

# The Commoner

ISSUED WEEKLY

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The Paul Morton precedent seems to be working overtime.

Phonetic spelling will be a great help to those who are too lazy to study orthography.

It will be noted that it is not Andy Hamilton's "yellow dogs" that are doing the yelping.

"The tariff will not be touched," says Congressman Payne. However the tariff will continue to "touch" the people.

A large portion of free seeds sent out by congressmen are sent to constituents who have no ground in which to plant them.

Mr. Carnegie's new fund will not, however, be devoted to a correction of the "bad spell" of tariff robbery the people have been enduring for a long period of years.

The Sioux City Journal sarcastically calls attention to the fact that "the best of order prevailed" during the latest lynching in Tennessee. Ohio is not yet able to do it that way.

The Associated Press sends out a dispatch announcing that Senator Knox is opposed to the freight rate bill. Every now and then even the Associated Press is hard pushed for something to "fill up."

It has been reported that Mr. Bryan will speak before the democratic state convention in Indiana in June. This report is not correct. Mr. Bryan will not return from his foreign tour until September.

Senator Warren of Wyoming opposed statehood for Arizona. Yet Arizona today has more people, more schools, more enterprises and claims upon statehood than Wyoming had when it was admitted to the sisterhood of states.

The navy department is now asking for a battleship that will cost as much as the entire expense of maintaining the agricultural department of the government for a whole year. The "big stick" doctrine is bearing its expensive fruit.

President Roosevelt complains to laboring men that they "hamper me in getting what I think they ought to have." Despite this assertion there are a number of workmen who think they know as much as President Roosevelt about what they ought to have.

President Roosevelt says he will ask for an injunction against a labor union just as quickly as he will ask for one against a corporation. The labor unions will not care just so the injunction against it is of no more effect than the one against the beef trust.

## WASHINGTON CITY LETTER

Washington, D. C., April 2.—So far as the railroad bill is concerned everything now hinges on the character of the amendment that will provide for a judicial review. It will be recalled that Mr. Bailey's amendment prohibits the courts from issuing injunctions against the enforcement of the orders of the interstate commerce commission. The republicans, and notably Mr. Knox, of Pennsylvania, contend that such action by congress would be unconstitutional. It has been evident for the past ten days that senators of the same views as Mr. Knox are not going to give up the fight until they are certain they cannot add to the bill one or more amendments that will smooth down the proposed law in the interest of the railroad companies. They are exceedingly shrewd and politic in warning timid statesmen that it is best to go slow and not put upon the statute books a law that may not be able to stand the test in the high courts of the land.

In these wonderfully interesting discussions Mr. Tillman continues to play the most prominent part. He takes occasion every now and then to remind the senators, the visitors in the galleries and the country itself, that the role in which he finds himself was not of his seeking, and at the same time impresses upon his hearers that inasmuch as he was designated by the committee to lead the fight for rate regulation his whole time and energy will be devoted to the accomplishment of the object in view.

Not many days ago there was a running debate in the senate during what is called the morning hour—that is, between the time the body was called to order by Vice President Fairbanks and 2 o'clock when what is known as the "unfinished business" is taken up. Mr. Tillman started the discussion. First he commenced to upbraid one of the committees for being so slow in considering his resolution offered weeks ago on the subject of campaign contributions by national banks. He had not been long on his feet before Senator Spooner got into the discussion and not many minutes after that the argument by what appeared to be a well planned effort on the part of the republicans was switched to the railroad rate regulation. Mr. Tillman in the heat of the discussion happened to make use of the word "infernal." For that he was severely taken to task by Mr. Spooner in a manner that might have angered most men. Mr. Tillman, preserving his balance, promptly replied that he would admit that his language at times in debate was "more or less lurid," and he added the following: "It probably cuts deeper than I intend for the reason that I take the first word that exactly conveys my meaning, without undertaking to shade it off, or oil it or sweeten it, but it does appear to me an infernal anxiety, if it exists in any man here, to protect the corporations and leave the man out of consideration."

Mr. Tillman says he will keep right after the republicans and do his utmost to force them to name the day for the vote. He thinks that April 9 ought to be late enough for everybody to be prepared to settle the question, but if that is too soon for Mr. Aldrich he will ask them to fix the time themselves. Of course, as is so well known to those who keep the run of legislative proceedings under the rules of the senate the debate can not be limited except by agreement. The most interesting part of the discussion is probably yet in store for readers. It will take place when the various amendments are brought before the senate.

A report in the case of Senator Reed Smoot, of Utah, can not long be delayed. The republican members of the senate committee on privileges and elections will not have to, to use a common but forcible expression, "face the music." The case has been in the hands of the committee for more than two years. It has cost the government the considerable sum of \$23,000 to prosecute the inquiry demanded by hundreds of religious and other organizations. It has also greatly worried and harassed Senator Smoot himself, for he has been on the ragged edge of uncertainty during the past year. It is only fair to him and the constituency that he represents that the senate committee on privileges and elections should dispose of the matter at the earliest possible moment. Just what the report will be it is difficult

to predict. The republicans are embarrassed, to say the least. They would like to have the matter go over until after the congressional elections which are to be held in November next. If they should decide in favor of Senator Smoot they know they will seriously offend a powerful element that has been demanding loudly that Mr. Smoot ought to be expelled from the upper branch of congress. If they decide that he is entitled to hold the seat the friends and followers of the senator in Utah and other portions of the west will be greatly disappointed if not enraged. And if they simply declare the seat vacant, as many believe they will do, that does not help the situation. The republican members of the committee would really like to withhold the report until next session, though it will be hard to frame an excuse for such unwarranted delay.

The house of representatives to a greater extent than ever known in the days of "Reed rule" is applying the gag to its apparently helpless members. For more than thirty years under a provision that was framed for the express purpose of permitting points of order against items in appropriation bills that should not be there the rules committee of the house during consideration of the legislative, executive and judicial bill brought in a most drastic rule that tied completely the hands of the members who felt it their duty to raise objection to new legislation that does not properly belong in appropriation bills, or to block extravagant schemes that had crept into the measure. It is hardly necessary to say that the democrats of the house almost solidly opposed the proposition to still further limit the rights of the representatives of the people. Most of the republicans were whipped into line and in the face of the fact, too, that nearly one-third of the republicans are known to be severe in their private conversations against the system of running the popular branch of congress under a plan which places all power absolutely in the hands of three men—the speaker and the other two men of his party constituting the majority of the rules committee. Two very prominent republicans who voted to gag the house on the occasion referred to are Col. "Pete" Hepburn, of Iowa, and Mr. Cushman, of Washington. In taking such a stand these members simply threw consistency to the winds. They have both in times past howled loudly against the power usurped by the presiding officer and his party associates on the rules committee, and on numerous occasions have asserted in fiery language that if the representatives were not given more latitude there would be a rebellion in the republican camp the leaders would never forget. But these gentlemen have become as meek and gentle as the triumvirate could wish, and had not a word of protest when the most outrageous gag in the history of congress was applied. Messrs. Bede, of Minnesota, Burton, of Ohio, and Mondell, of Wyoming, are three republicans who had the nerve to vote against the rule on the occasion referred to.

Many of the prominent republicans explain the policy that has been adopted by saying that too much time was being consumed in debate and on points of order. They are trying to mollify the rank and file by telling them that as soon as all of the appropriation bills are out of the way and in the hands of the "slow senate" an opportunity will be afforded members to call up and pass bills of local interest to those introducing them. They admonish the brethren that if things are not hurried along congress will be in session during the hot days of July, and that it is better to shut off the talk now and force the senate to attend to business with a little more alacrity than the gentlemen over at the other end of the capitol have yet displayed this session. They complain that the senate hasn't been considerate of the house at all this year. The senate has had numerous adjournments from Thursday to Monday since the holiday recess. That is the usual custom before Christmas, but the house managers think it not only bad form in the month of March, but an utter disregard of the feelings and wishes of the members of the lower branch so anxious to wind up the business and hie themselves off to prepare for the approaching campaign.

ALFRED J. STOFER.