

## Washington Letter

Washington, D. C., September 30.—The Associated Press has never been accused of lack of political influence. Nor has it ever failed to use this influence in behalf of the party in power. It was cheerfully democratic when Cleveland was president, and at all other times has been enthusiastically republican.

The American Newspaper Publishers' Association has not been quite so avowedly partisan. It is more of a democratic association, using the word "democratic" in its proper sense as meaning an organization governed by all of its members instead of by a small clique.

However these two associations at a meeting in New York a few days ago took up the question of the enormous increase in the price of print paper due to the paper trust which is maintained by the tariff on wood pulp. The newspaper owners who voted were men who control republican and democratic papers both, and they adopted the following resolution:

"Resolved, That it is the sense of this meeting that the duty on printing paper, wood pulp and all material entering into the manufacture of printing paper, be immediately repealed."

Republican publishers voted as enthusiastically for this resolution as did democratic or independent publishers. But what are the republican editors going to do? They can make it very hot for republican representatives ranging from the newest member of the Sixtieth congress to "Uncle Joe" Cannon, chief of all the stand-patters, with their bitter outcry for free wood pulp and everything used by them. If the republicans do grant to the newspapers of their own party faith concessions of this sort, why shouldn't they grant like concessions to the farmer who has to buy agricultural machinery at a greatly increased price, owing to a trust buttressed by the tariff? If great papers of this country say of the tariff, "Let well enough alone," what right have they got to go before congress and plead that where the tariff is not well enough for them it must be amended? Why has not the New York Tribune, or the Chicago Record-Herald, or the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, or the Cincinnati Tribune pointed out in the interests of their readers and of their advertisers that the tariff breeds trusts and despoils the people? These republican papers have been eager enough to break down that part of the tariff that affects their own pocket books, but have nothing to say in defense of the interests of the masses of the people.

It is so easy to apply to the argument of the republican press, in which the democratic press joins with perfect consistency based on its past record, its earlier utterances and the argument of its idols, like Cannon and Foraker, Taft, the late Dingley, Fairbanks, Beveridge and the rest, that to touch any part of this sainted tariff means to destroy the entire system. Moreover it should be borne in mind that if there is a tariff on wood pulp, and other articles entering into the manufacture of paper, it enables the paper trust to pay high wages to its employes, who thereby are provided with funds to spend in the busy marts of trade. There isn't a bit of difference between free pulp, or free coal, or free wool, or free hides. The only difference is that the owners and editors of great republican newspapers seem to be perfectly willing that the people should be taxed on everything for which they have use in order to protect the industries involved, but do not think that they, the publishers, should be taxed on anything that enters into their own manufacturing business.

The owners of democratic newspapers who stand for tariff reform have no reason to do anything except rejoice that the shoe is beginning to pinch their republican associates, but how the editor of a high tariff paper can demand, as two score of them did, that the tariff on articles which he used in his business should be reduced, while the tariff on everything that men and their families wear from shoes to hats, and everything that they put into their houses, from a furnace to the shingles on the roof, should be maintained at its present figure, will be something they will have to explain in the next congress.

The most remarkable feature about the government suit to dissolve the oil trust, now being pressed in New York, is not that this corporation was able by more than questionable methods to make a profit of upwards of a billion dollars in twenty-five years, over half of

which has been earned during President Roosevelt's occupancy of the White House; not that John D. Rockefeller has made about sixteen million dollars yearly in profits and coined money at the rate of over \$21 a minute as the heaviest stockholder in this company; but that any such unrighteous industrial practices as the oil trust has indulged in should have been allowed to continue unhampered as long as they have. The billion dollar profit that the Standard points to with such pride, the \$21 John D. Rockefeller gets every time the minute hand on his clock ticks, are not after all as great an indictment against the oil combine as against the government that has so long allowed such a condition of affairs to exist.

The vices of the oil trust is an ancient tale. Its methods were investigated by congress as far back as 1888, and practices then charged and proved, for which the oil trust has only now, twenty years later, been called to account. Henry Demarest Lloyd wrote his "Wealth Against Commonweal" over a decade and a half ago, setting forth an impeachment of the Standard Oil methods far more convincing than the recent report of Commissioner Smith of the bureau of corporations. Over three years ago Miss Tarbell published her two-volume "History of the Standard Oil Company" which contained the old charges of Lloyd and supported them with much new data. Much of Miss Tarbell's information was actually news at the time it appeared, but Commissioner Smith's report while an able document, added really nothing new either to the charges or the facts against the oil monopoly. The report of Mr. Smith, the fine of Judge Landis, and the present suit to dissolve the trust are really indictments against every administration since that of Harrison until the present time. No matter who was in power such a huge and unconscionable monopoly should never have been permitted to have grown up in this country with the Sherman law on the statute books.

Within two days remarkable interviews have appeared with regard to the present and future attitude of the United States toward the Philippines, one from Admiral Dewey, and one from former Senator Charles A. Towne. These interviews differ in but one important respect. They both admit the strategic and commercial importance of the islands. They both admit that the islands are in themselves a great financial and moral burden to our nation, but Admiral Dewey says: "I do not believe our country should or will ever abandon the Philippines," while Mr. Towne says, "Under no circumstances am I in favor of the indefinite retention of the islands as a dependency of the United States."

In declaring for permanent occupation of the Philippines, Admiral Dewey does not state the position of either of our political parties on this question. The republican party has never had the courage to declare for a permanent occupation of the archipelago. Both in its national platform of 1900 and 1904 the republican party was content to remain silent on the question of the ultimate independence of the Filipinos. Its policy is one of indefinite occupation of the islands without any promise as to the ultimate object of that occupation. No one knows whether the republican party intends to ultimately treat the Philippines as we have treated Cuba, or whether it intends to embark this country upon a policy of colonialism similar to that of England.

As against this indefinite attitude the democratic party takes a firm stand against our nation becoming a colonial empire, and contends that both to quiet Filipino fears and dissatisfaction on account of continued American occupation of the islands, and to supply the Filipino with the best incentive to rapid improvement, that our nation at once definitely state that our ultimate object in the islands is to secure for her people a stable government and give them independence as soon as they evince the ability to undertake its responsibilities.

Mr. Towne's interview should also clear away many erroneous impressions that have been industriously engendered by republican spellbinders in many minds concerning the attitude of the democratic party and many of its leaders toward the Philippine problem. I should like to quote Mr. Towne at length, but lack of space forces me to briefly summarize his statements. He is not in favor of our nation selling its wards to any other power, especially Japan. He is not in favor of our "vacating the islands and leaving them to their own devices without provision touching the maintenance of their national independence and the preservation of their domestic order." He would "absolutely defend the islands against any aggres-

sion from any source to the limit." He "would favor, provided we could not neutralize the islands internationally, the retention of a naval and commercial strategic base in the archipelago as the best guarantee that no other nation on earth should ever dominate the Philippines." He would at once do simple justice to the Filipino by giving him free access to the American market for his chief products, because we forcefully took away the Spanish markets he had and then under a republican tariff law shut him out from our markets, a law the republican party has constantly refused to repeal. Mr. Towne says that by doing this, "we will give the Filipino convincing proof of our desire to be just to him, and of our capacity to be wise in our mutual interests." But lastly, but not least, Mr. Towne says: "It is perhaps unnecessary for me to add that under no circumstances am I in favor of the indefinite retention of the islands as a dependency of the United States."

WILLIS J. ABBOT.

## Letters From the People

F. M. Hall, Danvers, Ill.—I wish to submit a proposition to the readers of The Commoner. It is this, that every subscriber donate The Commoner one year to some conservative republican of his acquaintance. Believing it is for the good of our party, I send you the name and money with this letter.

H. H. Schenk, Memphis, Mo.—I wish to make a suggestion. Would it not be well to devote a page in your paper to the readers' use to contribute articles on the general subjects of the day. Invite them to contribute.

James N. Symons, St. Louis, Mo.—Will you kindly permit me a few lines of space in your "letters from the people" department? In your issue of the 26th, Mr. J. W. Thornton, Douglas, Arizona, writes under a wrong impression when he says that no political economist has ever explained the phenomena of periodical depression in trade that occur with more or less regularity in all commercially active countries. I do not wish to intrude upon your space with an explanation in my own language, but would like to be permitted to call our friend's attention to a very clear and convincing explanation offered of the phenomena in question contained in Henry George's "Progress and Poverty," book 5, chapter 1, "The primary cause of recurring paroxysms of industrial oppression," Doubleday & McClure Co. Edition page 257. Possibly this will prove of interest to others as well as Mr. Thornton. In fact I would strongly urge a close study of the whole book referred to above for the simple reason that the writer believes Mr. George to have there set forth the best and most democratic democracy of modern times.

George Watkins, Verdon, Neb.—In The Commoner of April 5, under the head "Current Topics," I see quoted from the Houston (Tex.) Post this statement: "The total estimated value of the national wealth in 1904 was \$107,104,192,410." The Post correspondent says: "This represents an increase in the four year period from 1900 to 1904 of \$18,586,885,635. This advance in national wealth has no parallel in the history of the United States, except the decade from 1850 to 1860. In 1850, when the first estimate of the national wealth was made the figures were only \$7,135,780,228." If you will take the trouble to compute a little bit you will see that the increase of national wealth from 1900 to 1904 was less than 5½ per cent simple interest, or almost exactly 3 per cent compounded annually. Let us take it by decades since 1850. In 1860 our national wealth had increased to \$16,159,616,068, or at the rate of 12½ per cent simple interest, or about 9 per cent compounded annually. By 1870 our national wealth was \$24,054,814,056, specie value, or an increase of a little less than 5 per cent per annum. By 1880 our wealth was \$43,642,000,000, an increase of almost exactly 8 per cent per annum. In 1890 our wealth had increased to \$65,037,091,197, or a little less than 5 per cent per annum. By 1900 our wealth was \$88,514,306,775, an increase for the decade from 1890 to 1900 of 3½ per cent per annum. Comment is not necessary except to say when we old pops used to call attention to this matter we were called all kinds of bad names. In the Omaha Bee of February 9, 1907, under the