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THE FORUM

SAYS A PROGRESSIVE—

Wilson's Deeds Reviewed by Orphan Bull Mooser.

La Grande, Aug. 17.—(To the Editor)—When the famous progenitor of the Progressive party renised, released and forever quieted all his right, title and interest in and to that party, he pinned to the founding's cradle a farewell note, in which he expressed the wish that the child be adopted by Mr. Hughes, "who is beyond all comparison fitter to be its foster father than I, Mr. Wilson."

As one of the orphan party, I have obediently nursed the hope that Mr. Hughes would duly qualify as our lawful guardian. I have read his speeches with unbiased consideration and great respect. I have read them with a sincere desire to know his attitude toward those policies of social and industrial justice which were the dominant planks in the Progressive platform. I have been open to conviction that Mr. Hughes is worthier than Mr. Wilson to be the custodian of the Progressive patrimony.

Thus far, however, Mr. Hughes has disappointed my hopeful expectations. I fail to find in his speeches that passion for democracy in government that distinguished the Progressive movement. They are able attacks and aggressive arraignment of the Democratic administration. But they are cautious and reserved in their expression of constructive and progressive ideas. Suffused with stump speech artifice and partisan appeal, they suggest the politician rather than the statesman.

Mr. Hughes has said little so far to encourage the independent voter and less to rebuke the sordid stand-patter. The war horses of the Old Guard arch their necks and step proudly to their music. Any one of the capable chief captains of the reactionary regime might have spoken them and still be true to caste.

In his discussion of the high protective tariff we hear again the muffled creaking of the Aldrich party machine. If Mr. Hughes is elected, he will doubtless be called upon during his term to deal with the changed conditions arising from the restoration of peace in Europe. We will have a "ruinous foreign competition" scare. Once more, as many a time and oft in the past, the "infant industries" will need protection against the pauper labor of Europe. Encouraged by Mr. Hughes's high tariff sympathies, the Old Guard will have a golden opportunity to restore to the special interests the princely patrimony of a highwayman tariff.

His pronouncements on preparedness and Americanism lack the Roosevelt ring and intensity of conviction, and trail off into vague generalities when he considers the possibilities of the foreign vote. So far Mr. Hughes has not spoken a single sharp syllable in rebuke of the subterranean schemes of a foreign power to control the political affairs of the United States.

On domestic and economic issues, aside from the tariff, Mr. Hughes's utterances have been as nebulous as dim puffs of star dust lost in the haze of the Milky Way. As to Mr. Wilson's legislative record—the most constructive and progressive program enacted since the Civil War—Mr. Hughes is strangely silent. His guns are all long range guns, and scarcely a shell has fallen this side of Europe or Mexico. Mr. Wilson's diplomatic record is Mr. Hughes's Verdun. Naturally these attacks are highly captious and critical, but they throw no light on Mr. Hughes's own capacity as a constructive statesman. He is notably reticent concerning the program he himself would follow.

From his speeches so far, we gather mainly that Mr. Wilson has shamed us before the world, that he is one of the weakest presidents we have ever had. This is putting it strong, to say the least, for one doesn't have to rise any higher in the scale of animal intelligence than that possessed by a college freshman to know that we have had some very distinguished disappointments in the White House—one in particular not more remote than the reign of Big Built Aft.

In his scathing strictures on Mr. Wilson's dealings with Germany and Mexico, Mr. Hughes leaves us to infer that if he had been president, Belgium would not have been invaded, the Lusitania would not have been sunk, and Mexico, summarily squelched and subdued, would now be a domestic decorum. But how he would have avoided the mistakes he attributes to Wilson, he leaves us also to conjecture.

Would Mr. Hughes repudiate Wilson's policy of neutrality? Would he join the Allies or the Central Powers? Would he demand instant and specific disavowal from Germany of the Lusitania sinking? Would he threaten war on Great Britain for interference with our shipping and seizure of United States mail?

Mr. Hughes hastens to assure us that he is not a Roosevelt fire-eater, that there is not a drop of militarism in his political veins. But how he could have brought Germany up standing—Germany that did not hesitate a moment to defy the combined military power of England, France and Russia; how he would have converted that nest of viper's eggs in Mexico into a perfectly palatable omelet; how he would have accomplished all this without a resort to cannon and corpses, would require the services and the entire Pinkerton detective agency to determine. He is precise and definite only as to what we had a right to expect of Mr. Wilson.

Under Mr. Wilson we have avoided war with Germany and won an epoch-making diplomatic victory. Germany has stopped her submarine warfare on merchant-shipping solely on account of the president's insistence on international law. Could we have expected more under Mr. Hughes?

Under Mr. Wilson we have thus far

been able to successfully apply the principles of justice and Big Brotherhood to our distracted sister republic on the south. It has been a difficult and delicate task, and naturally has not been accomplished without some friction and bad feeling. But we are now in a fair way of assisting Mexico to realize herself. No doubt Mr. Wilson has made mistakes in his dealings with Mexico. Could we reasonably expect that Mr. Hughes would have made none?

Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong. To have raped a helpless sister republic; to have crushed her beneath the iron heel of military despotism, might have been good politics, but it would have been a moral crime. A politician, with his eye on the next election, would have applied coercion to Mexico. Woodrow Wilson, with his eye on the next generation, dared to apply the golden rule. And the next generation will justify Wilson no less surely than it will condemn Germany for its invasion of Belgium.

As an American citizen I am proud of Mr. Hughes. I am proud of the inspiring spectacle of his unquestioned courage and moral integrity. But his integrity is not more inflexible than is Mr. Wilson's. His ideals of public service are not superior to those of Mr. Wilson. His record as private citizen and public servant is duplicated by that of Mr. Wilson.

The weight of Mr. Hughes's fame rests upon his investigation of the insurance scandals. He fought for honesty in the insurance business and won a signal victory. But he said nothing about the corrupt relation existing between the great insurance reserves and the money trust. He said nothing about how these great reserves might be made to better the old age conditions of the poor. He did nothing to destroy the underlying system which made these insurance evils possible.

Mr. Wilson, on the other hand, has fought the system of special interests wherever it has shown its Cobra head. He found the system entrenched at Princeton University, and gave it no quarter. As governor of Jersey he again discovered it, defied it, and wrote its death warrant into the statutes of that state. With drawn sword he followed its slimy trail into the legislative halls of the nation.

Through his legislative enactments, he has curbed the predatory interests, reformed the currency, taken the financial power out of the hands of the Wall Street oligarchy, and put it into the hands of the people where it belongs. Through the Clayton law, he has made labor respected as Lincoln said it should be; has raised it from the status of a mere commodity and given it human rights superior to the pitiless law of supply and demand. Through the income tax law, the "malefactors of great wealth" are no longer exempt from their just share of the burdens of taxation; they are distributed upon the shoulders best able to bear them. Under him the robber baron tariff has passed from the realm of special legislation into the fairest measure that the brains of impartial tariff experts can devise.

I am not a Democrat. I did not vote for Mr. Wilson. Neither am I a Bourbon Republican. I did not vote for Taft. I have little interest in the success of parties, but a very great interest in the success of democracy. I believe in the consolidation of all independent voters, and the consolidation of all Bourbon voters. And I believe in surrounding the Bourbons with all the comforts of Sing Sing. I humbly suggest the permanent retirement of Special Privilege; I may never have the pleasure of attending its funeral but I thoroughly approve of it.

As a Progressive, I am profoundly grateful for Woodrow Wilson. With intelligence, independence, sympathy, poise, patience, and an inflexible integrity of purpose, he has wrought to exterminate special privilege and enhance the general betterment of mankind. And the general welfare of the people, as Alexander Hamilton remarks, "ought to be the leading object of every party and the aim of every individual according to the measure of his power." If Mr. Hughes is elected president of the United States I shall humbly advocate a life position for Woodrow Wilson as the President Emeritus of Humanity.

For the foregoing reasons I still ponder the question: Why should a Progressive vote for Hughes in preference to Wilson?
ANDREW R. MARKER.

Red Tape in France.
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