

Letters from the People

H. S. Case, Camden, Indiana.—Congressman Crumpacker of Indiana still travels the same old road and excuses himself because he don't know. I see The Commoner prints the statement of Mr. Crumpacker saying that it does not make any difference if a man wears cotton instead of wool if he does not know it. Mr. Crumpacker made a speech in West Point township in White county, Indiana, in 1896, wherein he charged Cleveland and the demo-

cratic administration of squandering the money in the United States treasury and bankrupting the government and when he closed his speech he said if anybody in the audience would like to ask any question in regard to the matters he had been discussing he would be very glad to have them do so. Thinking this was a way he had of having people to testify to what he had said by keeping silent, I said I would like to ask a question if it was satisfactory and by consent I asked Mr. Crumpacker to state how much money was in the United States treasury when the republican party turned it over to Cleveland. He said, "I don't know." I then asked him how much money was in the United States treasury when Cleveland turned it over to Harrison. He said "I don't know." I then proceeded to ask him how much money was in the United States treasury when Harrison turned it back to Cleveland. He said, "I don't know." Then I asked him if the obligations of this government had not enormously increased during Harrison's administration and that was the cause of the treasury being bankrupt and the answer was the same as before, "I don't know." Then I told Mr. Crumpacker he ought to know, for they were matters he had been discussing during the evening. He had a very distinguished republican from Monticello by the name of Mr. Sills who was carrying his hand bag around and he arose and told me to "shut up, shut up, shut up, Case, shut up." I told him I did not have to, as I was before the meeting by request of Mr. Crumpacker. I also told him that I see they employed the same tactics out there in the woods as they employed in the halls of congress and I would surrender the floor to the gentlemen.

O. J. Leding, Devils Lake, N. D.—Concerning the stand W. J. Bryan has taken on the tariff question and as to party pledges are all essential facts, and shall receive my hearty support. The fact that some democratic senators and representatives flopped over to the republicans in favor of a protective tariff has crippled the democratic party possibly more than can be realized.

A. B. Moore, Scio, Ohio.—The legality of an income tax is now to be secured through a sixteenth amendment to the federal constitution; but our humble opinion is that it should be defeated—not that the tax is undemocratic or unjust—but for the following reasons: 1. Because the amendment seems unnecessary; for (Art 1, Sec. 8, Par. 1) congress has power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, * * * but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States. Hence the power to lay and collect any other indirect tax is unrestricted. 2. Because many officials would be required to determine the amount of income to be assessed for taxation and collect the taxes thereon, whose service would eat up much of the tax collected. 3. Because there seems to be a better way of raising revenue provided by Art. 1, Sec. 9, Par. 4 of the constitution. It reads: "No capitation or other direct tax shall be laid unless in proportion to the census or enumeration hereinbefore directed to be taken (Art. 1, Sec. 2, Par. 4.) Therefore the census of a state is its definite assessment for federal taxation, and it is necessary only for congress to determine the rate and leave the state

to collect and pay over the tax according to its own tax law. This would put the greater burden of taxation on wealth and render federal tax-gatherers unnecessary; moreover the amount needed from this scheme would be certain, while by any other it would be virtually an unknown quantity. Submitted for courteous criticism.

Joseph F. Darling, 116 Nassau St., New York.—The criticism of Leslie's Weekly on the income tax is a perfectly fair one. The earnings of no one should be taxed; but the returns on unearned values should be taxed to the full extent of said values. The income tax is inquisitorial, and undemocratic; puts a premium on perjury; favors the tax dodgers who are very successful in this country; and successful enough in all countries to thwart the intent of every tax law that does not fall on special privileges that are easily appraisable. And all special privileges are easily appraisable. An income tax on unearned incomes is very satisfactory, and easy to apply, because franchise values and unearned increment are the most easily ascertainable yearly values imaginable, when the tenure of them is on a clearly defined basis. And it is easy to define clearly the exact basis of every tenure of land and of franchise values, indefinite, numerical form, annually. But earned incomes, i. e., purely industrial incomes, minus the element of privilege, not only never can be justly taxed, but never can even be properly appraised. And all attempts at the appraisal of earned incomes involves an undemocratic and revolting investigation of private business. Of course, special privilege businesses ought to be both investigated and taxed. But why private and purely industrial and non-privilege businesses?

F. W. Bigger, York, Pa.—Enclosed find my check for \$3 together with the names and addresses of four new subscribers, and my own subscription to be renewed. I wish I could have secured ten—yes, ten thousand new subscribers. The Commoner has my good will and best wishes. It gives me information about the west, which our eastern papers do not give, and which I do not think they would care to give if they had it. I have been specially interested in the law guaranting bank deposits, but never a favorable word do we get for it in the east. They are quick to print any disparaging remarks about it, but the real truth is withheld. The tory and his offspring have always hid under the wing of the federalist, whig and republican parties. He has never dared

to come out in the open and state his beliefs in regard to government, but he has worked like the worm in a log, waiting for the day when it might become rotten enough to be consumed, or fall to pieces. This element of our people have always been trying to destroy our system of government. They hit the hardest blow when they succeeded in deceiving the people of the north to make war on the states of the south. That is too long to discuss here, but I will enclose an editorial from the Philadelphia Inquirer, of December 2, 1909, to illustrate. The editorial referred to is under the head of "Budget Rejected in the House of Lords." The thought in the mind of the writer is that our system of government is bad, while the British is good, because they do not elect their lords or masters, or rulers, whichever term the mind may choose. We have thousands of people who think just that way, and you will generally find them in the republican party. Had The Commoner published such an editorial, it would have been construed to mean an attack upon the supreme court of the United States. May God bless The Commoner, and give it the place in the hearts of the people throughout these United States which it deserves.

Clarence E. Cole, Hartville, Ohio.—The tariff bill as it stands at pres-

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