

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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NEW YORK'S GREAT DEMOCRATIC LEADER

William Sulzer, governor of New York, replying to an inquiry as to the part self-elected "leaders" might take in the administration of state affairs, said: "I am the democratic leader of the state; the people decreed it at the polls, and I stand on their verdict. I can't succeed in doing what I want to do as governor unless I am the democratic leader. If any democrat in the state challenges that leadership let him come out in the open and the people will decide."

Only the Future Counts

On another page will be found an editorial which recently appeared in the St. Louis Republic. The Commoner has not commented upon the many editorials that have mentioned Mr. Bryan, favorably or unfavorably, in connection with a cabinet position, but it begs to protest against an argument presented by the St. Louis Republic which says:

"Woodrow Wilson's debt to Bryan is the biggest debt possible in American politics. Proper acknowledgement of that debt is expected. Popular belief is that it will be paid."

Another sentence reads:

"As to Mr. Bryan's fitness for the premiership or for the ranking ambassadorship, opinion may differ."

There are other sentences complimentary to Mr. Bryan, but these two passages bring out the point to which The Commoner wishes to call attention.

Cabinet positions ought not to be regarded as currency with which to pay debts. They are responsible positions, and in filling them the president-elect should look to the future and not to the past. A public official has no right to discharge political obligations at the expense of the public. The men selected by Mr. Wilson for the cabinet should be selected not because of personal service rendered to him, nor even because of past service rendered to the party. The individual counts for little; the cause counts for much. An individual, if he has had a proper motive for working, finds sufficient compensation in the triumph of ideas, principles and policies; he does not need the consolations of office. Offices should be used to strengthen the party and to advance the things for which the party stands. It is pleasant to reward those who have been faithful, where that reward can be given without sacrificing public interests, but where past service is considered it is better to consider it as an assurance of future service than merely because it has been rendered.

The Commoner declines to discuss cabinet possibilities, but it ventures to express the hope that Governor Wilson will be governed by a higher motive than gratitude in the selection of his official household. A great responsibility rests upon him, and he will need the assistance of the best and bravest for his work. He ought to feel free to select for each place the man best fitted for it; in no other way can he hope to

THE COMMONER'S THIRTEENTH YEAR

In its initial number The Commoner said: "The Commoner will be satisfied if, by fidelity to the common people, it proves its right to the name which has been chosen." At the beginning of every year The Commoner has reproduced this statement, and in this, the first issue of The Commoner's thirteenth year, attention is again directed to it.

It is not for the editor to say whether The Commoner has proved its right to the name it bears. Those who have habitually read this publication are to be the judges. It is sufficient for the editor of The Commoner to know—and perhaps pardonable for him to say—that if The Commoner has made mistakes they have not been mistakes of the heart; that its purpose has ever been to stand for the public interests, and to make the great political party with which it affiliates of practical service to the people to the end that a government erected, as our government was, in "liberty's unclouded blaze" shall be in truth what the fathers intended it should be—government of, by and for the people.

measure up to the expectations of the public. He need not—he should not—consider any service that Mr. Bryan has rendered to him, or to the public. Mr. Bryan has been abundantly rewarded for all he has done, and does not feel that the party, or any individual in the party, owes him anything. If he ever holds any office, it ought to be given, whether by appointment or by election, with the view to the service that CAN be rendered in connection with the work YET TO BE DONE, not with the idea of rewarding him for anything that he has done. And the rule which is here laid down for Mr. Bryan is the rule which he believes should be laid down for all. In other words, the welfare of the party and the welfare of the country, not the ambitions of men or the interests of individuals, should be considered.

GOOD FOR SULZER

William Sulzer is to be governor in fact as well as in name. There is no mistaking that. Governor Sulzer's courage and patriotism will meet the approbation of men of all political parties. The democratic party will win success by deserving it, and it will deserve success when its leaders shall come to understand that a public office is a public trust rather than a private snap, and that government is to be administered for the benefit of the many rather than to the advantage of a few men. Governor Sulzer spoke well when he said that he had been chosen the democratic leader in New York. His heart beats true to the public welfare. Let him but follow the call of his own heart and his name will be written in American history as that of one of America's great executives.

THERE'S A REASON

Attorney General Wickersham says that the Sherman anti-trust law is good as a civil law but lame as a criminal statute. Lame? Of course it is, and why? Because the supreme court destroyed its force as a criminal statute when it wrote the word "unreasonable" into it.

Opportunity

Abstract of speech delivered by Mr. Bryan at the complimentary dinner given to Governor William Sulzer at the Waldorf-Astoria, New York, December 21, 1912:

Mr. Toastmaster, Ladies and Gentlemen: I am glad to join Governor Sulzer's New York friends in doing him honor. I have shared with him the gratification which his victory has caused and none of his supporters have greater confidence than I that his administration will prove satisfactory. I have chosen for my subject tonight, "Opportunity," and shall use two public men and our party to illustrate my theme.

Political success is the conjunction of preparedness and opportunity. One may be prepared but his preparation can not be put to use until the opportunity comes, and opportunities pass unimproved unless those to whom they come are prepared to make good use of them.

A great opportunity came to Governor Sulzer and he improved it. The democrats of New York were looking for a candidate who would fit into the political conditions existing at that time and they turned to Mr. Sulzer and invited him to assume the responsibilities for which he had been preparing for nearly a quarter of a century. Twenty-four years ago he began his public career in the state legislature. He acquitted himself so well that he was soon promoted—entered congress some eighteen years ago. In that body he rose in position and influence until he stood in the front rank among the trusted leaders of the party. His word has such weight in party councils that he might have been wealthy had he been willing to barter his honor but he preferred to follow the advice of the wise man—"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." He has now been called to be chief executive of the largest state in the union. He will live up to the expectations of his friends because he has built his house upon the rock. His administration will be popular because he will be on the people's side.

I feel a personal interest in his triumph and in the glory he will gain from the office which he is about to enter, because he was my friend back in 1896 when I needed friends. Some of his political associates were timid but he was

RENEWALS

The subscriptions of those who became subscribers with the first issue of The Commoner and have renewed at the close of each year, expire with the last issue in January. In order to facilitate the work of changing and re-entering the addresses upon our subscription books and mailing lists and obviate the expense of sending out personal statements announcing that renewals are due, subscribers are urgently requested to renew with as little delay as possible. The work of correcting the stencils entails an enormous amount of labor and the publisher asks subscribers to assist as much as possible by making their renewals promptly. The corrected expiration usually appears on the wrapper of the second issue after renewal is received.

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