

## The Commoner.

ISSUED WEEKLY

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## President's Message

President Taft's annual message, delivered in congress December 6, 1910, is one of the longest in the history of such documents.

In the beginning the president says that the relations of the United States have continued upon a basis of friendship and good understanding. He pays a tribute to arbitration, referring to the settlement at The Hague of two important international controversies—the fisheries dispute with Great Britain and the Orinoco dispute with Venezuela.

He says he has not yet made appointments to the peace commission because he is awaiting the expressions of foreign governments as to their willingness to co-operate.

### TARIFF NEGOTIATIONS

Referring to the new tariff law provision respecting the maximum and minimum tariffs the president says that discrimination was discovered in several countries and removed by negotiation. Conferences on this line with Canada will be resumed at Washington in January.

Under the head of "the department of state, the foreign service," etc., he recommends "such legislation as will make possible and convenient the establishment of American banks and branches of American banks in foreign countries." Then he takes the pains to recommend the ship-subsidy, although he refers to it as "mail subsidy or other subvention adequate to guarantee the establishment and rapid development of an American merchant marine, the restoration of the American flag to its ancient place upon the seas."

He recommends the enactment into law of the general principles of the existing executive regulations respecting civil service as applied to the diplomatic and consular services.

He urges upon congress the passage of some measure similar to that favorably reported by the house committee on foreign affairs February 14, 1910, authorizing the gradual acquisition of premises for the use of American embassies and legations.

### NEXT YEAR'S EXPENSES

He presents as an estimate of expenditures for next year \$630,494,013.12, as against \$636,068,672.51; this does not include the Panama canal expenditures which will be something more than \$56,000,000.

The president says that four hundred places have been abolished in the civil service of the treasury department without injuring the department's efficiency. He recommends "a wiser

method of preparing a public building bill," preparing the measure upon a report by a commission of government experts.

On the question of revenue he says the corporation excise tax has worked well.

Of the Payne tariff act he says that measure was "adopted in pursuance of a declaration by the party which is responsible for it that a customs bill should be a tariff for the protection of home industries." The measure of the protection to be the difference between the cost of producing the imported article abroad and the cost of producing it at home, together with such addition to that difference as might give a reasonable profit to the home producer."

He says that "the basis for the criticism of this tariff is that in respect to a number of the schedules the declared measure was not followed, but a higher difference retained or inserted by way of undue discrimination in favor of certain industries and manufacturers." He says that little, if any, of the criticism has been directed against the protective principle, but that the criticism "has been based on the charge that the attempt to conform to the measure of protection was not honestly and sincerely adhered to."

In explanation of this he says that the time in which the tariff was prepared was too short for congress and experts to acquire the necessary information, but that in order to avoid criticism of this kind in the future the appointment of a tariff board was authorized. He says this board is now hard at work, although it is not likely to make a report during the present session of congress on any of the schedules. He hopes, however, that he may be able to give to the next session of congress some of the results of this board's investigation. In this connection he recommends that when the tariff is corrected it be corrected "one schedule at a time." He says we ought to have, like other governments, an office or bureau whose business it would be to supply "the most reliable information as to the propriety of the change (tariff reform) and its effects."

### BANKING AND CURRENCY

He advises congress to provide for "a non-partisan and disinterested study and consideration of our banking and currency system." This would mean the appointment of another commission to tell the people just what they ought to have in banking and currency "reform."

The president tells us that the army numbers now about 80,000 men and he emphasizes the need for additional officers for the rank of captain who may be used as teachers for militia and volunteer forces.

He says that the Philippines and Porto Rico are in good condition and he objects to the provision in the new Porto Rico bill providing for a partially elective senate as unwise.

He declares that the Panama canal will be completed by January 1, 1915, within the estimated cost of \$375,000,000. He recommends charging toll on the canal and intimates that a dollar a net ton would be sufficient, as this will bring an income of nearly \$7,000,000.

He renews his recommendation providing for national incorporation of industrial and other companies engaged in interstate commerce.

He advises the simplification of judicial procedure by empowering the supreme court to do it through the medium of the rules of the court. In his opinion no man is entitled as a matter of right to a review of his case by the supreme court. He should be satisfied by one hearing before a court of first instance, and one review by a court of appeals. The supreme court, in his opinion, should expound the law and especially constitutional law so as to furnish precedents for inferior courts. He advises, therefore, the relief of the supreme court from an unnecessary burden of appeals. These recommendations have been embodied in bills prepared by the American Bar Association, which bills are now pending.

He renews his recommendation of a law regulating the issuing of injunctions without notice.

He recommends the increase of the salary of the chief justice of the supreme court to \$17,500; associate justices, \$17,000; circuit judges, \$10,000; district judges, \$9,000.

He says that arrangements have been perfected so that postal savings banks will be opened in some cities and towns January 1, and that then the system will be gradually extended to the rest of the country.

He congratulates the country that there is no longer a postal deficit.

He renews his recommendation as to the increase of mail charges upon magazines and other second class matter and he says that the increase in receipts resulting from this change

"may be devoted to increasing the usefulness of the department in establishing a parcels post and in reducing the cost of first class postage to one cent;" then he recommends the adoption of parcels post on rural routes not to exceed eleven pounds per package. He adds that this should be adopted with a view to the general extension of the parcels post "when the income of the postoffice will permit it and the postal savings banks shall have been fully established."

He recommends the abandonment of certain navy yards on the ground that they are unnecessary.

He recommends "fitting recognition by congress of the great achievement of Robert Edwin Perry," saying that he reached the north pole April 6, 1909.

He recommends the adoption of Secretary Ballinger's suggestion that appeals in land cases may be taken from the interior department to the court of appeals of the District of Columbia.

On conservation he recommends the repeal of the limitation now imposed upon the president which forbids him reserving more forest lands in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Colorado and Wyoming. Also that the government's coal deposits be leased after advertisement inviting competitive bids for terms not exceeding fifty years with a minimum rental and royalties upon the coal mined, to be readjusted every ten or twelve years and 2,500 acres of service to be the limit for any one lessee. Also similar provision for government phosphate land with the added condition that the government might regulate and if need be prohibit the export to foreign countries of the product. Also a provision of law whereby a prospector for oil or gas may have the right to prospect for two years over a certain tract of government land when he shall be given a government license upon discovery of oil or gas; this prospector shall be given a government lease. Also that water power sites be leased by the government for not exceeding fifty years with a condition fixing rates charged by the public and against assignment to prevent monopolistic combinations.

Concerning Alaska the president recommends that its government be delivered to a commission with limited legislative powers, this commission to be appointed by the president.

He recommends the creation of a bureau for the control of national parks and the building of another national park out of the Grand Ganyon of the Colorado. The president pays a tribute to the various departments as operated under his administration.

He renews his recommendation that a bureau of health be created and says that those responsible for the government can be trusted to secure in the personnel of the bureau the appointment of representatives of all recognized schools of medicine and in the management of the bureau entire freedom from narrow prejudice in this regard.

He renews the recommendation that the claims of the depositors in the Freedmen's bank be paid; also that steps be taken looking to the holding of a negro exposition in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Mr. Lincoln's emancipation proclamation.

On the civil service he recommends a law providing that the president shall have the power to include in the classified service all local office appointments which now require the confirmation of the senate and that upon such classification the advice and consent of the senate shall cease to be required in such appointments; this would put in the civil service all of the local offices, such as postmaster, United States marshal, attorneys, postoffice officials, etc.

He advises the creation of a civil pension system such as is in vogue in England in the form of "contributory plan with provision for refund of their theoretical contributions." This would in effect be an insurance system. He therefore recommends the passage of the Gillette bill amended so that the difference between the annuities thus granted and the salaries may be used for the employment of official clerks at the lower grade.

He renews the old time recommendation for safety appliances for the protection of railway employes.

He asks for reasonable appropriation to enable the interstate commerce commission to enter upon a valuation of all railroads.

He recommends the passage of a law under which one who, in good faith, advances money or credit upon a bill of lading issued by a common carrier upon an interstate or foreign shipment may hold the carrier liable for the value of the goods described in the bill at the valuation.

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