THE SCIO TRIBUNE

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WHEN WILL IT END?

The war is well into its third year and, so far, is a practical draw. Nevertheless the allies are on the offensive on every side and are stronger in men and munitions, the central powers seem to be able to put up an impregnable defense so far.

So far as Germany accomplishing what was her first purpose is concerned, she has made a failure. Her drive for Paris, the establishing of a base on the North sea on the northern coast of France and the capture of Verdun, all have failed. No other result that the destruction of billions of dollars worth of property and a tremenduous loss of life, has resulted.

The war, especially on the western front, has settled down to a case of hard pounding on each side and the question is, which side can continue replenishing the war chest the oftener without bankruptcy? Which can fill her depleted ranks the more rapidly?

In all of these respects, England seems to have the better supplies from which to draw and is in less danger of exhaustion. With Canada, Australia, New Zeland and India to aid the mother kingdom to supply men, and with her large sources of wealth and credit, she certainly has a large advantage over Germany and Austria.

At the present time these waring nations have acquired a total debt of near sixty-five billions of dollars. This is a sum is beyond human comprehension. It means practical bankruptcy to all of them, for what nation can pay a debt of $500 to $600 per capita? It means that every family of four persons must pay an annual interest on account of the government of $100, for which no beneficial return whatever can be received. It will make wage slaves of the people for many generations to come.

When our civil war closed, we had incured a debt of near $3,000,000,000 and of which the interest paying debt amounted to more than $50 per capita. Fifty years have elapsed and we are still paying interest on a part of this war debt. With our immense productivity and power to create wealth, we have not yet dischargeed the debt. What will these European nations, with less wealth earning power, do with a debt ten times as large? Besides the enormous cost of the present war, each of these warring nations had a debt of from $75 to $150 per capita. England was still paying interest caused by the Napoleonic wars, France had not recovered from her war with Germany in 1870 and Russia was yet paying for her Crimean and Japanese wars.

When will the war end? When physical and financial exhaustion arrives, seems to be the only answer. When the gold reserve of a nation, which must buy from other nations is exhausted, its inability to prosecute a war has arrived. Germany may possibly be able to live within herself and which she is now doing, owing to the blockade of men on land and ships on the sea, but England could not. Destroy England's mastery of the sea and she would be compelled to make peace in three months.

And what are they fighting for and what will they have gained when the war ends? For end it must in time.

Germany nor Austria will be able to pay indemnity for, apparently, they will be financially and physically exhausted before they quit fighting. Countries are like men. Destroy their ability to pay or to earn wealth and, well—their notes are worthless. Germany has lost or is about to lose all of her colonial possessions and her ships have been driven from the sea. Therefore her ability to pay indemnity is destroyed. True, the present German government may be utterly destroyed and her lands taken. But what would be gained with such a result? The people with their power to earn wealth largely destroyed, would still be on the land and common humanity will demand that they shall be cared for.

When our civil war ended, the debts which the south had incurred were repudiated. It required several years to reconstruct matters, to move along towards peace and prosperity. The problem of reconstructing Europe will be immensely greater and far more difficult, because of difference of language and customs. Systems of government which will cause or permit such wholesale destruction of life and property, are failures. If new governments arise, which will give greater liberty and enjoyment to the people while the price is terrible to consider, it may not be too dear. If it shall drive the idea of the divine right of kings to rule from the world, a long step towards the millineiun will have be taken.

TARIFF THE LEADING ISSUE

About the only clear cut issue of the present campaign is the tariff. Mr. Hughes contending for extreme high protection, or the restoration, practically, of the Payne-Aldrich duty rates, while democrats contended for the present tariff schedules with a change here and there as conditions indicate should be made, both for purposes of revenue and incidental protection.

There is no doubt but what the vast majority of the American people are opposed to the extreme high protection which our manufacturers demand. The complete overthrow of extreme high duty rates in 1912 as represented by the old guard republicans, is abundant evidence of this fact. It will be remembered that President Taft, when signing the Payne-Aldrich bill, said it was the best tariff law ever enacted by the republican party. When a candidate for re-election Mr. Taft was able to secure the electoral vote of but two states, Utah and Vermont.

Candidate Hughes is contending for the restoration of a tariff law, somewhat similar to that which caused the overwhelming defeat of Mr. Taft. Mr. Hughes is spokesman for the same element of the republican party which wrote the Payne-Aldrich duty rates. That is to say the numerically small number of manufacturers who are the sole beneficiaries of high duty rates and the great financial interests closely allied with them. The great mass of the American people, while willing to submit to reasonable protective duties, are emphatically opposed to extreme high protective rates as defined by the last republican tariff law. The 1912 election should be sufficient evidence. But it is not. Mr. Hughes advances the same old argument to justify high duty rates which has been used by republican campaigners for generations. The defeat of 1912 will have to be repeated before their swan song is changed.

It is an impossibility for a tariff bill enacted by either republicans or democrats to be perfect. A law which suits the manufacturers, does not suit the consumers. Our country is so large and our industries are so varied that a tariff which suits one locality or section of the country, is against the interests of another. This fact has been recognized by both political parties and both have declared for a tariff commission, composed of experts, which can give the matter a deeper study than it is possible for congress at one session to give.

Mr. Wilson was elected with the promise of a revision of the tariff schedules downward. He immediately convened congress in special session for this one purpose. The Underwood tariff, which cut the duty rates on an average of 50 per cent, resulted. But the bill is not perfect and conditions forced the restoration of the duty on sugar within three years, as a revenue measure. Perhaps conditions may require other changes as well. But it is safe to say that a congress, which would restore the extreme high duty rates which maintained under Mr. Taft, will not be elected next November, nor thereafter and Mr. Hughes mistakes the temper of the American people when he contends for high duty rates.

The European war has so changed world conditions, that any tariff law enacted in time of peace, no matter whether duty rates were high or low, would be found to be defective. For this reason, the present tariff law has not resulted as was expected. It has failed to produce the revenue expected, because the war has greatly curtailed the importations of foreign made goods. For this same reason, the cost of living has advanced, because foreign made goods have not competed with our American manufacturers in our markets. Therefore it is impossible to say just what would have resulted from the Underwood law, had world peace maintained. Mr. Hughes says or implies that our cities and towns would have been full of idle men. But that is simply his opinion expressed for partisan purposes. He cannot point to the empty dinner pail as of old, for these same pails are full not only with the necessities but with the luxuries. Mr. Hughes thinks they ought to be empty and seems utterly confounded to see the full dinner bucket under a democratic administration.

While the tariff seems to be Mr. Hughes only issue of importance, it is not an issue in the minds of the people, unless personally interested. They think that, because of the war the present or Underwood tariff has not yet had a fair tryout. They are beginning to believe that it will not necessarily destroy any industry and are unwilling to have it changed materially, until it is fully tried out with the world in a normal condition.

Mr. Hughes appeals to voters with his statements of what would have been our condition under normal world conditions, are simply bunco. He does not know. We don't know. Nobody knows. It is simply a matter of interested opinion in most cases.

If a fair minded tariff commission of experts can be selected, who are broad minded sufficiently to recommend duty rates which will result to the greatest good for the great majority of the people, the problem will be solved. But it is simply nonsense to discard the present law, which the people do not yet know to be a failure and go back to the law which was overwhelmingly rejected in 1912, just to give Mr. Hughes the presidency and place the old gang of Penrose, Smoot, Barnes and others in charge, for such will be the case with the election of Hughes and a republican congress.