The Commoner.

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The Central Bank

The people have another fight ahead. The financiers have decided that they can coerce congress into creating a central bank to manage the government's money matters, and they are going to make the effort. Possibly the president's advocacy of it may explain the sudden collapse of Wall Street's opposition to Mr. Taft's nomination. At any rate the Napoleons of finance are not willing to risk delay—the next congress may be democratic. And then there will be changes in the senate and these are likely to lessen Wall Street's control of that body. Now is the time, they think, and the acquiescence of a majority of the republicans in the Aldrich plan leads them to believe that the rank and file of the republican party will tolerate anything. But will they?

The Standard Oil trust lost its tariff on oil and the steel trust came near losing its tariff on iron ore. The new telegraph-telephone merger is giving the people a shock, and the demand for a ship subsidy is making them sit up and take notice. This may not, after all, be an opportune time to launch a gigantic bank monopoly.

Senator Aldrich has had his swing around the circle and met the local financiers who hope to represent the bank in their respective communities, but what about those who will be left out in the cold?

A central bank does not fit into our institutions; it is a foreign idea and can not be brought into harmony with our instincts and business methods. It would destroy all independence in the banking world. In Canada they have branch banks but they have a number of them and competition still exists, but even there the business man suffers an inconvenience in having to have his paper passed upon by an outsider and the depositor runs the risk of having his money used to build up some other community. With a great central bank all competitors would become timid lackeys, afraid to offend, to say or do anything that would displease the officials of the big bank. With a great central bank the money would be gathered up at the extremities and poured into the commercial centers. The depositors would soon find the interest reduced on deposits and the bank would increase its profits from both depositor and borrower, for there would be no competitor who would dare to pay more or charge less than the central bank. Not only would such a central bank dominate but it would control politics as well. Nick Biddell told President Jackson that it could elect or defeat presidential candidates and the hero of New Orleans replied with an oath that if it could it had more power than it ought to have and more than he was willing for it to retain.

If a central bank is created it is only a question of time when its tyranny will become unbearable. But why invite such a condition?

Now is the time to fight the central bank idea; every newspaper should warn its readers; every voter should write to his senators and member of congress protesting against the whole scheme. The smaller banks should array themselves against it. The advocates of the central bank are using the corporation papers to mislead the reading public; it is high time that the patriotic forces were aroused to the danger. The plans of the bank monopoly must be defeated.

WHY NOT TAFT AND ALDRICH?

Has it occurred to you that "Taft and Aldrich" are likely to head the republican ticket in the next campaign? Mr. Taft's endorsement of Mr. Aldrich's statesmanship, his praise of the Aldrich bill as the best tariff bill we have ever had; Senator Aldrich's tour through the west and the laudatory comments made by the corporation press on the senator—all these point to a plan. New England has not had a position on the republican national ticket for some time, although she has supported the ticket with great constancy; is it not time to recognize her?

Senator Aldrich has announced that he will not be a candidate for the senate again. What is more natural than that he should aspire to be boss of the senate in name as he has for years been in fact, and then?

Why not Taft and Aldrich in 1912? And if the people will swallow that then Aldrich and Cannon in 1916. What do the progressives say to that?

THANKS GIVING TO THE G. O. P.

Thanksgiving table supplies consisting of a nine-pound turkey, plum pudding for four, mincemeat for three pies, celery, parsley, quart of cranberries, pound of mixed nuts and three pounds of sweet potatoes were sold in Chicago ten years ago yesterday for $1.95. Yesterday precisely the same supplies cost $4.25. If this difference is a little above the average, it is still safe to assume that the prices of these and similar articles have practically doubled in the last ten years. The department of commerce and labor at Washington found a year ago that the increase in the cost of living in ten years had been 49 per cent.

Meanwhile the increase in wages has been small and the increase in salaries has been still smaller. And since the increase in pay has not been nearly so large as the increase in the cost of living, how have the masses adapted themselves to the new situation? The answer is plain. They have simply—and necessarily—lowered their standards of living. The matter of income is, after all, measured by what the income will buy, not by its definition in dollars and cents. The incomes of the masses will not begin to purchase now what they did ten years ago, nor what they did two years ago; but unless there is a check in the encroachments of organized greed, they still purchase more than they will hereafter.

The greatest of all factors in the increase of the cost of living is the protective tariff. The protective tariff, in its extreme abuses, is also the chief cause of the concentration of wealth. And aside from the general suffering that arises from the inequitable distribution of wealth through the tariff protected trusts and the conditions they create, this concentration of wealth is the greatest of all menaces to the political security of the nation.—Kansas City Times (Rep.)

Another Step Backward

There seems to be no limit to the reactionary policies of the present administration. The power companies which seek perpetual franchises are relying on the favor of Secretary Ballinger; the financiers who want a central bank have secured the endorsement of President Taft, as have also the ship owners who want a subsidy. And now comes Attorney General Wickersham and outlines a scheme for turning over to the control of the general government all corporations doing an interstate business. He proposes national incorporation and adds that if such a law demonstrates its value it may be wise ultimately to PROHIBIT STATE CORPORATIONS FROM ENGAGING IN INTERSTATE COMMERCE.

This is the most gigantic step yet proposed in the direction of centralization. That this new scheme is not advanced in the interest of the people but in the interest of the corporations is evident from Mr. Wickersham's statement that the government "must provide means of enabling co-operative enterprises to engage freely in interstate and foreign commerce without interference by state action, which fetters, confines and destroys the possibility of such free pursuit." To prevent "INTERFERENCE BY STATE ACTION"—this is the whole purpose of national incorporation.

Surely the democrats can present a united front against this menace to the authority exercised by the state.

The democratic plan is to ADD federal regulation to state regulation but Mr. Wickersham proposes to SUBSTITUTE *federal regulation for* state regulation. *The democratic plan of* requiring a federal license, not for all corporations but for large ones, preserves state authority and supplements it with federal supervision, but the administration's plan contemplates the abolition of state regulation entirely. The predatory corporations seem to prefer to risk an Aldrich-Cannon kind of federal regulation to regulation by the people through their state legislatures.

DAVID A. DE ARMOND

The death of Congressman De Armond removes from public life a statesman of high rank, a conscientious public servant and a democrat in the broadest sense of the term. He had great natural ability and to this he added careful training and a wealth of experience. He was honest in forming an opinion and fearless in expressing. His record will bear scrutiny for his every vote and speech reflected the sentiment of his constituents. His death is a severe loss to the party in Missouri and the west. His place will be difficult to fill.

REFORM IN INDIA

Great Britain is taking a very important step in the government of India. She is recognizing the right of the Indian people to a voice in their own government—a commendable act already too long delayed. The people, acting in various groups, religious and otherwise, are to select representatives in the general and provincial councils, and while Great Britain retains a veto power, as in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, that veto is not likely to be used very often.

Great Britain, as well as India, is to be congratulated upon this momentous reform. The world is moving—in some places slowly but everywhere to some extent toward self government—and our nation is leading the way.

PHILOSOPHY

If there's no sun, I still can have the moon;
If there's no moon, the stars my needs suffice;
And if they fail, I have my evening lamp;
Or lampless, there's my trusty tallow dip;
And if the dip goes out, my couch remains
Where I may sleep and dream there's light again.
—Blanche Gray, in Harper's Weekly.

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