

CONSTITUTION AND FETTER WORSHIP

The Chicago *Inter Ocean* notes the fact that a gentleman delivering a lecture on American institutions to an audience of socialists made a quotation from the constitution, and, when the correctness of his memory was challenged, requested all in the audience of 150 who had read the state and federal constitution to rise. Only seven did so.

"Now," says the *Inter Ocean*, "this audience was somewhat above the average of mental development." This may be true for Chicago, but without comparing the Chicago average with the general average of mental development, except on this one point, we are safe in assuming that, taking this country through, there are not more than seven in every 150 of the voting population who have ever read the constitution of their state and of the United States in the course of their lives.

At this time certain well-meaning but superstitious persons are attempting to introduce flag worship into the public schools of Missouri and other states. They want to set up a bit of bunting in the school yard and have all the children uncover to it, duck their heads to it, crook their knees to it, or worship it in some other way, with the idea that such idolatry will make them patriotic Americans. This is to political patriotism exactly what fetishism is to religion. It centres the mind on an idol, some symbol of good luck, and draws it away from the realities. If there is any reality in Americanism it is to be found in our highest law—our constitutions. Instead of making children worship a piece of bunting, put on a pole like a Gessler's cap for them to bow to, they should be made to get the state and federal constitutions by heart as they do the multiplication table, regardless of whether they understand it or not. No child ever knows why twice three makes six, but when such facts are committed to memory in childhood they are of the greatest utility afterwards. And so would be the constitutions if committed to memory. No attempt should be made to explain them. No comments should be allowed for all such involve partisanship. But getting the facts of the constitutions as they stand by heart should be substituted for the fetishism of flag worship if the desire to preserve an indestructible union of indestructible states is to manifest itself rationally.

It is now expected that Speaker Crisp will not be able to announce his committees, with the exception of two or three of the minor committees, for ten days or two weeks yet. It is barely possible that this result may be postponed until after the Christmas holidays. The amount of work involved is prodigious. The very large number of new members from the section of the country outside of the southern lines suggests the probability of a general shake-up of the house organization, and it is understood to be the policy of the new speaker to give the east, west and northwest very substantial recognition. If long service in the house were alone to determine the standing of members on committees, the south would get the cream of the committees, even though that section were largely in the minority in representation, as most of the southern men have had long terms. It is understood, however, that Speaker Crisp proposes to overcome this difficulty by giving prominent places to those members north of the Mason and Dixon line whose experience and ability qualify them for the assumption of important trusts. This will necessarily disappoint a number of southern men whose long service in the house entitles them to promotion, but there is apparently no escape from it. The south will get about half the chairmanships and the north the remainder.

The correspondent of the *Oregonian* telegraphs from Washington as follows:

There is a good deal of speculation as to what position Mills will take in the next house. Mills stands ready to take the chairmanship of the ways and means committee if it is offered him, and says he will serve the party wherever he may be placed, and his friends think it will be very strange if he is not offered the place. Crisp will hardly do otherwise, because it would only emphasize the claim made by the Mills crowd that Crisp's election meant a back track on the tariff.

This indicates that there will be no wavering on the tariff question by the democrats. The appointment of Springer, McMillan or Wilson would mean the same thing. The robber tariff will be the great leading vital issue in the next campaign. The silver and other questions will be secondary in importance.

The Home Market Club is to be congratulated on one thing. Its spokesmen have at last been able to recognize the fact that tariff reform has been gaining ground in New England. President Draper professes to be unable to account for it, but he acknowledges it and publicly laments it. The ostensible policy hitherto pursued by the high-tariff brethren appears to have been abandoned.

A correspondent asks about what papers south of Salem take telegraphic news. There are none. The *Herald* of this city and *Guard* of Eugene took the dispatches for a while, but finding the expense too great for a merely local paper they discontinued them.

The story telegraphed from the east, to the effect that Mills, after his defeat, walked like a school boy is hardly to be credited. But if it were true, that trait alone would be sufficient reason for his defeat.

McKinley, on account of his tariff views, ran 5000 votes behind the other candidates on his ticket.

Mr Springer who may be made chairman of the ways and means committee of the house gives his views of the proper course for the democrats in congress to pursue on the tariff question. He says:

"I do not think we should attempt a general revision of the tariff at this time. We should offer the country relief by passing bills for putting the articles named on the free list and sending them to the senate. A general tariff bill cannot be enacted into a law, and would keep congress here until October. I think there should be appointment of a strong committee on manufactures, with able investigators on it. It should consist of fifteen members; ten democrats and five republicans. This would make a sub-committee of three each. They should divide the work, one investigating textile industries, another iron production, another glassware and pottery, and so on. This committee would be a sort of adjunct to the ways and means committee, which could go on with its work, and then subsequently get all the testimony without a long list of hearings. These sub-committees could go on during the session and also during the recess. Their industries should not be conducted with a spirit of hostility toward manufacturers, but with a view to ascertain the bottom facts and ascertain in each case, what, if any, degree of protection is needed, as I have a suspicion that frequently it is represented that they need a great deal more protection than is really the case. It should be ascertained what labor costs, the things produced, wages paid, whether work be steady or not, profits on actual capital and not on watered stock, relative stock of production here and abroad, whether there are tacit or direct agreements to limit production, and much more information of a practical character. This information is not now to be had. The party could then fight the McKinley bill, and if we win in the election this information would enable us to form a tariff bill adapted to the country, and become a law, and pass it in the 53d congress. If we fall in the election, then this information has been obtained, and we can keep on until the country is educated against the McKinley bill.

Democrats in Douglas county are taking steps, through L. F. Lane, chairman of the county central committee, to organize clubs throughout the county.

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