

speakership amount to?" The question is "What will the house of representatives amount to, so far as concerns its agency for popular government, unless one-man power is destroyed under the democratic party even as democrats sought to destroy it under the republican party?"

The Post concludes in this way: "We must insist that the democratic masses know nothing whatever of the rules, that the members are better qualified to judge of the rules that are to govern the proceedings of the house than a voter who has never read any set of house rules. The people are directly concerned in the legislation that the majority shall enact, and in nothing else. The Post believes with Representative Burgess that the selection of the committee on committees will result in log-rolling and a scramble for place that will greatly impair the harmony of the majority. If the majority will give the country the desired results, the country is not going to trouble itself about the rules or the personnel of the committees."

The theory that the members are better qualified to judge than the "democratic masses" is the doctrine of thrones. The representative is the servant rather than the master of the men who elect him. And because the Cannon rules of the house make it impossible for the public sentiment to be expressed in legislation the people are vitally concerned in house rules. If it be true that there must be log-rolling in the election of committees, then it is better that the log-rolling take place in full view of the house and of the country rather than in the secret chambers of the speaker, as was the case under the Cannon regime.

"If the majority will give the country the desired results," says the Post, "the country is not going to trouble itself about the rules or the personnel of the committees." But "the country" has learned through sad and costly experience that the barn must be locked before rather than after the horse has been stolen. "The country" has learned that the way to secure "the desired results," whether it be under democratic or republican rule, is to restore the house to its representative capacity, making it impossible for one man or a coterie of men to control, and making it probable that the sentiment of "the country" would find reflection in the action of the house. Paraphrasing the Post's remarks, one may see how absurd its proposition is in the American view: "If the king will give the people the desired results, the people are not going to trouble themselves about the laws under which they live or the personnel of the men who make and execute those laws."

The simple truth is that the democrats have dinned into the ears of the American people the fact that through one-man power the house of representatives has ceased to be of public service, and now it is an insult to public intelligence for any democrat to say that the existence of an un-American power should be dependent upon the character of the men entrusted with that power—that the system which democrats denounced as despotic under republican control would be acceptable under democratic authority.

#### IN NEBRASKA

It would not be wise from any consideration to try to conceal the fact that the organized effort to make the democratic party obedient to the special interests includes Nebraska within its circle of operations.

If the democrats of Nebraska desire that their party shall be the plutocratic party, that their platform shall be written and their candidates chosen by the representatives of the special interests, then it is their duty, as it is their privilege, to make their wishes known.

They should not, however, be deceived and democrats who believe that the party should be preserved as an effective agent for the public welfare should have their own eyes opened and should make it their business to open the eyes of others with respect to the reorganization movement now going on within the democratic party, and under the leadership of those who would make it useless so far as concerns genuine reforms.

The Commoner intends to speak plainly because plain speaking is essential to the party's protection and the public welfare.

The New York World is the newspaper leader of the reorganization movement. The Commoner has already referred to the World's editorial entitled "A New Democratic Party." That editorial boasts that the democratic party "is emancipated and master of its own destiny" because "the Bryan socialism has followed silver and the democratic slate is wiped clean." The

Fremont (Neb.) Herald reproduces among its own leading editorials the New York World's "Bryan Socialism" editorial.

Now let the Fremont Herald tell its readers what it means by "Bryan Socialism."

Let the Fremont Herald tell its readers just what advantage would be gained for the people if the democratic party shall reverse its position as described in the national platform of 1908 and become the tool of the men whose business it is to exploit government rather than to protect the people.

The Fremont Herald will find it difficult to deceive Nebraska democrats. Certain politicians, posing as leaders, will commend the Herald's echo of the New York World's cry for Wall Street; but the rank and file of Nebraska democrats will not be caught napping in the future. They will not permit their party to be delivered for the use and benefit of the trust magnates even as it was delivered in the last state convention for the use and benefit of the liquor interests.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The president's annual message is notable for its length. If Mr. Taft's sympathies with the special interests had not already been made known to the people the message would be notable for its distinct leanings toward the very system the people are seeking to regulate—the system against whose encroachments upon popular government the people have but recently rendered an explicit verdict. He pleads for the ship subsidy, which is in principle antagonized by the progressive thought of all political parties today. He recommends national incorporation, which would ultimately remove all state control over corporations, centralizing that control in the federal government and making it more difficult than ever for the people to hold corporation agents to account or obtain relief from corporate impositions. He declares that there should be no more legislation with respect to corporation regulation, giving the laws already on the statute books an opportunity to demonstrate their usefulness. It may not be out of place to say right here that if the president would put the prestige of his high office and the great power he holds behind the criminal clause of the Sherman law, enforcing that clause against the chiefs of all the great trusts, it is reasonable to believe that the people would obtain immediate relief so far as exactions at the hands of these trust magnates are concerned.

Mr. Taft is a particular friend of "government by commission." He would have the tariff board made permanent, and then he would have "experts" representing that board tell the people just what particular schedules should be revised, or to enter protest against proposed revision when that course seemed impractical. He would have our currency and banking laws revised by commission, and he would have our national policy with respect to rivers and harbors, waterways and public buildings, as well as to tariff and money and banking, arranged by boards of "experts."

The message indicates that Mr. Taft has failed to make profitable study of the returns from the recent election. It shows that at any gathering of royal standpatters Mr. Taft is entitled to a seat at the head of the table. It proves beyond reasonable doubt that he is the logical candidate of the republican party for the presidency in 1912 because he stands unflinchingly for present-day Hamiltonianism—and present-day Hamiltonianism out-Hamiltons Hamilton, for it would lead the American people upon ground so absurdly aristocratic that even Hamilton would have avoided it.

#### A COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

It is to be counted as rather a fortunate circumstance, we think, that Representative Garner of this state has become not only an advocate, but a protagonist of the proposition to take the power of fashioning committees from the speaker of the house of representatives. For a good many of us the penalty of advocating a reform of any kind is to be called a "mollycoddle," or, if the critic happen to be of kindly nature, an idle dreamer. We rather incline to the opinion that no one will call Mr. Garner a mollycoddle or question the tangibility of his ideas. Therefore he brings to the propaganda the kind of support of which it is peculiarly in need. His accession to the ranks, if not, indeed, his bound into leadership, is a fortunate reason of the vigor and pertinacity which characterize all of his activities. We think the cause of this salutary reform is made

to "look up" considerably by the news that Mr. Garner has "got into the game."

We are sanguine enough to believe that the merits of the proposition have only to be presented intelligently and persistently to assure its adoption. The idea that an assemblage that boasts as its chief virtue that it is a "representative" body should set up a boss, empower a single individual with an authority which gives him the power of a director, whether he so uses it or not, is about one of the most incongruous of the things listed in our register of freakish facts. And as if to emphasize the anomaly of the matter, the senate which makes no boast of being a highly "representative" body, but which rather pretends, on the contrary, to be somewhat above popular direction, has stripped its presiding officer of all except such authority as is needful to a mere moderator of debate. Though the creature of all the people themselves, the president of the senate is only its presiding officer, denied all power to direct, or even influence its proceedings. Is it not somewhat topsy-turvy-like, that the so-called "representative" body should set up a single individual as its boss, while the body which makes no boast of its representative quality should leave itself free to exercise its own judgments? And yet the speaker of the house, with all of his immense power, is elected by the people of a single district, whereas the president of the senate is the choice of a majority of the people of the whole United States. Even if there were no other consideration, a decent regard for consistency ought to impel the house to enact this reform.

It will be a genuine reform, because it will wonderfully facilitate the efforts of representatives to represent their constituents. As it is now, the speaker can "frame up" a committee in a way that precludes practically all hope of the passage of a measure, even though an overwhelming majority of the house should be in favor of it. Committee-stuffing is not a theory, but a fact.—Dallas (Texas) Morning News.

Representative Garner's plan is as follows: Strike out the first paragraph of rule ten and substitute the following:

I. At the commencement of the congress, unless otherwise specially ordered by the house, the majority party of the house shall elect and report to the house five members of a committee on committees, and the minority of the house shall elect and report three members of the same committee. The speaker shall be ex officio a member of the committee, with all the powers of an elected member, and shall be the chairman. No member of the committee on committees shall be appointed chairman of any other standing committee of the house or be a member of more than one other standing committee. It shall be the duty of the committee on committees to report to the house for its approval the membership of the standing committees, the majority members of the committee designating the majority members of the standing committees and the minority members of the minorities of the standing committees.

#### THE BALLINGER WHITEWASH

The Ballinger whitewash by the republican members of the investigating committee was no surprise to the public. Chairman Nelson and several of the other gentlemen who signed the report giving Mr. Ballinger a clean bill showed during the investigation that they were inclined to be his zealous partisans rather than his fair judges. So far as any influence upon the public mind is concerned, the Ballinger whitewash report is not worth the paper upon which it is written. "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time!" And Abraham Lincoln had a pretty good idea of the people, too.

#### WILL NEW YORK RATIFY?

The New York World calls attention to the fact that the democratic state platform of that state endorsed the income tax amendment. Will Governor Dix recommend the carrying out of this plank? And will the democratic legislature stand by the platform? If so, the country will be greatly benefited by the victory won by the party in New York. It will be remembered that Governor Hughes urged the rejection of the amendment and that he had influence enough to secure the rejection by a bare majority. Let us hope that a democratic governor and a democratic legislature will do better.