



The Indianapolis Times

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"Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way."

Just Like Jim

Once more the forward looking people of Indiana must regret that this state furnished the agent who tried to throw a monkey wrench into the meeting of so-called progressives at Washington. These men and women are seeking real relief from the unemployment situation and the human misery that comes from a badly adjusted economic machine.

It was Senator Watson, of course, who by preference or selection, attempted to turn the attention of these men and women from economic problems to the more highly controversial subject of prohibition.

That trick has worked so often in the past in Indiana that Watson is justified in the idea that the liquor problem might divide any group.

The privileged loafers know that if people quarrel about prohibition they are not likely to agree on methods of protecting the farmer and the laborer.

That is the reason professional wet and professional dry organizations can be easily financed. It is the background for the election of unfit men to the senate and the house of representatives. It permits those who betray the people to escape retribution.

No one in this state, for example, would believe it possible for the colleague of Watson, coming from the very beginnings of Stephensonism, to be re-elected after the exposures of that era, were it not for the fact that Robinson is able to persuade the fanatical dry voters that he is their particular guardian. He is the typical product of wet and dry discussion.

When The Times wired Senator Watson for a clear and direct answer to his own questions on prohibition, his reply was not even evasive. He merely said the people know where he stands. That is "just like Jim." It is the way he gets by.

Does any reader of The Times know where Senator Watson stands on this question today?

If there is any such information extant, the other readers are entitled to the facts. The Times tried to get it from Watson. It failed.

Don't crowd, but write, if you know.

Practical Men

In those lost days of Hoover prosperity, when money grew on brokers' books and washerwomen were said to wear silks, but didn't, the country had no patience with progressives. Calamity howlers, long-haired fanatics, parlor Bolsheviks, were the abusive names flung at them.

Now that times are hard, they get a hearing. And as the country listens to them in their progressive conference in Washington they do not seem so crazy after all. Indeed, it is the present chaotic political and economic situation attacked by them which seems crazy.

Certainly it is hard for any sane man to defend as just or intelligent a system which produces wholesale unemployment and misery in the richest land in the world. Basically the problem is ethical—the injustice of denying the right of work and food to free men, the cruelty of such economic slavery.

But forget ethical considerations. Put it solely on the practical ground of efficiency. By that test our system has failed. The cycle turns to longer and deeper depressions, engulfing wider masses of the population.

By the misery of factory workers and farmers, the merchant and the manufacturer are pulled down. Destroy the wages of the producer and he ceases to be a consumer. Without a wide and sustained consumers' market our whole mass production machine will wreck itself.

Continue the concentration of wealth in fewer pockets and prosperity can not return, for the people's purchasing power will be gone. The rich will go without our profits, and the poor will go without food.

In this emergency, business and political leaders generally have no plan. They drift. They hope to muddle through. They wait blindly for the cycle to come around again to temporary prosperity—followed by longer and worse depression.

The Progressives reject that fatalism. They have no easy cure-all, but they believe that the same human intelligence which is conquering the problems of disease and of science can be used to solve our economic and political problems. They believe that planned economy can control business cycles and prevent unemployment.

Therefore to their national nonpartisan conference the Progressives call political scientists and economists. For the politician's customary chapter they try to substitute the expert and his facts.

They do not succeed perfectly. But they go a long way.

Reading the addresses and technical reports made at the first session of the Progressive conference Wednesday, we are impressed by the expert knowledge and the practical wisdom of the leaders of this nonpartisan movement. When a Costigan or a Lewis discusses the tariff, or a Borah discusses the return to representative government, they speak with expert authority unsurpassed anywhere in the country.

For that reason we have faith in the Progressive movement. We believe America's economic salvation depends upon developing enough national intelligence and courage to apply the principles of social engineering to our problems.

That is the only practical way out. And, so far as we can see, the Progressives are the only group in congress even seeking that practical solution.

Teachers Versus Education

Dean Alexander Melikjohn of the experimental college of the University of Wisconsin announces that he is ready to terminate the novel institution of which he will have been the head for five years at the close of this academic year.

He states the reason as the desire to give the authorities a chance to assess the value of his work. This may end a third episode in the academic history of the intrepid American educator.

He gained his original reputation as a popular dean and an extraordinarily effective teacher of philosophy at Brown University. He resigned this position to assume the presidency of Amherst College.

THE INDIANAPOLIS TIMES

M. E. Tracy SAYS:

It's Trade, Not Principle, That Makes the Government Seek a Better Understanding of the Soviet.

PADUCAH, Ky., March 12.—Secretary Stimson's idea that something should be done about the Russian situation deserves the highest prize. Except to satisfy President Hoover's passion for such methods, his idea that it requires any great amount of study is not so good.

Given three days, any high school kid could tell not only what's the matter, but what ought to be done. It goes back to the simplest kind of foolishness on both sides.

No sooner was the Soviet established than its leaders fell for the illusion that they could and would subdue every capitalist government on earth. We Americans not only got scared, but allowed the scare to build up an equally groundless illusion that the Soviet didn't amount to anything and couldn't last.

Former Secretary Hughes put our sentiments in the form of a wise-crack when he described Soviet Russia as "an economic vacuum."

The curriculum was unique. Instead of the usual pursuit of required subjects of an essentially high school character in the freshman year, the students were taught the principles of classical civilization. In the sophomore year they were put through the foundation of our scientific and technological civilization of today.

At the end of two years they were turned back into the regular curriculum and pedagogical grind, with it was hoped, an unusual insight into our present civilization and how we had attained it. The study of pagan civilization was intended to indicate the defects of our industrial, profit-making culture.

There is no doubt that the boys in the experimental college learned a great deal and enjoyed their work. From the standpoint of intellectual illumination the experiment proved a success.

But this apparently is not the essence of university endeavor.

As at Amherst, the stimulation of an inquiring type of mind and the inculcation of a zeal for learning were secondary to other considerations. At Amherst enlightenment was sacrificed to tradition and clique. At Wisconsin economic considerations and departmental politics are said to have dominated.

The experimental college was far more expensive to maintain than the rest of the university, in proportion to per capita instruction units. Melikjohn's experiment deprived members of some departments of money which might have gone to insure payments and salary increases.

He prevented other departments from securing increases of staff. No amount of success in provoking heightened intellectual activity could compensate for such sins. Hence his head was demanded once more.

The chief lesson is that not all our educational stagnation and inertia is due to the malicious influence of trustees and alumni. The vested educational interests, pedagogical superstitions, departmental jealousies and college politics of the faculties often are a greater menace to sound and enlivening education.

At Amherst the trustees did not step in to decapitate Melikjohn until the faculty had forced an impasse.

Professors are wont to go gunning for the beam in the eye of boards of trustees. They will be more successful if they first remove the mote from their own.

By and large, college faculties get about what they deserve.

Joseph P. Cotton

Most men grow conservative with age and responsibility. Joseph P. Cotton did not. When he was named undersecretary of state by Hoover, he was suspect, as a New York corporation lawyer. But the longer he was in the public service, the more liberal he became.

Into that strangely oppressive atmosphere of precedent and red tape at the state department, he brought something more unusual than intellect, which is rather common there. He brought a sense of humor and a human touch which are no less important than knowledge in the art of diplomacy.

That sense of humor helped him to see through the red scares which frightened such worthies as Hughes. That humor drove him to work for withdrawal of marines from Haiti and Nicaragua, military occupation not offensive to the Stimson.

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