

Cummins and His Bold Challenge

Iowa Senator, Leader of the Insurgents in Their War Against the Payne Tariff Bill, Is a Fighter Who Never Sounds Retreat.

Main Question on Which the Battle Will Be Waged—Side Lights on Senate Insurrectos, Strong Factors in the Progressive Movement.

By JAMES A. EDGERTON.
THE statement of Senator A. B. Cummins of Iowa that the insurgent fight against the Payne bill is not ended, but that it will be carried into every Republican convention and will be fought out on the floor of the national convention in 1912, introduces a new element into American politics.

In my own view, no more important step nor one fraught with possibilities of more far-reaching consequences has been made in recent years. Of course the present purpose of this fight is to unhorse the stand pat leadership in congress, and especially in the senate, and to control the Republican party. That is the intention of the insurgent leaders, but it is one thing to start a political prairie fire and quite another thing to control it when it is once under way. No one can tell just what proportions the blaze will assume nor where it will end. The enthusiastic reception given to Cummins when he returned to Iowa would indicate that the people of that state are with him. Signs are not wanting that there is a deep undercurrent of sentiment in that direction throughout the land, being most intense perhaps in the states of the central west.

The Cummins program does not contemplate any further general revision of the tariff in the immediate future or, in fact, for the next ten years. Its main plank is one demanding the rigid carrying out of platform pledges. This

tor makes it plain that he supports the president, whom he regards as a progressive, and he adds significantly that he will continue in this policy until or unless the president proves that he is not a progressive. Still more significantly Mr. Cummins intimates that he would not himself be averse to becoming the standard bearer in 1912. This makes the issue explicit, furnishes a battery and a candidate around whom to rally, throws down the gauntlet defiantly and makes compromise impossible—burns all political bridges, in a word, and insures that the contest will have to be fought out to a conclusion. There is to be no quarter asked or given. In good old phraseology, it is to be war to the knife and knife to the hilt.

It is about the most definite and fighting challenge that has been issued in American politics in the last dozen years.

What of the man who makes it? Is his character such as to insure that he means what he says and that he has the purpose and the ability to make a finish fight? And, if he measures up to the task he has set himself, what of the forces behind him? A general must have an army. Has Cummins lieutenants who will stay by him? Can he rally the masses? The answers to these questions will determine whether this is to be a fight or a fiasco, a battle or a blunder, a victory or a joke.

Father of the "Iowa Idea."
First as to Cummins. Fortunately he is not unknown. His record is an

a narrow margin of eighteen votes after one of the bitterest and ugliest fights in the history of Iowa politics. And this is the man that has now thrown down his glove in front of the tariff barons and trusts of America. Behind him are La Follette, who has shown equal pugnacity and determination; Dolliver and Beveridge, the orators; Bristow, the man who exposed the postal frauds, and many others of like fiber, with a great army of the farmers of the middle west falling into step in the new crusade. It certainly looks like political war of the real variety.

"Handsome Albert."

Senator Cummins is fifty-nine years old, of distinguished appearance, iron gray hair and mustache, graceful and Chesterfieldian in manner, always wins the support of the women—so much so, in fact, that if woman suffrage were in force he would be elected almost unanimously—a man who dresses well and knows how to wear his clothes, called by his enemies "handsome Albert" and "this man Cummins," an orator who is equally at home with a column of figures and a spread eagle peroration—in fact, an all around leader that if he catches the tide on this present proposition is liable to go to almost any heights. He is of the sort who will either be president or die in the last ditch. Give your optic to Cummins, for, without trying to pun, he is a coming man.

Then there is La Follette, small and scrappy, who has fought even harder than Cummins and has been abused more, who also was three times governor of his state and fought against the railroads and the old political bosses, a man who would not accept his election to the senate until sure that his state reforms would be carried out! La Follette is five years younger than Cummins and has been in the senate four years longer. When he went to that body the Aldriches and Hales tried to haze him, but he hit them so hard that they soon gave up that policy. Well hated by the interests and better loved every year by the plain people of the United States, it is a tossup whether Cummins or La Follette is the real leader of the insurgent forces, and it does not much matter since they are so nearly alike in principle that the same cause will triumph whichever carries the banner.

Perhaps the third in importance among the senate insurgents is Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana, who is younger than either Cummins or La Follette and has been in the senate much longer. Beveridge is outgrowing his reputation as a boy orator and through his fight against child labor and for other reforms is more and more endearing himself to the hearts of the progressives. He was born in Ohio in 1862, beat Bryan in a college oratorical contest and has long been a Chautauqua idol and a spellbinder that could do anything with the English language except shut it off. The old chaps in the senate never would give the Indiana Demosthenes a chance, and now that this insurgent movement has happened along he is in his element.

How Cummins Corralled Dolliver.

Nor is Beveridge the only orator in the bunch. Jonathan P. Dolliver, Cummins' colleague from Iowa, has the American eagle trained so that it will not only spread and soar for him, but turn flipdaps in midair and scream in sheer rhetorical delight. Dolliver is also an insurgent, though there are those who say that Cummins had to kidnap him and drag him into the game, or, rather, Cummins grabbed off the whole state of Iowa and Dolliver had to come along if he wanted to play at all. At any rate, he is committed and now makes a noise like a progressive. Likewise he gave Brothers Aldrich, Hale and Lodge several uncomfortable half hours during the late lamented extra session. Dolliver was born in what is now West Virginia fifty-one years ago and has been in congress nineteen years, seven of which have been spent in the senate.

Joseph L. Bristow of Kansas is an editor and a reformer of the Roosevelt type. When he was not running a paper in the Sunflower country he was secretary of the Republican state committee and private secretary to Governor Morrill. McKinley made him one of the assistant postmaster generals, third, fourth or seventeenth, and he unearthed the Cuban postal frauds. This made him right with Roosevelt, who set him to work cleaning out the whole postoffice department, which needed it enough, as the sequel showed. Bristow was born in 1861 and is a new member of the senate. The only pity is that he cannot investigate that body and clean it up as he did the postoffice bunch.

Personally speaking, it is a grief to me that Burket and Brown of Nebraska, who insured up to the very last hour, had not the stamina to stick it out and vote against Brother Alldrich in the last ditch—and beyond. I used to know both of them in my salad days, when I was trying to do a little reforming on my own hook. But there is hope that in spite of that one vote for the conference report they will return to the insurgent camp and make things interesting along the Platte.

Nor should Knute Nelson, the grand old Norwegian from Minnesota, be forgotten, nor Clapp, both of whom stuck to the end; nor Coe I. Crawford of South Dakota, who insured in spots and at intervals, although lacking at the last roll call; nor Victor Murdock and a host of others in the house; nor old Uncle Josh and Bill Jones, back on the farm and in the shops, who had no chance to spout in the halls of legislation, but who are looking grim and waiting till they get a chance to go to the polls. These are the boys that have the last say in the matter, and their verdict is yet to be heard.

WATER POWER TRUST

Gifford Pinchot Tells of Its Peril at Irrigation Congress.

HE ADVISES SPEEDY PROTEST

National Forester Asserts That a Combination is Forming and That the Time to Fight Its Schemes is Now. Points Out the Country's First Need.

At one of the sessions of the recent irrigation congress, held in Spokane, Wash., Gifford Pinchot, the chief of the forestry bureau, directly charged that there was a water power trust in process of formation.

"Not only this," he said, "but this water power trust does not have any hesitancy about appearing before this congress, in the persons of its attorneys, to seek to break down the last remaining opposition to ownership of all the power in the country.

"In fact, I know one genial and urbane gentleman who is now here helping the trust's cause. The time for protest is very short, and the water power trust will show but little consideration to the common people if once the power of the country is centralized. In power there is life, and the water power trust will eventually control all other trusts."

Equality of Opportunity For All.

Mr. Pinchot named one power corporation which, he charged, was after the control of water power. His speech was in part as follows:

"The first thing we need in this country, as President Roosevelt so well set forth in that great message which told what he had been trying to do for the American people, is equality of opportunity for every citizen. No man should have less and no man ought to ask for any more. Equality of opportunity is the real object of our laws and institutions.

"It goes without saying that the law is supreme and must be obeyed. Our civilization rests on obedience to law. But the law is not absolute. It requires to be construed. Rigid construction of the law works and must work in the vast majority of cases for the benefit of the men who can hire the best lawyers and who have the sources of influence in lawmaking at their command. Strict construction necessarily favors the great interests as against the people and in the long run cannot do otherwise. Wise exponents of the law must consider what the law ought to accomplish for the general good. The great oppressive trusts exist because of subservient lawmakers and adroit legal constructions. Here is the central stronghold of the money power in the everlasting conflict of the few to grab and the many to keep or win the rights they were born with. Legal technicalities seldom help the people. The people, not the law, should have the benefit of every doubt.

Water Power Trust Now Forming.

"There could be no better illustration of the eager, rapid, unwearied absorption by capital of the rights which belong to all the people than the water power trust, not yet formed, but in rapid process of formation. This statement is true, but not unchallenged. We are met at every turn by the indignant denial of the water power interests. They tell us that there is no community of interest among them, and yet they appear year after year at these congresses by their paid attorneys asking for your influence to help them remove the few remaining obstacles to their perpetual and complete absorption of the remaining water powers.

"They tell us it has no significance that the General Electric interests are acquiring great groups of water powers in various parts of the United States and dominating the power market in the region of each group. And whoever dominates power dominates all industry. Have you ever seen a few drops of oil scattered on the water spreading until they formed a continuous film, which put an end to once to all agitation of the surface? The time for us to agitate this question is now, before the separate circles of centralized control spread into the uniform, unbroken, nation wide covering of a single gigantic trust. There will be little chance for mere agitation after that. No man at all familiar with the situation can doubt that the time for effective protest is very short. If we do not use it to protect ourselves now we may be very sure that the trust will give hereafter small consideration to the welfare of the average citizen when in conflict with its own.

"The man who really counts is the plain American citizen. This is the man for whom the Roosevelt policies were created, and his welfare is the end to which the Roosevelt policies lead. As a nation we are fortunate at this time in this fact above all others that the great man who gave his name to these policies has for his successor another great president whose administration is most solemnly pledged to the support of them."

It is on account of this speech that the belief is expressed in Washington that Mr. Pinchot has imperiled his chances of long remaining in the government service.

New African Gold Field.

Glowing reports have been received at Bulawayo, South Africa, of the discovery in the Abercorn district of British Central Africa of gold deposits similar to the Rand formation, which are said to extend over an area of six miles.



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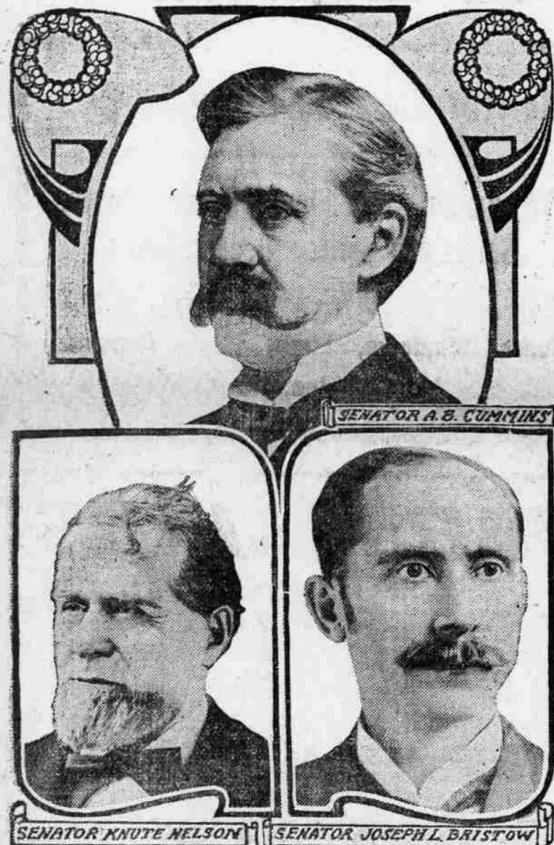
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SENATOR CUMMINS OF IOWA, WHO LEADS THE INSURGENT FIGHT ON THE TARIFF, AND TWO OF HIS LIEUTENANTS.

shows its wise political generalship, catches the enemy at his weakest point and raises an issue against which it will be impossible to make a successful fight. In theory all men agree that party promises should be kept. Any other policy is insincere and dishonest, and woe to that politician or group of politicians whose sincerity and honesty the public comes to doubt. Nothing means such speedy and certain political death. The Iowa senator thus assails Aldrichism at the one fatal breach in the wall. It is impossible to argue against the principle. A political platform is not, like a car platform, meant to get in on, but to stand on. It must be made in good faith and considered as sacred as the promissory note of a private individual—indeed, more so, for with the platform pledge tens of millions of private individuals are involved, and the duty to fulfill the obligation is raised to the nth power. This principle is primary and fundamental. There is no gainsaying it. The issue then becomes one of fact as to whether platform pledges have been carried out or not, and on this question the coming battle will be waged.

To Fight in the Party.

As to the tariff itself, Senator Cummins' program is exceedingly moderate—a commission of tariff experts, which in a somewhat crippled and ineffective fashion is provided for in the Payne bill itself, and revision on individual schedules as public policy seems to demand. Emphasis is placed on the underlying principle of protection, the basis for making rates being that laid down in the last Republican national platform and made prominent in the campaign of President Taft, which is that the tariff on any given article should equal the difference between the cost of domestic and foreign production, with the addition of a reasonable profit. The Iowa son-

open book and determines the character of the man. In the light of this record certain facts stand out in clear relief. Albert Baird Cummins is a fighter. He means what he says. He never sounds retreat. He fought the old leadership of Iowa Republicanism to a standstill, was elected governor three times in spite of their opposition, hammered the railroad politicians till he got a yell out of Senator Elkins, their high priest; stirred up the whole country by his "Iowa Idea" of protecting American industries without sheltering illegal combinations, dared to veto a bill permitting a railroad combination which all the corporation attorneys and old line politicians wanted him to sign, showed his independence of party lines, although political irregularity in Iowa was then considered almost a capital crime, and finally was elected to the senate despite the frantic opposition of almost everybody in the state except the people. But did he stop fighting when he had realized his supreme ambition of sitting in the United States senate? Did he? Ask Aldrich. Ask Smoot, the Mormon elder, who became Aldrich's right hand man. They know how hard Cummins can fight. And did he stop fighting when the tariff bill was passed? His pronouncement issued on his way home from the extra session is the answer. And will he stop fighting till he wins? If you have any doubts on this score read his history. To start a new battle the next day after the finish of an old one is his habit. Twenty years ago or more, when he was practically unknown in politics, he entered a fight for the United States senate and came within three votes of beating ex-Governor Gear, who had the state machine and the Burlington railroad behind him.

The next morning after Gear's election Cummins announced himself as a candidate for governor and won out by

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