

The Commoner

ISSUED WEEKLY

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"COMMONER DAY"

As a result of the organized effort on the part of the readers of this publication the Commoner's circulation was materially increased Saturday, February 24, otherwise known as "Commoner Day." It is unnecessary to say that the efforts of those friends who co-operated on "Commoner Day" are appreciated and every one who aided in this work must know that he has The Commoner's cordial thanks.

Several letters have been received suggesting that county committees and state committees might with advantage make an organized effort to circulate The Commoner among their constituencies. This is a good suggestion and the publisher of The Commoner will be glad to correspond with democratic committeemen who believe that the work may be advanced by an increase in The Commoner's circulation in their locality.

"Commoner Day" was a success, thanks to the efforts of tried and true friends.

It has been decided to build a lock canal, but up to date no one has succeeded in making the key.

Doubtless Mr. Rogers will fairly stutter in his anxiety to adequately express his contempt for the Missouri supreme court.

China is talking about reforming her currency. The chief reform needed in China is the reformation of the Chinese.

Mr. Roosevelt's second intervention is calculated to make Mr. Baer take a second look at his title to that divine trusteeship.

A learned government chemist says the only safe whisky is that bottled in bond. And it loses its safety as soon as the cork is pulled.

It is not necessary to read the southern papers in order to learn what the people of the south are saying about that Springfield, Ohio, mob.

The Missouri bartender who refused to answer questions while on the witness stand is now in jail. It seems that Standard Oil is more potent than fusel oil.

The Washington Post is sorely afraid that the rich will be persecuted. They can escape it by going to Europe and collecting their rents and interest by proxy.

Having pocketed a fat fee for steering us up against the canal trouble, William Nelson Cromwell is now telling us that it is none of our business what he received for it.

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WASHINGTON CITY NEWS LETTER

Washington, D. C., March 5.—Just how long the debate on the rate bill will run in the senate none of its friends in the upper branch of congress are prepared now to predict. It depends chiefly upon the attitude of its opponents. Senator Tillman has stated frankly that owing to the importance of the issues at stake the advocates of the bill are willing that there should be a discussion. Senator Aldrich has assured the country that those who differ with a majority of the interstate commerce committee will not consume any more time than is necessary to forcibly present their side of the question. Mr. Aldrich and his followers are smarting under the condition of affairs that confront them. Clearly they have been outgeneralled by the senate democrats and the few republicans who have stood with the minority from first to last in demanding that this congress shall place upon the statute books a rate regulation law in accordance with the national democratic platforms in three consecutive campaigns. In both the senate and house the democrats have been united on all leading questions. The dissensions have been so few and far between as to be hardly worth calling attention to. On the greatest issue of the session they will differ only as to minor details. It was understood when the rate bill was reported from the committee by Mr. Tillman that it would be open to amendment, for some of the democrats have not hesitated to declare that provision should be made for judicial review by the courts to a certain extent. This is the position of Senators Morgan and Pettus, of Alabama, Rayner, of Maryland, Clark of Montana, Carmack of Tennessee, and others. But these democratic senators will not favor the brand of judicial review that has been proposed by Senator Knox, of Pennsylvania. If Mr. Knox, backed by Mr. Aldrich and other opponents of the measure as it now stands could have their way an amendment would surely be passed that would give the courts and not the interstate commerce commission the power to fix the rates. In other words, the supporters of the bill believe there is an organized attempt on the part of the opposition to provide an opening through which the railway companies might have the law declared unconstitutional.

The president is still dependent upon the almost solid vote of the senate democrats to carry through his reform policy. This is soul-harrowing to most of the senate republicans and especially to the New England element who used to absolutely dominate, but who have been compelled to step aside and permit the younger and more progressive element from the middle west and the far west to take a leading part in legislation.

Senator Dolliver prefers to have the Hepburn bill passed without amendment. He realizes, however, that is hardly possible, owing to the differences of opinion even among the friends of the measure on the court review proposition. A great deal will depend upon the Iowa senator's individual efforts among the republican senators he is expected to influence and hold in line for the policy the democrats have kept to the front, the policy that President Roosevelt adopted after years of hesitancy, and the only one to be pursued if this piece of legislation is successfully engineered before the close of the session. Mr. Dolliver must have fourteen republicans stand by him. The senators following the lead of Senator Aldrich are capable of all sorts of legislative tricks. True, they are in a very ticklish position at present, and it may be that they will finally have to surrender and yield to the inevitable. They are cautious in the extreme, however, and few people outside of their councils at this writing really know what they are up to. To use a slang phrase they have something "up their sleeves" and what that something is will likely be developed later on. Should the opposition manage to insert provisions in the bill which the house could not accept, and railway rate legislation be sent over, it is stated on the best of authority that President Roosevelt would call an extra session of congress, no matter how hot the weather may be or how long the members might have to remain here to patch up their differences. There is only a bare possibility that Mr. Aldrich and his followers will be able to drive through an amendment that is objectionable to the supporters of the bill which they can not accept. Every indication points to definite action this session, with the chances of a sound walloping for the Aldrich contingent if they do not surrender before the time of reckoning arrives.

Senator Tillman is once more in the enjoyment of his usual good health. This will be high-

ly gratifying news to his host of friends in all parts of the country. He has worked unusually hard this session. In addition Mr. Tillman has been compelled to look somewhat after his political fences in South Carolina. Every man of prominence has opponents in his own state who are constantly trying to undermine him. Senator Tillman fortunately has an army of strong and influential friends in South Carolina who seem determined that he shall be elected for the next term. It is reported that they have assured him that he need not worry, for they will look carefully after his interests.

Probably not one newspaper reader in a thousand even among the most intelligent classes of our people realizes the vast amount of labor entailed upon the venerable Senator Morgan, of Alabama. Hardly a man twelve or fifteen years his junior could go through with such regularity what he stands. Mr. Morgan will be 82 years old next June. He has been almost thirty years a member of the senate. On behalf of the democrats Senator Morgan has done most of the hard work this session in connection with the Panama canal investigation. Mr. Morgan has had a number of the witnesses on the rack. Especially has he made it lively and interesting for W. N. Cromwell, the well known attorney credited with having put through the deal by which the United States bought the rights of the French company in the canal. The republican members of the committee have been kind and lenient to Mr. Cromwell. They have protected him when crowded by Senator Morgan with questions that would have proved embarrassing to both Mr. Cromwell and high officials of the government.

Senator Morgan firmly believes there has been much crookedness in connection with the operations out on the isthmus, and that is why he has been so determined to get at the bottom facts. But he hasn't much hope of success if the republicans continue to have the more important witnesses summoned before the committee. If the democrats are fortunate enough to control the next house of representatives there will be sure enough investigations. They will come, too, in ample time to shed light on certain transactions the people would like to understand fully before the presidential election of 1908 is held. Voters, therefore, who would like to know what is going on, the democratic leaders here have an idea, will bear this matter in mind in deciding this year whether they will support democrats or republicans in the congressional districts. They argue that if voters do not want the light turned on they will continue to aid the republicans; if they desire real investigations they will do their utmost to change the political complexion of the house of representatives.

As the session advances a number of the house republicans are complaining bitterly that the managers of that body are stifling bills introduced for the benefit of their districts and states. It is the old story that has been heard for ten years or more that too much power is vested in the speaker and his republican associates on the rules committee. The wall is heard that under such a system there is no longer representative government. These men talk as if they are going to organize an insurrection the like of which has never been seen in modern times, or since the Reed idea has prevailed in the popular branch of congress. They have frequent conversations with the democrats and want to know if they can count on anything like their solid support if the rebellion breaks out. They are invariably assured that whenever they are ready to begin the fight the democrats will be only too glad to take part. More republican insurgents are to be found in the Wisconsin and California delegations than from any other section of the United States. The congressmen from the Pacific slope contend that not for six years have they been given the recognition they are entitled to for the passage of bills of the greatest local importance to that portion of the country. They further assert that unless their demands are complied with it means a check upon the progress of the states of the far west. And the worrying feature of the situation is that these members realize that if they are not able to show greater results the people in their districts are apt to conclude it would be a wise move to substitute democrats for republicans to represent them in the lower branch of congress. This story is related mournfully to the republican bosses of the house, but so far Speaker Cannon and his associates on the rules committee are not disposed to hearken unto the appeals of the distressed brethren.

ALFRED J. STOFER.