

Editorials by Commoner Readers

J. E. Goodell, Albuquerque, N. M.—The enclosed is from a republican paper, one that has opposed Bryan in three campaigns, and even avers that it does not understand why Bryan is still today the idol of all democratic democrats; yet after more than ten years it shows the folly of imperialism and even admits the weakness of a supreme court which has been largely chosen by President Taft.

As time goes on the country is drifting deeper and deeper into what has been called "Bryanism." And is this not a proper name, for it is Bryan who has led the fight all along. Others are following. Roosevelt admitted that the recall of judges would be proper in California, which is just over an imaginary line from Arizona, where his creation (Taft) declared this reform should not exist. Wilson was able to see the wisdom of placing the courts in the hands of the people by the time he reached Oregon; and, had the United States extended a few hundred miles farther westward, would have become fully convinced. Why even Taft himself, who sees in a judge the nearest approach, on earth, to the Creator himself, admits that it is time something should be done. He sees the hand writing on the wall. Something will be done after 1912. Yours for "Bryanism."

J. F. Parsons, Ogden, Utah—The Chinamen of these western states are very anxious for a republic in China. Many have contributed money to that end and received notes similar to our "greenbacks," payable by the China republic in gold. Several consulted with me about it and I suggested to them the signs were that Japan and England would oppose the establishment of a Chinese republic and be backed in that view by the United States administration. These Chinamen here say most of the provinces are in the hands of the rebels and most of the leaders are able and learned men, nearly all or many can speak English and received their education in the United States, and feel they should have our sympathy in their struggle for a republic. The condolence we offered the South African republics I fear is of the same brand Uncle Sam will give to the Chinese republic. Oh, for a LaFayette! Or, have all such men long since died?

J. Q. Adams, Hammond, La.—In re of letter of Levy Mayer on corporations, why should not all of the profit above a certain per cent belong to the people? On what theory has one man a right to exact a greater percentage of profit than another?

O. C. Skinner, Montrose, Colo.—I note in The Commoner that Senator Owen and others heartily indorse the suggestion of The Commoner that the candidate be asked to state how he stands on public questions, which is all very well as far as it goes. But before the candidate is nominated by the party there is something of more importance.

If one is engaging a printer to work in his office, he not only "questions the candidate" but he wants to see recommendations as well.

If he is hiring an engineer for some important work, he not only "questions the candidates" but he wants to know when and how the applicant won his right to be applying for the job.

If he seeks a lawyer for a very important case, he not only "questions the candidate" which in this case is the lawyer applicant, but he

looks up his record of cases won, of ability shown and of legal knowledge proven in hard fought battles.

Why, then, when it comes to selecting a candidate for an important office, where the ability demanded must be great, and where the position of the applicants on the mighty questions of the day must be not only well understood, but so rock-ribbed that there can be no after dodging, and no evasion, it is enough to simply "question the candidate" and take his word for what he is and will do if elected?

Why not go more into details, and do as any good business man would do, demanding proof that the would-be officer has been an advocate of the principles you desire enacted into the law long enough to have those principles firmly fixed in his mind? Then question him, and you will have not only the present day statement that he will be true, but you will also have his record of the past to hold him in line when the fight becomes hot, and the tendency to quibble and to compromise and to dodge is before him, and when every inducement to go back on his word is being made to him.

Men will say glibly enough, "Oh, yes, I am in favor of the initiative and referendum, for instance, and yet when that measure comes up for a vote will as glibly support an amendment to make the initiatory per cent forty, as was attempted here in Colorado, which is in effect a death blow to such a measure. He could comply with his ante-election pledge and still help to practically kill the measure.

By selecting men who have in the past held certain opinions, and fought for them, too, we make it all the harder for them to switch, and at the same time make it certain just what they mean when they stand up when we proceed to "question the candidate."

Jesse J. Barker, Philadelphia—The enclosed quotation from a speech of William Pitt, (the rejection of whose advice to George III caused the American revolution), appears to me to be apt and appropriate to meet the speeches of Mr. Taft on his 40 days' itinerary:

"To the Editor of 'The Bulletin'—Sir: William Pitt, the English statesman, said during a speech in the British parliament

"(a) 'To levy a tax of 7 per cent is a dangerous experiment in a free country, and may excite revolt.

"(b) 'But there is a method by which you can tax the last rag from the back and the last bite from the mouth without causing a murmur against high taxes, and that is to tax a great many articles of daily use and necessity so indirectly that the people will pay them and not know it. Their grumbling then will be of hard times, but they will not know that the hard times are caused by taxation.'

"(c) is the system of taxation in the United States, and is the cause of all the poverty and distress in this land of plenty. The protective tariff and our system of taxation are the bulwarks of monopoly and privilege. How long is it going to take the people to realize this?

"(d) is the system of taxation that should be adopted. A 5 to 7 per cent tax on all land values and the wiping out of all other taxes would settle the trust question, the money question, the land question, the liquor question, the labor question, the poverty question, the charity question and make this country to prosper in a way undreamed of. The land tax would open idle land to capital and labor to get busy on;

it would do away with land speculation, with its inflated values and put values where they rightly belong.

"In conjunction with government ownership or control of telegraph, telephone and interstate transportation and municipal ownership or control of street railways and public utilities, it would form the basis of the best government on earth, 'of, for and by the people,' and is the logical, sane, honest, Christian method of bringing the Kingdom of God on earth. Monopoly and privilege—one and the same—have this country by the throat. The people have the remedy in their own hands. Think it over.—A. A."

B. M. Olena, Champlain, N. Y.—I notice there has been considerable discussion of late in the newspapers in regard to selling and disposing of a goodly number of United States war vessels which, it is claimed, are

out of date, and therefore unserviceable for war purposes. It seems to me in view of the fact that these same vessels having cost the people of these United States hundreds of millions of dollars, and many of them having made a glorious record in the Spanish-American war that they could be converted into mail ships, or as The Commoner has urged, United States mail routes could be inaugurated and these vessels used to carry the mails and could also be used for the purpose of training ships for American seamen and midshipmen. I am not sure but that some of them could be converted at very little expense into merchant vessels and thereby be used as a basis for the upbuilding of our merchant marine, which sadly needs a stimulus of some kind. I hope that Mr. Bryan will take up the fight and save these valuable war vessels to the American people.

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