The Commoner.

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Cannonism

During the campaign of 1908 Speaker Cannon, in one of his speeches, charged Mr. Bryan with having made a large sum "selling wind and ink." When Mr. Bryan promptly responded by giving an inventory of his worldly goods and asking Mr. Cannon to take the people into his confidence and tell them what he had been "selling" and how much he had made the speaker answered that he was "just joking."

It seems that he has been "joking" again. In a recent speech at Elgin, Illinois, he accused the democrats of re-enacting the Reed rules and added: "And my friend, William Jennings Bryan, of Nebraska, voted for those same rules. He didn't say anything about the czar business then or for many, many years. He did not mention the czar business in 1896, in 1900 or in 1904, but he waited until he thought everybody had forgotten his vote for the rules."

Mr. Cannon will have to revise his statement. Mr. Bryan DID say something about "the czar business" while in congress. Although the Reed rules were modified by the democratic congress Mr. Bryan, though a young man and a new member, made a speech against the counting of a quorum. Long before Mr. Cannon became speaker Mr. Bryan registered the following protest in the house of representatives, April 17, 1894:

Mr. Bryan said:

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to the gentleman from Maine for this courtesy. The question upon which we are called to act is one of a great deal more importance than some members seem to think, and the objection which is made to the rule by some of us, who have not been able to favor it, is based upon reasons far more weighty than gentlemen have assumed.

The constitution of the state of Nebraska, which I have the honor, in part, to represent, contains this provision:

"No bill shall be passed unless by assent of a majority of all the members elected to each house of the legislature, and the question upon the final passage shall be taken immediately upon its last reading, and the yeas and nays shall be entered upon the journal."

The constitutions of a majority of the states of the union, among them the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and I might name them all if time permitted, provide the same, the object being to prevent less than one-half of all the members elected to the legislature from passing laws. It is only by the concurrence of a majority of the members that we can know that the majority of the people desire the law. The constitution of the United States does not contain a similar provision; and there is no question, since the decision of the supreme court, that it is within the power of this house to declare by rule in what manner a quorum may be ascertained. It can be done in the manner provided in this rule, or it can be done by the call of the yeas and nays, as it has been done for a hundred years. Now, the question with me is this: Which is the safer plan? According to the rule which has been in vogue a hundred years, the minority has the safeguard which is expressly secured in the constitutions of a majority of the states; according to the old rule the minority, by refusing to vote, can compel the concurrence of a majority before a law is passed.

Now, I believe that is a wise provision. I do not see why it is wiser in a state than in congress; I do not know why it is necessary that the members of the legislature in my state, or in New York, should be compelled to vote yea or nay when a bill shall pass, and that a majority shall concur, unless the same reasons apply in this body.

We are asked to change this rule, which has been in operation since the beginning of the government, and adopt a new rule; a rule not intended to enable the majority to rule, but to enable less than one-half of the members of congress to pass laws for this country. I believe that the innovation is a dangerous one. There is far more safety in giving to the minority the power to delay legislation until a majority have expressed themselves in favor of a law. How can you tell that the people of the United States desire a particular law except by the voice of their representatives; and how can we tell that their representatives believe the bill should become a law until they have expressed themselves by vote in favor of the proposition? The naked question brought before us by this rule is, "Shall we so make our rules that the minority of the people of the United States may make the laws, or shall we retain the rule which enables us to compel the concurrence of a majority when it seems of sufficient importance?"

Of course the right to remain silent can be used to filibuster, but we have a rule which shuts off filibustering when a majority desires to vote. We have it in the power of the house—and I think it is a wise provision—to put an end to dilatory motions and to bring the house to a vote when the majority so desires, but a rule to count a quorum is not designed to facilitate the government of a majority, but to enable the representatives of a minority of the people to do business and make laws in the absence of the representatives of a part of the people.

Mr. Bryan also favored an enlargement of the Cannon rules so that it would represent the entire country. (See page 2 of this issue.) In addition to this, he has advocated the selection of the committees by caucus instead of by the speaker and he helped to secure that change in the Nebraska legislature. This last reform was not advocated until recently, however, and Mr. Bryan will admit that the czarism of Speaker Cannon did much to convince him that the appointment of committees ought not to be entrusted to the speaker. The chief objection to Reed's rules was that they authorized the counting of a quorum and Mr. Bryan objected to the endorsement of that policy by the democrats. The chief objection to the Cannon regime is that he so construes the rules of the house as to destroy popular government in that body. He does not consider the will of a MAJORITY OF THE HOUSE but only the will of a MAJORITY OF THE REPUBLICAN MEMBERS and he uses the appointing power to coerce republicans into misrepresenting their constituents. He has also used the appointing power to reward democrats for betraying their party. No other speaker has ever made such a shameless use of power.

A New York republican has charged Mr. Cannon with making a trade with Tammany to carry his rules through in the last session of congress and a republican member of congress has publicly accused him of appointing tariff conferees who would stand with Aldrich and against the house bill. The liquor interests were openly active in supporting Mr. Cannon and his rules and he has the backing of every predatory corporation that is seeking favors from the government or is trying to shield itself from the wrath which its iniquities have aroused.

In a long public career Speaker Cannon has not attached his name to any remedial measure, but he has succeeded in giving his name to a system of parliamentary tyranny which has become a stench in the nostrils of honest republicans, as well as democrats.

WHO OWNS THEM?

In its issue of September 25 the weekly publication called "Judge" reproduces, in a conspicuous place, the following quotation from *Leslie's Weekly*:

DO YOU WANT IT?

Before the people of this country commit themselves to an income tax with undue haste they should bear in mind that this tax may be made to apply to everybody, precisely as the tax on real estate applies to every one who holds real property, no matter if it be to the value of only five or ten dollars. President Taft is said to favor a tax on all incomes of $1,200 and over. The board of directors of the National Association of Manufacturers, in indorsing an income tax, suggested that it be fixed at one-eighth of one per cent, on all incomes, great and small, which is the only equitable method of levying taxes. Every one should bear a part of the burden, for then every one will be interested in understanding the proposition. A tax of one-eighth of one per cent would be only 75 cents a year on a man with an income of $600, and $1,250 on a man with an income of $1,000,000 a year. If the people are willing to be taxed on their incomes, just as they are on their real estate, let them favor the proposition to amend the constitution accordingly.—Leslie's Weekly.

The argument made by Leslie's and reproduced by Judge is so unfair and misleading as to convict the writer of it of wilful misrepresentation, and the question naturally arises: Who owns Judge and Leslie's? If the real owners were known it might be easy to form an opinion as to the REASON for the bitter opposition shown by these publications to the income tax.

On the first page of Judge it is stated that Judge is published by "Leslie-Judge Company," and on page two the names of the president, secretary, treasurer, managing editor and art editor are given, but who are the real owners? The officials may be employes—men who are paid by the owners of the stock and who do what they are told to do.

In view of the fact that Judge and Leslie's are ultra partisan in opposing popular measures and in defending the privilege-holding and privilege-seeking classes it is only fair that their readers and the general public should know what financial interests speak through these two papers.

Judge and Leslie's are opposed to the income tax amendment—an amendment endorsed in the

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