

# The Commoner

ISSUED WEEKLY

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Entered at the postoffice at Lincoln, Nebraska, as second-class mail matter.

One Year.....\$1.00	Three Months.....25c
Six Months.....50c	Single Copy.....5c
In Clubs of 5 or more per Year.....75c	Sample Copies Free
	Foreign Postage 52c Extra.

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THE COMMONER, Lincoln, Neb

After all the "man with the muckrake" stirred congress quite a bit.

Senator Spooner's reply to Senator Bailey's great speech seems to have exhausted itself in the preliminary advertising.

The French having perfected a new battleship destroyer it is up to some other country to perfect a battleship destroyer.

A scientist says that automobilism will cure insomnia. Perhaps; but trying to get the automobile causes the disease in the first place.

In 1896 the man who spoke of a federal judge as President Roosevelt spoke of Judge Humphrey was called "anarchist," "agitator," "traitor," and a few other choice names. They did it then to earn their pay; they refrain from it now in order to retain their place on the payroll.

The democratic national committeeman from Nebraska, James C. Dahlman, has just been elected mayor of Omaha by a majority approximating 3,000. He is the first democratic mayor elected in Omaha in sixteen years. He promised the people a thoroughgoing democratic administration and his word is good.

The Milwaukee Sentinel claims that the drydock "Dewey" continues to smash all slow progress records. In its enthusiastic republicanism the Sentinel has overlooked the progress of republican revision of the tariff. Compared with republican tariff revision the drydock "Dewey" makes a San Francisco relief train look like it was going backwards.

The house bill to remove the revenue tax from denaturalized alcohol is now over in the senate, reposing in committee of which Senator Nelson W. Aldrich is chairman. Senator Aldrich is the father-in-law of John D. Rockefeller, jr. Free denaturalized alcohol will be a severe blow to the Standard Oil company. Puzzle: What will become of the house bill to remove the revenue tax from denaturalized alcohol?

## PREACHING VS. PRACTICE

A few weeks ago Mr. John D. Rockefeller, jr., told his Sunday school class that a lie, either spoken or acted, was never justifiable, and he animadverted at length upon the wickedness of lying. The other day young Mr. Rockefeller visited a Connecticut town and registered at a hotel as "John Davidson." True, that is the young man's name, but just the same he registered it with the purpose of deceiving people and hiding his identity. It was one of those "acted lies" which young Mr. Rockefeller so severely repro-

bated a few weeks ago. It is with sorrow and anguish that we call the attention of the Sunday school class to this lapse from virtue, and we beseech its members to immediately wrestle with their erring teacher and give him every needed assistance in getting back into the paths of virtue and truthfulness. It is sad to see such prominent exemplars of our youth lapsing, and we do not intend to witness it without rising in protest.

## WHERE THE ELKINS' LAW IS LAME

In imposing a fine upon the railroad men convicted of granting rebates, Federal Judge Bethea at Chicago expressed regret that the imprisonment clause had been repealed. Judge Bethea said: "If there was a provision for imprisonment in the penitentiary much more might be accomplished."

It will be remembered that the imprisonment clause was repealed by the Elkins law, and we were assured that a mere fine would make the law much more effective. But these so-called captains of industry have just as much dread of prison bars as the ordinary mortal has. As Jere Black said in discussing the violations of law committed by the railroad magnates of his day, if these men knew that a continuation of imposition on the public meant imprisonment in jail "they would no more rob a shipper on the railroad than they would pick a pocket in a prayer meeting."

## DANGER OF ARBITRARY POWER

The danger of conferring unlimited and arbitrary power upon men has been emphasized by occurrences at San Francisco during the reign of terror in that city. It is now generally conceded that the troops were altogether too reckless in their shooting, and that a number of innocent people were killed by over-zealous militiamen. No one will deny the necessity of extreme measures under circumstances such as confronted the peo-

ple of San Francisco. All civil authority was destroyed for the time being, and even martial law was not given control. Under such conditions it was necessary to give unusual power to the troops on guard, and doubtless their presence prevented many horrible crimes. But, as might have been expected, the granting of such unusual power resulted in the death of many innocent people at the hands of men only too ready to exercise power without discrimination. There is the danger in granting unlimited power to fallible men.

## HOW CAN THEY EXPLAIN IT?

A recent bulletin from the bureau of labor presents some statistics that would keep the tariff "standpatters" busy with explanations were it not for the fact that tariff "standpatters" never explain anything. The bulletin shows that the cost of living has increased 29.2 per cent since 1897, and that most of the commodities upon which the increase in price has been made are sold more cheaply for export than for home consumption. The tariff "standpatters" may not now deem this matter worthy of attention, but the men who work for a wage that has not increased in proportion to the increase in the cost of living may take a notion to do some voting at coming elections.

## THE CHAIRMAN KNEW

The Kansas republicans in state convention assembled reaffirmed their devotion to the high protective tariff, but the voters of Kansas will not forget that W. R. Stubbs, chairman of the republican state committee in calling the convention to order said: "We know that the greatest robber in this country today is the great steel trust, made possible by an unreasonable protective tariff. I believe that reasonable and conservative resolutions should be passed along this line."

# WASHINGTON CITY LETTER

Washington, D. C., May 7.—South Carolina has more farmers in congress than any state in the union. Both of the South Carolina senators before they were sent to Washington were compelled to make their living by tilling the soil. Senator Latimer, however, in recent years has been engaged in other pursuits and is reputed to have gotten together more of this world's goods than his colleague, Mr. Tillman in the upper branch of congress. Two of the members of the house of representatives from South Carolina also record themselves in the congressional directory as farmers. They are Mr. Aiken and Mr. Ellerbe. But the former has had a side business, for he is a fine shorthand writer and before coming to congress earned good pay in reporting for the courts.

Colonel John H. Bankhead of the Sixth Alabama district, who was recently defeated at the primary by Capt. Richmond Pearson Hobson has never had any other occupation except that of farmer. His district is particularly agricultural but the voters preferred the naval hero and decided that Capt. Hobson should represent them. Representative Pollard, of Nebraska, writes himself down in the directory as a farmer and in addition records the fact that he has a 200 acre apple orchard.

"Always lived on a farm," is what Col. "Lon" Livingston, of the Atlanta district of Georgia says about himself in the directory. Several other members of the house put themselves down in the directory as "farmers and bankers." They are Mr. Hull of Iowa, Mr. McKinley of Illinois, and Mr. Reeder of Kansas. Mr. Reeder states that he has the largest irrigated farm in his commonwealth.

Some of these other combination farmers and business men are recorded as follows: Representative Sibley, of Pennsylvania, manufacturer and farmer; the same is true of Mr. Gordon Lee, of Georgia; and the Hon. James W. Wadsworth, chairman of the house committee on agriculture, commonly called by his friends in that body "Farmer" Wadsworth, owns immense landed estates, but his principal business is breeding fine stock, horses, cattle and sheep.

"By occupation he is a farmer." That is what the Hon. Wm. W. Cocks, of the First district of New York writes in the directory about himself. Mr. Cocks represents the district in which President Roosevelt has his legal residence,

He goes on to tell that the district is normally democratic by about 2,000, but notwithstanding that fact he managed to pull through two years ago by a plurality of 329.

A few days ago Ex-Senator James L. Pugh, of Alabama, for the first time this session visited the august body of which he was an honored and influential member for eighteen years. Mr. Pugh was a member of the house of representatives as long ago as 1859. There is now no man in public life at Washington who was in either branch of congress when Mr. Pugh was first sent here by his constituents. The nearest one to him is Senator Allison of Iowa, but he did not come to Washington until about the middle of the civil war, having been first elected a member of the house of representatives from his state. Senator Allison is in his 78th year. Ex-Senator Pugh is going on 87, and although he had an attack of illness last winter he seems to be fully recovered and his friends would not be surprised if he were to round out another decade.

It is a remarkable fact that the two most venerable men in the senate are from Alabama. Senator Pettus will be 85 his next birthday and Senator Morgan will be 82. Among the other venerable senators are the following: Messrs. Teller of Colorado, who will be 76 on May 23; Cullom of Illinois, 77 in November; Frye of Maine, 75 on September 2; Platt of New York, 73 on July 15; Depew was 73 last month; and Proctor of Vermont, will be 75 on June 1. All of the senators named are actively engaged in legislative duties except Mr. Depew.

Inasmuch as Captain Hobson has announced that his sole desire in getting into congress is to work for the construction of a stupendous navy—to cost anywhere from one to two billion dollars—it is appropriate to mention that the ambitious young retired officer will have a hard time as a democrat getting on the naval affairs committee of the house even should his party control that body in the next congress. Until the "big stick" policy of the government is sent to the rear large appropriations for the navy will be made. Business concerns, of course, are deeply interested, and it is natural that they should want to get as many contracts as possible. Older members of the house will demand to be appointed on the naval affairs committee, and the chances for Capt. Hobson are looked upon as being rather slim to land on this committee.

ALFRED J. STOFER.