commerce." An interchange of commodities necessarily includes importations as well as exportations, and it is plain that if we desire to encourage such exchanges with South America or any other part of the world, our first duty is to remove, as far as possible, the restrictive tariff regulations which now interfere with them. The Senator says: "All duties must necessarily either retard or facilitate importations." While it is not apparent how any duty can facilitate importations, it is evident that all duties must retard them to a greater or less extent. South America wants to sell us wool, copper, and other articles, and to buy from us agricultural implements and other manufactures, and the Republican Party proposes to encourage this trade by subsidizing steamships to ply between the ports of the two countries, and at the same time discourages it by imposing taxes upon the wool and copper when they seek to enter our market; and this inconsistent and absurd policy is eulogized by the Senator as the perfection of American statesmanship. What right the government has to tax the farmers, mechanics, and other

producers in the United States for the purpose of raising money to be donated to the owners of ships, is a question which appears to have escaped the attention of the advocates of subsidies and bounties; but it is a question that will be persistently asked by the victims of their policy, and it will have to be answered sooner or later. It is a practical question, and it cannot be satisfactorily answered by mere declamation or by rhetorical figures illustrating the beauty and glory of the American flag on the high seas. What the taxpayer will want to know, is why he should be compelled to pay the expense of exhibiting the flag when somebody else is to realize all the profits.

It is scarcely worth while to review the general statements made by the Senator concerning the attitude of his party in relation to reform in the civil service. All he claims for the present administration is that it has selected good men to execute the law; that may be admitted, although it occupied a long time in the performance of this simple duty. He refers to the passage of the first civil-service law by a Republican Congress, but omits to state that another Congress of the same political complexion starved the Commission to death by refusing to make appropriations for its support. What the present Congress will do remains to be seen; but it is apparent that the administration itself entertains no friendly feeling for the system or for the principles upon which it is founded. Since the organization of the government there have never been, during the same length of time, so many removals for purely political reasons as have been made since the fourth day of March, 1889; and the process is still going on as rapidly as victims can be found. The claim that "to the victors belong the spoils," has never in our history been so vigorously asserted or so relentlessly enforced by a party in power, and yet the pretense of devotion to the cause of civil-service reform has been all the time ostentatiously proclaimed to the country. It is true that nobody is deceived by this pretense, but still it is an affront to the intelligence of the people that ought not to be tolerated.

The Republican Party came into power burdened with obligations which it finds itself unable to discharge, and the most difficult problem it now has to solve, is how to reward its friends

and pay even a small part of its political debts without ruining the country. When out of power it promised everything to everybody; but there is not money enough to go around, and as no one is willing to be left out of the distribution or even to reduce his claim, the situation has become quite serious. It has promised the taxpayers that it would reduce taxation, and it has promised the soldiers and the subsidy-hunters that it would increase the expenditures. It cannot do both, and it dare not refuse to do either. It has promised the friends of silver that it would help them to remove the restrictions now imposed by law upon the coinage of that metal, and it has promised the advocates of the gold standard that it would do nothing to depreciate the value or interfere with the stability of our currency. In a vain effort to keep both of these pledges, it proposes to convert the Treasury Department into a warehouse for the storage of silver bullion, and to issue receipts to be used as money. This is the only new financial policy it has so far developed, but its resources are not yet exhausted, and if the demands of the discontented become sufficiently strong, we may have paper promises to pay issued upon deposits of wheat and corn, or upon farm mortgages. It will be difficult to satisfy the plundered and impoverished farmer that his claim upon the bounty of the government is not as just as the claims of the prosperous owner of silver mines or the wealthy owner of ships.

The Senator is ominously silent upon the subject of pensions to the soldiers and sailors of the late war—a subject to which more prominence has been given than perhaps to any other in the political campaigns of the past. The most extravagant promises have been made by the Republican Party to these classes of our citizens, but now when it has, largely by reason of these promises, secured the absolute power to enact any pension legislation it chooses, it hesitates, and begins, for the first time, to calculate the cost of redeeming its pledges. It is now evident that not one half of what was promised will be done, and that this question will be left open for use in future campaigns. Unless the credulity of the soldier is inexhaustible, he will not be content with new promises or with renewals of old ones.

Already the Republican Senate has deliberately repudiated

one of the pledges repeatedly made in national platforms, and upon which the party secured no inconsiderable number of votes in all parts of the country. For many years, when it had control of only one branch of the legislative department, the Republican Party insisted upon the passage of a bill appropriating a large sum of money from the federal treasury for educational purposes in the States; and such a measure has three times received the approval of the Senate. For eight years it has been strenuously contended, in and out of Congress, that it was the duty of the colored man to vote the Republican ticket, and the duty of the Republican Party to educate his children at the expense of other people; and the Democratic House of Representatives has been denounced in unmeasured terms for its refusal to consider the several Senate bills sent to it. The Senator himself, in defining the position of his party upon this and other questions, says:

“It acknowledges its obligation to educate for the ballot those to whom the nation has given it, and its duty to open wide the gates of opportunity for the people in every walk of life.”

Although the nation has not in fact given or attempted to give the ballot to anybody, it is clear that the Senator refers to the colored people as the only ones to whom his party is under obligations in this respect; but the pledges heretofore made were not limited to any class, and the bill by which it was proposed to carry them out provided for the distribution of money to white and black alike in all the States. Since the Senator wrote, that bill has been rejected in the house of its professed friends, after a full discussion, thus affording another demonstration of the utter unreliability of Republican campaign promises.

The deluded Negro is now to be consoled for his past disappointments by the passage of a long, complicated, and impracticable election law, under which it will be almost impossible for him to cast a legal vote without the advice of counsel. All laws relating to the exercise of the right of suffrage, in a country where that right is extended to all classes of the people, should be so plain and simple that the humblest citizen can understand them and the most inexperienced official execute them. This is a proposition which will not be disputed by any one who

honestly believes that the citizen who is entitled to cast a vote should have an opportunity to do so with the assurance that it can and will be legally counted and certified. But the Republican Party, upon the pretense of securing to all citizens the right to vote for Representatives in Congress, proposes to enact a law containing so many technical requirements, and involving the performance of so many official duties upon the part of those charged with its execution, that in many parts of the country it will be impossible to hold a legal election under it; and this is claimed to be in the interest of the ignorant and oppressed voter. Such a law would offer no remedy for any existing evil, but would greatly aggravate the situation, and result in continual controversies and contests wherever its enforcement might be attempted.

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CANADA THROUGH ENGLISH EYES.

SIR CHARLES DILKE, in his very important and interesting work on the "Problems of Greater Britain," rebukes the present writer for dealing with Canadian questions in English and American organs of opinion. "The Canadians," he says, "prefer to fight the matter out among themselves." His rebuke must be extended to the ex-Governor-General of Canada, Lord Lorne, who the other day discussed the same questions in this very American review. Canada has no organ in which anything can be discussed at greater length than that of a newspaper editorial. The attempt to give her one has more than once been made in vain. The fact is significant, because there could hardly be a better proof of literary nationality than ability to support a first-class periodical. Ontario is not large or rich enough, and it is completely cut off in every sense from the maritime Provinces by French Canada. Canadians can hardly fight out among themselves such a matter as their relations to two other countries, each of which must have a voice in the settlement. No etiquette will keep them and the Americans from freely discussing the "problem" which forces itself on the mind of every one who has traversed the line of Canadian Provinces or even stood on the banks of the St. Lawrence. A Canadian, therefore, need not hesitate in an American review widely read both in Canada and England, to say a word on the Canadian portion of a book written by an Englishman and published in London and New York.

Little slips, such as the statement that the seats in the Canadian Parliament are not parted down the middle as in the British Parliament, but arranged in a semi-circular form as in Congress, indicate that Sir Charles's recollections of Canada are not very fresh. He has got himself wonderfully well informed as to events up to date. But to be informed as to events is not always to see them in their real bearing. Of this we may have one or two ex-