

The Commoner.

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If the People Rule Why Don't They Get What They Want?

In his great speech, delivered in the United States senate, Senator Owen of Oklahoma asked, "If the people really rule why don't the people get what they want?"

The Commoner has received many replies to this question and some of these are hereinafter printed:

Robert Lavington, Perry, Okla.—I think the people get what they want, all but about 96 per cent, I should judge; anyway the brainy fellows can figure along these lines to suit themselves.

Jim Williams, Burton, Ky.—No, they don't rule and never have since the time of organization. The money power has always ruled. Even in revolutionary times while our fathers fought for freedom, men like Morris, the man that so largely financed the revolutionary war, arranging to beat the laboring classes and congress favored the schemes.

J. H. Allison, Blue Lick, Mo.—The people do not rule and the reason they do not get what they want is that Senator Owen and Senator Aldrich, Joe Cannon and every representative in the houses of congress believe in private ownership of public utilities and so do a majority of the newspapers, not omitting The Commoner from the list.

planned. This is what it means to have the government serve the people service at cost." Now if a government operated by men who do not believe in public ownership can make so good a showing as that what could she do if operated by people who do believe in public ownership of all public utilities.

F. W. Moore, Brooklyn, N. Y.—As I have written a book to prove that the people always rule, it is with special satisfaction that I note your symposium. The people rule through public opinion, habit and custom, and would obtain what they want—that is, good wages, cheaper rents and better conditions generally—if they had a clearer understanding of government in its relation to themselves.

Charles Porter, Grinnell, Iowa.—"Why don't the people get what they want?" Apparently they do. The people voted for high cost of living, they are getting it; they voted for "protection," are they not getting it? They voted for Cannonism, Aldrichism; who can say they are not in receipt thereof?

B. S. Paddock, Manzanola, Colo.—The people do rule. The people get what they want. They trade at a store because the proprietor tells them he is selling to them cheaper than to other less favored customers. They go to the church that gives them the greatest social recognition, irrespective of the virtues of Christ and other members of the congregation.

Jasper W. Jones, Monroeville, Ind.—The people do not rule as they did prior to the war of the rebellion. President Lincoln and the congress during the war had to do drastic things—adopt measures and execute same without the consent of the people.

restoring to the government their just rights went further, little by little, until during the last few congresses the people of our great commonwealth are governed by two men, the leader of the senate (Aldrich), and Speaker Cannon. These two men dictate our laws; no laws pass either branch without their consent.

E. B. Stebbins, Sturgis, Mich.—Too many representatives of "selfish greed" in both the republican and democratic parties. While the democratic party is nearer to the people of the two, it contains too many "high protective tariff" allies to be successful in administering to the needs of the people.

W. H. T. Wakefield, Monroe City, Kan.—The people do not get what they want because of the surprising length, breadth, thickness and density of their ignorance of the natural laws of political economy and of the true election system.

James E. Doran, St. Paul, Minn.—The people do not rule, because the representatives elected do not represent the people. Under the primary system of election laws only office-seekers secure the nominations.

John Bray, Darlington.—I am a republican. My first vote for president was for John T. Hale, next Fremont, then Lincoln. At the last election I was puzzled to decide whether to vote for Taft or Bryan, but voted for Taft. I am an admirer of W. J. Bryan. His influence for good has been and is great.