

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

VOL. 12, NO. 47

Lincoln, Nebraska, November 29, 1912

Whole Number 619

STOP, LOOK, LISTEN!

It behooves members of congress to be on guard. The big financiers who are behind the Aldrich currency scheme are planning to rush the bill through congress at the short session which convenes in December. It must be prevented. The Aldrich bill includes the two things for which Wall street has been planning for nearly twenty years, namely, an asset currency and complete control of the business of the country. An asset currency would enable the banks to make a double profit on their money—they would first loan their money and then use the notes of borrowers as a basis for bank note circulation, and then their organized control of the financial world would be made absolute by the central bank system proposed. The reformation of the currency should be postponed until the new congress meets and then it can be undertaken by democrats according to the democratic theory which puts the responsibility upon the government instead of the banks. The currency can be given all the elasticity it needs without increasing the privileges of the banks or the influence of Wall street.

MR. CARNEGIE'S PRESIDENTIAL SUBSIDY

Andrew Carnegie's latest proposition is described in the following Associated Press dispatches:

New York, Nov. 21.—Future ex-presidents of the United States are to be pensioned in the sum of \$25,000 each annually by action of the Carnegie corporation of New York today. The grant is provided for with the idea of enabling former executives of the nation to devote their knowledge gained in public affairs to the public good, free from pecuniary care. A similar amount is to be paid widows of ex-presidents as long as they remain unmarried. The pensions are to be promptly offered to the ex-presidents or their widows so that no application will be required from them. Payment is to be continued so long as the recipients "remain unprovided for by the government." The announcement followed the second annual meeting of the corporation held at the residence of Andrew Carnegie here and attended by the corporation's eight trustees.

Provision has been made through this corporation for a pension for each future ex-president and his unmarried widow of \$25,000 per year as long as they remain unprovided for by the nation, that they may be able to spend the latter part of their lives devoting their knowledge obtained to public affairs to the public good free of pecuniary cares. These pensions will be promptly offered to the ex-presidents or their widows, so that no application will be required from them.

Washington, Nov. 21.—When informed tonight of the action of the Carnegie corporation in New York, in providing pensions for future ex-presidents of the United States, President Taft said it was a very novel and very unexpected proposition, but that he preferred to make no comment upon it tonight. In a speech before the Lotus club in New York city last Saturday night the president hinted broadly that congress should provide for ex-presidents so that they need not lower the dignity of the position they held when they re-enter private life.

This is the most extraordinary proposition yet made by a man given to extraordinary propositions. The arguments used against the Carnegie pension or subsidy for teachers, may be applied with four-fold force against his proposed presidential pension or subsidy as it would better be called. It would be a monstrous thing to permit the president of the United States to rest under the shame of anticipating a pension

from a fund accumulated through special privilege. It would be bad enough to put our ex-presidents in the attitude of the object of charity, but it would be infinitely worse to make him the beneficiary of special interests. Mr. Carnegie's proposition is so serious a menace to the public welfare, that congress should seize the first opportunity to make such a pension as that proposed by Mr. Carnegie utterly impossible. Indeed, the proposition is so insulting to the intelligence of a people living under popular government and it amounts to such a serious attack upon popular government itself, that it would be well if public sentiment could be so crystallized as to force an immediate withdrawal of the proposition by the gentleman who made it.

Mr. Carnegie has piled up so much gold that he has found it difficult to devise ways in which to dispose of it. He secured his immense fortune, first, through special privileges from the political party, to whose campaign funds he was a generous contributor and finally through the watered stock of the steel trust perfected under the 1912 trust system. The use of this ill-gotten wealth for the pensioning of educators has had a bad effect upon our educational system, but the efforts of those who were sufficiently far seeing to recognize the evil involved in the teachers' pension, were overcome by the influence of those who were anxious to participate in the pension coupled with the efforts of the many who are all too ready to believe that a seemingly generous gift may cover a multitude of sins. The Carnegie presidential subsidy proposition should be rejected with such vigor that a similar suggestion will never again be made by any reader of American history or any student of American character.

Several years ago Mr. Carnegie offered to pay 20 million dollars to the American government provided that he was permitted to insure the Filipinos that they would be given their independence. About that time the Chicago Tribune (issue May 18, 1902) printed an editorial entitled, "The Arrangement of Wealth." The Tribune complained that Mr. Carnegie was "constantly posing," and that he had "tried the patience of his friends severely in some of his late bids for notoriety." It said that Mr. Carnegie had "scattered libraries broadly through the country, all of which were to be called for him, and every one of them is a contribution to the conscience fund." Then the Tribune said: "Mr. Carnegie made his money in a magnificent way, but he should never forget that HE MADE IT THROUGH UNDUPLICATE FAVORITISM of the government of the United States. OWING TO THE DISCRIMINATION PRACTICED IN HIS FAVOR BY THE TARIFF, he was enabled to amass a fortune of two hundred million dollars or more, MOST OF WHICH CAME OUT OF THE POCKETS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN THROUGH THE OPERATION OF UNEQUAL LAWS. Much has been said of the benefit to the workingmen from the establishment of the Carnegie works. The beneficent

tariff system permitted the works to survive and flourish, but there are some people who have not forgotten the Homestead strike, nor the outrageous manner in which workingmen were treated at that time by employers whose brutality has seldom been exceeded in the history of labor agitations."

A thoroughly non-partisan description of the Homestead strike in the Encyclopedia of Social Reforms, is as follows:

"Homestead Strike—In July, 1892, a serious difficulty arose in the iron and steel works of Messrs. Carnegie & Co., Homestead, Pa., employing several thousand men. Wages had been for many years fixed in these works by a sliding scale based upon the selling price of steel billets. (See Amalgamated Assn. of Iron & Steel Workers.) The wages were high for many of the men, but a considerable degree of skill is required for the work, which also, in some cases, makes great demands upon the health and strength of the workers, owing to the high temperature of the workshops in which the molten iron has to be worked. The scale agreed upon in 1889 was to expire on June 30, 1892; and when that date approached, the owners gave notice of a desire to reduce the basis from \$26.50 a ton to \$23.000, and to make the scale terminable at the beginning of January instead of at the beginning of July. To this the employes objected, because in the middle of the winter they could not afford a cessation of work, and would not be in a position to resist any unwelcome demands made by the employers. The number of men actually affected by the cut-down was not large, but the delegates of the Amalgamated Association of iron and steel workers, in the name of the employes, rejected the proposed scale. The employers retaliated by formally discharging all who refused their terms and announcing that they would hold no further negotiation with the association as such. A virtual lockout followed, for the company nominally severed all connection with the discharged employes. They subsequently issued a notice that "all the old hands who did not return by a certain date would lose their positions." Further Messrs. Carnegie & Co. had provided against the contingency of a strike or lock-out during the previous six weeks by building a fence around the works three miles long and twelve feet high upon a parapet three feet in height, and covered with barbed wire, so that the operatives called the works Fort Frick. Having prepared the works to stand a siege, they proceeded to obtain a force of Pinkerton special constables to enable them to introduce non-union labor to take the place of the strikers. Negotiations for the supply of this force had been begun even before the lock-out had been declared, though the men were not introduced until after application had been made to the sheriff for a guard to protect the property of the company. The officials of the Amalgamated Association, on their side, offered to provide such a guard but their offer was refused by the sheriff on the ground that though they might

CONTENTS

| |
|--|
| MR. CARNEGIE'S PRESIDENTIAL SUBSIDY |
| A SIX-YEAR TERM FOR PRESIDENT WICKERSHAM ADMITS RESPONSIBILITY |
| A MISSISSIPPI OPINION |
| TWENTY-NINE NEW GOVERNORS WHEN NO PRESIDENT IS ELECTED |
| MR. WILSON'S FAVORITE POEM |
| CURRENT TOPICS |
| HOME DEPARTMENT |
| NEWS OF THE WEEK |
| WHETHER COMMON OR NOT |
| WASHINGTON NEWS |