

ALLIANCE DEPARTMENT.

J. F. NISBET Editor.

BACK AT BRADHAM.

Congressman Stokes Replies to an Open Letter.

PROTECTION THE POINT

On Which Alliance Brethren Differ. Figuring on Principle and Profit. The Alliance Lash.

Congressman Stokes asks The State, in justice to him, to republish the following letter from the News and Courier:

Capt. J. D. Bradham, Manning, S. C.

Dear Sir: Through the thoughtfulness of a friend I am in receipt of a marked copy of The News and Courier in which you publish my private letter to you, and your reply. Though ample time elapsed, you gave me no intimation of your purpose. I do not object to the publication, however—in fact I am rather glad now that it is published, since you insist upon public discussion at this time. But, mark this—my willingness in the premises, not having been ascertained by you beforehand, will not take away from the transaction the suggestion of bad faith; nor lift the flavor of sharp practice.

The close personal and Alliance relations heretofore subsisting between us might have warranted a more direct appeal to you to stand true to the doctrines we had together stood for in the past; but I merely asked your careful attention to a published argument, and emphasized some additional points. Read in connection with that argument much of your ill humored criticism falls utterly pointless.

I stand by every statement of fact in my letter, as touching matters that came under my personal observation or from contact with Republican members; and time will prove the correctness of my predictions.

But let all that pass. Since you insist upon discussion of tariff now let us discuss it without heat, dispassionately. You are a farmer; so am I. We are both producers of short staple cotton; so are your people and mine. Whatever the bearing of the question may be it bears upon our interests alike. If we are to obtain the relief we desire for our industry we must keep together. We can't afford to divide, but if we continue to travel together we must be patient and tolerant. Hence I pass over much in your letter that seems ill considered and unjust, not to say ill tempered, and will confine myself to the question at issue.

Since you seem to resent consideration from the standpoint of the Democratic platform, and challenge me as an Alliance man to defend my position, I will endeavor to treat the question specially with reference to Alliance demands. You seem to forget, however, that on the tariff, and many other issues, the Alliance demands and the Democratic platform (State and national) are identical. You seem to lose sight of the fact that we framed the Alliance demands because we

thought they were right; and for the same reason we placed those demands in the State Democratic platform. So that, in appealing to the platforms, I was simply appealing to that which you and I and others had accepted as right and beneficial from the farmer's standpoint.

In the first place, then, you say that I and other Alliance leaders industriously taught you that "the money question, not the tariff, was the issue." That is true but who is agitating the tariff issue and insisting upon its discussion now? I have pleaded with you and with others not to agitate it now. In my published article, which you say you read, I distinctly protested against agitating it, thus diverting attention from the money question at a time when we should be closing up our ranks for the grand assault upon gold monopoly in 1898 and in 1900.

I plead with you not to agitate the tariff question now, and you seem unaccountably irritated and consumed with indignation on account of it. I am singing the "same old tune" now that I sung when I was, as you say, "industriously teaching that the money question, not the tariff, is the issue." You took us "at our word" then—why not now.

In a modest way I did teach that along with others, and I am still protesting against any diversion of attention from the money question, especially since you admit that the proposed tariff on cotton could not benefit producers of short staple cotton. That the proposed tax cannot be adopted at his time is conceded all round. The present tariff bill will probably remain in force at least four years. Then why agitate it? But what did the Alliance and its leaders really teach on the tariff issue? The Ocala demand on the tariff, which you and I and others helped place in our State Democratic platform, reads thus: "Believing in the doctrine of equal rights to all and special privileges to none, we demand that our national legislation shall be so framed in future as not to build one industry at the expense of another. We further demand a removal of the existing heavy tariff tax from the necessities of life that the poor of our land must have."

You quoted that preamble to that demand in your letter—why did you not quote it all? You challenged me to the Alliance view, and then you quoted only a part. Why quote half a truth when the whole truth lay right alongside? Did you believe that demand was right, captain, when you helped to place it in the State Democratic platform, or when you endorsed it as an Alliance man? If you were sincere then, and have not changed since, what right have you, as a consistent Allianceman, not to say Democrat, to advocate building up one industry at the expense of another, and thus add to rather than remove, tariff taxes? Can the fact that the benefit, if any, is coming south alter the principle involved or change the complexion of the act? If we advocate a protective tariff on cotton, we cannot consistently oppose a like tariff on other necessities of life.

If a protective tariff on cotton would yield any benefit to your people and mine I might see some excuse for agitating, even though it is practically a fruitless issue. But you yourself admit that the proposed tariff tax could not help the producer of short staple cotton, though you think it would help the price of long staple. Suppose it should increase the price of long staple. My people do not produce long staple cotton, but they do use the goods made from long staple. If the price be raised, as you profess to believe, my people would have to pay the increased price upon what they use; so would people everywhere who do not use long staple. What right have you as an Allianceman, so jealous of consistency on my part, to build up the long staple cotton industry at the expense of other industries—yes, at the expense of my constituents who produce short staple? While the long staple was selling at 17 to 33 cents per pound, short staple ranged at 5 to 7 cents per pound. Your proposition is to advance the price of the 30 cent article at the expense, in part, of the producer of the 5 cent article.

If you believe the Alliance demand was right when you helped put it in Democratic platform, and have not changed since, you stand just where I do as to the principal involved, and when you admit that so far as my people, the short staple producers, are concerned, the proposed tariff on cotton could not benefit you admit everything I have contended for. Then why find fault with me and indulge in considerate railing?

My position is, "stand to principles that we profess to believe right, whether the benefits are coming south or not." You say, in effect, "this proposed tariff on cotton is wrong in principles, but if it tends to bring benefit south I will adopt it."

In essence your doctrine sets up the dollar standard as the supreme consideration in political conduct. At bottom your doctrine on this point is the doctrine of the old reprobate who said: "Get money, my son, honestly if you can, but get money."

The unthinking and the sordid may follow you for a time, until they realize, as they surely will, that your proposed tariff tax is a delusion, but good people everywhere will value principle above purse or policy as a rule of conduct in public men, and you cannot hope to escape responsibility for the doctrine you teach.

The import tax on wheat and corn is dealt with in my published article—did you really read it?

If they prove anything, they prove in their practical operation the correctness of my proposition—that an import tax cannot help the price to producers of an export crop. The statistics show that in spite of the import duty on wheat and corn, and in spite, too, of decreased production of both, the price to the producers of each steadily declined after the tax was placed.

As one of the few farmers in congress, I have sought to view this question from the standpoint of the farmer—the producer of short staple cotton. I know by experience the struggle of the short staple grower. All I have invested in growing short staple

cotton. I have given the subject the closest study of which I am capable from all aspects. I believe I have gotten at the bottom facts, and I can see nothing for the producer of short staple in the proposed tax. I have set forth my findings in my published argument, and all I ask of my brother farmers is what I asked of you, a careful reading. I do not wish to force any man's judgment. I believe my fellow producers of short staple cotton will give me a hearing, and I believe they will pause before committing themselves to a proposition whose advocates admit it to be wrong in principle and incapable of benefiting the short staple producer.

I offered in my argument the only method by which the protective idea could be made effective to the producer of the short staple. You fight shy of that in your reply. You admit the proposed import tax on cotton cannot help the short staple producer, and yet when I suggested the only method by which, upon the same principle, you could help us short staple growers, you are dumb. Do you favor a bounty on short staple cotton? And, if on short staple cotton, are you willing to extend it so as to include all the other export crops? And if so you should point out how the bounty is to be paid, and how it is to reach the producer with certainty. It is not sufficient for a statement to deal with the what: he must also point out the how. Your undiscriminating sneer at conventionality and laudation of innovation are both irrational. It is wise to respect conventionality when it is based on principle. Innovation for mere sake of innovation, without principle back of it or benefit, before it, is foolish.

Your firing about none of us introducing sub-treasury bills, etc., I answer so far as it applies to me. I stand by all our demands, but I never do anything for buncombe merely, and no one who knows the situation believes for a moment that any such measure could receive consideration even in committee, as the house was organized in the last congress and dominated in the present one. Then who censure us for not doing a futile thing?

After long and painstaking effort people from all parts who think alike on our financial demand have gotten together. They would be widely apart on the sub treasury and other demands. Our effort is to cement together the forces we have, and add to them. Do you think this can be done by diverting attention to demands that they would feel compelled to fight us on?

But it is right for the people to watch their representatives. I do not complain at your watching us, and stimulating us to greater activity along Alliance lines. Of course when you come to congress you will expect the same treatment.

If I were not fearful of arousing your resentment again by reference to splitting the party of financial reform, I would suggest that the only ground upon which an Allianceman or Democrat could offer such a proposition as the tariff on cotton would be as a matter of party strategy, to show up the insincerity of the Republican protectionsists. But, as I understand you, not only offer it, but would actually support and vote for it.

This reply has been delayed by sickness, in addition to the delay attending receipt of your publication.

Very truly yours,
J. W. M. STOKES.
Washington, D. C., May 5, 1897.

For fear the Reporters for the sub-Alliances do not fully understand our contract with the ENTERPRISE PUBLISHING COMPANY. I will try to explain. The ENTERPRISE allows us the use of four columns in the paper to publish such matter as we see proper and the different Alliances are each to have a Reporter who shall furnish the editor of these columns with articles to help fill up our part of the paper. And each and every one of those Reporters shall act as agents for the ENTERPRISE to solicit subscriptions to the paper and to collect the subscription price there-to as well as arrearsages, and the ENTERPRISE people are to furnish each Reporter a list of delinquents that he is expected to collect.

Now, brethren, let us try to do our work properly and come up to our part of the contract. Let us quit ourselves like men and show that we are in earnest about it, and about Alliance matters generally.

Lancaster C. H. Alliance meets next Saturday 22nd inst., at 3 o'clock, p. m.

E. EVERALL,
Secretary.

Our State exchange is doing a great work in the way of keeping prices down and by keeping us posted on prices by publishing a weekly price list and we have special prices on buggies, wagons, harness, etc., sent us by our exchange agent that we would be glad to hand to Alliancemen any time.

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