

# The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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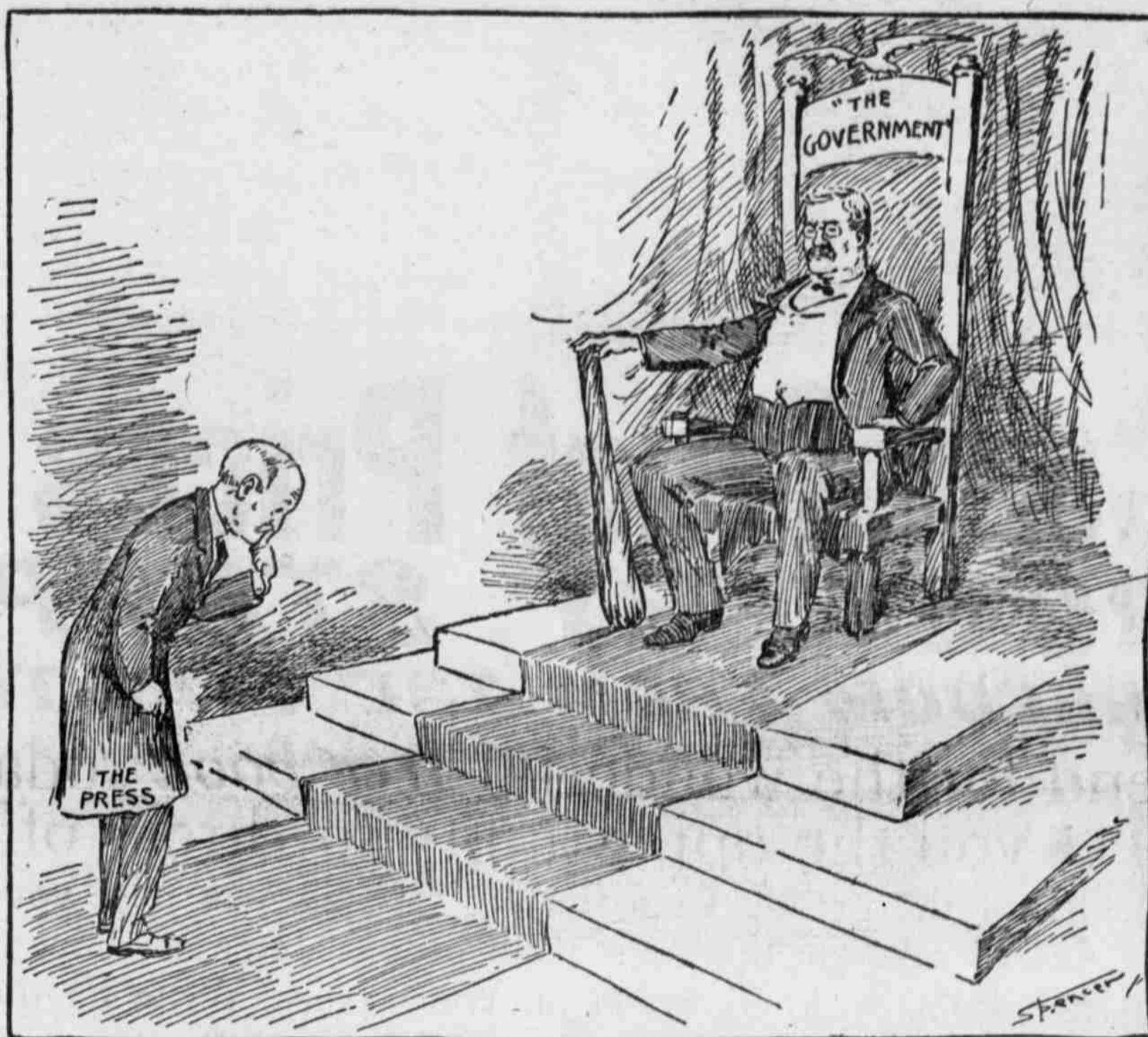
### THE OREGON PLAN VINDICATED

Governor George E. Chamberlain, of Oregon, has just been elected United States senator from that state. He is the first senator ever elected according to the Oregon plan, and he being a democrat, elected by a republican legislature in pursuance to pledges made to the people by the candidates for the legislature, his election is a vindication of the Oregon plan, and the Oregon plan is a long step toward the popular election of senators. In fact, it goes as far as the state can go without an amendment to the federal constitution.

In the last issue of *The Commoner* attention was called to this plan as it is embodied in the bill presented in the Nebraska house of representatives by Hon. Fred B. Humphrey. It is commended to the attention of the democratic legislatures now in session in the various states. (The bill is reproduced in this issue, page 5.) The Nebraska legislature will undoubtedly enact a law substantially like the one in Oregon and thus bring to the people of the state the benefits of the popular election of senators. In the close states, where such a plan is most effective, it is quite certain that enough candidates will agree to abide by the result of the popular vote to assure the election of the people's choice.

This plan is especially commended to the legislatures of Colorado, Nevada and Indiana, where democratic governors occupy the executive office and can act in harmony with the democratic members in securing the adoption of the Oregon plan. In Ohio, Minnesota and North Dakota, the democratic governors may have influence enough with the republican legislatures to secure the adoption of the plan, and in other states like South Dakota, Iowa and Kansas, the reform element in the republican party may be strong enough, when its vote is added to the democratic vote, to secure this measure of reform. In Missouri there ought to be sufficient co-operation between the democrats and the reform republicans to secure the passage of a law submitting the Oregon pledge to candidates for the legislature.

These states are mentioned especially because they are contested states. In the states that are considered sure one way or the other, the adoption of the Oregon plan might not materially affect the result, but the principle is right and the plan ought to be adopted everywhere. It will not only help to coerce the senate into consent to the election of United States senators by the people, but it will give the people of the states which adopt it the nearest approach that can be made, as the federal constitution now stands, to popular election.



IN AMERICA?

## THE SALARY QUESTION

A bill is before congress for the increase of the president's salary to \$100,000, and an increase in the salary of the federal judges is also contemplated. It may be well for our legislators to consider the effect of the increases proposed. Until Grant's time the president's salary was \$25,000. It was then raised to \$50,000, and now it is proposed to double it again. There has already been a large increase in the allowance made for the expenses of the White House, and with each increase in the expenditures of the chief executive, the country makes a nearer approach to the court customs of the old world. Is it impossible to resist the temptation to ape monarchical institutions? Is the sentiment which led our forefathers to establish a republic and to frame it with a view to simplicity and economy—is this sentiment, after all, too weak to stand against the pressure for the show and the ostentation that accompany authority in the Orient and in Europe? Must the president live so far above the people who pay the taxes, and so far from the producers of wealth as to be thrown entirely with the richer members of society? There is a tendency, seemingly irresistible, to live up to the salary, no matter how large it is, and a doubling of the president's salary would mean an increase in the complexity and in the expensiveness of life at the White House. It is proposed to withdraw the \$25,000 traveling allowance, in case the president's salary is increased, but that would not be permanent; in a very short time the new standard of life would absorb the president's salary and there

would be the same clamor for traveling expenses. Is it not time to consider whether such expanding expenses are in harmony with the spirit of our government and with the ambitions and aspirations of our people?

There is talk also of an increase of the salary of federal judges, but is there not also another side of the question? The judge, too, lives up to his salary, and the amount that he receives largely decides in what social circle he will move. Give him \$5,000 a year and his summer vacations will be spent where he comes in contact with those who, in taking a brief respite from the routine of life, seek some quiet and inexpensive resort. Make the judge's salary \$10,000 and he will select a new summer resort where he will be thrown into association with those who spend a larger sum upon their summer vacations. Raise the salary to \$15,000 and he will make another move and enter a new class; and he is naturally more or less affected by the opinion of the class with which he associates. Public opinion is a potent influence even with a judge. Dooley says that whether the constitution follows the flag or not is a disputed question, but that there is no doubt that the supreme court follows the election returns. Not only does the result of an election unconsciously influence the mind of judges, but the conversation which he is in the habit of hearing and the opinions that are expressed in his presence, imperceptibly mould his thought. If a judge's salary is such that his association is with those who enjoy large salaries, and he is shut off from contact with those who struggle