

SHEPPARD SHOULD BE SENATOR

Senator-elect Sheppard has sent to the members of the Texas legislature the following statement:

"I would be false to the principles for which I stand and to the people who have chosen me as Senator Bailey's successor were I not to express my willingness to serve if elected by the legislature for the unexpired senatorial term. The senatorship belongs to the people; it is the property of no man or set of men, to be employed as a mere instrument for the discharge of personal and political obligations. Having been chosen by the people for the full term, I would be untrue to them were I to neglect any step that might make my services of greater value.

"Admission to the senate, even a few weeks in advance of the regular term, would enable me to secure better committees and more commanding positions on them than would be the case if I should not enter until March 4th. I consider three committees of especial practical importance to Texas, namely, commerce, which controls river and harbor appropriations, agriculture and irrigation. I shall need every possible assistance in my endeavor to acquire membership on these committees, and to rank as high as possible on them from the beginning.

"Furthermore, nine-tenths of my time is already being taken up with senatorial matters, particularly in classifying and considering applications for federal offices that will come within the jurisdiction of the Texas senators, and in co-operating, through frequent conferences and otherwise, with the progressive democratic senators in the movement to bring the senate into complete harmony with the administration of Woodrow Wilson. Membership in the senate at an early date would enable me to be of far greater assistance in aiding to secure progressive democratic control of the senate by the time the new administration begins. The margin of democratic supremacy in the senate will be dangerously narrow at best, and every means should be used to solidify and strengthen the democratic side.

"The country is progressive, the democracy is progressive, Texas is progressive. Should not Texas remain true to her progressive ideals by strengthening the progressive element in the national councils at every opportunity? It is not a time when mere personal considerations should control the actions of men and legislatures; the democratic party is about to face the supreme moment of its existence, and Texas, now on the very threshold of a marvelous development, should occupy as commanding a position as possible in the national legislature.

"Convinced, therefore, that the unexpired term offers an opportunity to enhance the value of my service in the senate to the state, the party and the nation, I deem it my duty, from the standpoint of my conception of the public interest and with entire good will to all concerned, to lay these matters before the people's representatives in the legislature, and I shall cheerfully abide their decision."

He is right. He was elected by the people to succeed Senator Bailey and Governor Colquitt put his own wishes above the expressed will of the people when he appointed Colonel Johnson.

FOSS ON GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP

Governor Foss, of Massachusetts, in his inaugural address, talked about government ownership of railroads, and talked well. Here are a few of the things he said:

"The railroads of the United States today are in a sense not primarily engaged in public service so much as in private financial operations.

"If the government owned the roads, at whatever price acquired, the interest rate would be cut in half.

"The cost of all future inflation would be saved to the public. The incentive, moreover, to giving rebates, discrimination and other practices, which regulation does not seem to be able to eliminate, would at once disappear.

"Without control of the railway system, the trust system can not long survive. Railway ownership is the chief support of the so-called money trust."

The most important point in the governor's address is one to which we have repeatedly called your attention in this column:

Government ownership would make railroad men interest themselves in railroads.

At present, under private ownership, the railroad men of ability are interested in dividends, in fights between railroads, in successful violation of law, in rate cutting to hurt each other, or in combining to hurt the public—Atlanta Georgian.

RENEWALS

The subscriptions of those who became subscribers with the first issue of The Commoner and have renewed at the close of each year, expire with the last issue in January. In order to facilitate the work of changing and re-entering the addresses upon our subscription books and mailing lists and obviate the expense of sending out personal statements announcing that renewals are due, subscribers are urgently requested to renew with as little delay as possible. The work of correcting the stencils entails an enormous amount of labor and the publisher asks subscribers to assist as much as possible by making their renewals promptly. The corrected expiration usually appears on the wrapper of the second issue after renewal is received.

MORE LIGHT

The following resolution, introduced by Congressman Jones, of Virginia, ought to be adopted:

"Whereas in a book recently issued from the press, entitled, 'The American Occupation of the Philippines, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight to nineteen hundred and twelve,' by James H. Blount, officer of United States Volunteers in the Philippines from eighteen hundred and ninety-nine to nineteen hundred and one, and judge of the Court of First Instance of the Philippines from nineteen hundred and one to nineteen hundred and five, it is charged that the International Harvester company and other American importers of manila hemp have in the last ten years collected more than four million dollars in refunds of export taxes on manila hemp under a refund or rebate system growing out of the administration by the Philippine insular government of the Act of Congress of March eighth, nineteen hundred and two, known as the Philippine tariff Act, and that these refunds represent in effect a free gift or subsidy to American importers of manila hemp: Therefore be it

"Resolved, That the president of the United States be, and he is hereby, requested to advise the house, if in his judgment not incompatible with the public interest, to what extent, if at all, the exemption of American importers of hemp from the payment of the export tax thereon has operated unjustly, and who have been the beneficiaries of such injustice, if any, and what amounts have been refunded under the act of nineteen hundred and two up to the present time.

"Resolved further, That the president be, and he is hereby, requested, if not inconsistent with the public interest, to advise the house to what extent the manila hemp industry has been depressed, if at all, by reason of the exemption of American importers of manila hemp from payment of the export tax thereon."

WILL THEY GET TOGETHER?

Some of Colonel Roosevelt's staunchest supporters during the late campaign are showing signs of a desire to return to "the flesh pots." It was all right to whoop it up for reform during the campaign, but now that their leader has been defeated, and the republican to whom they were most hostile has been retired from active politics, they are talking about "getting together." Seeing that neither wing of the G. O. P. can flap alone, and that a progressive democrat in the White House is sure to draw from the Roosevelt forces those progressive republicans who are progressives first and republicans afterward, they are looking longingly toward a reunion of the republican factions as the only means of returning to power. All the plutocratic forces of the country will aid in the effort for the fears that Wall street entertained when it tried to prevent Wilson's nomination have been more than realized. Governor Wilson is even more progressive than they thought him, and as courageous as he is progressive. Under his administration the progressive side of the democratic party will grow and the desertions, if any, will be from the reactionary element of the party—already small—to the standpat republicans.

During the campaign the Taft and Roosevelt republicans were emphasizing their differences. Now, Mr. Munsey says, "The platforms of the republican and progressive parties are in many

respects the same" and Senator Jackson, of Maryland, nods approvingly and adds yes, "On questions of governmental policies there is not a very wide gap to be crossed by either party to reach the other."

In the meantime Governor Wilson is proceeding to plan for an administration which will deprive either wing of the republican party of any good reason for presenting a ticket.

FLORIDA WILL RATIFY INCOME TAX AMENDMENT

One of the early actions to be expected of the Florida legislature is the ratification of the income tax amendment to the federal constitution making the thirty-fifth of the thirty-six states required for the two-thirds majority.

The measure is democratic and the democratic party is pledged to its support—just as it was pledged to its support two years ago when, alleging that they could not take action without instruction from the people, the senate of Florida refused to ratify the bill. This year, however, every man in the state legislature was elected on the democratic platform which indorses the income tax amendment and as we said in the beginning one of the first actions to be expected of the approaching session is a unanimous ratification of the measure which has already received the approval of thirty-four states.

What the form of the proposed law will be is not known but the intention is to reach the people of the country who are not paying their rightful share of the country's expenses. It is commonly known that persons with the largest incomes are very frequently the ones who are most clever at dodging the tax collector and economists have long believed that the sure way of simplifying the problem of "paying the bills" is by making every citizen in the United States pay his proportionate share—according to his benefits—of the public expenses.

Artfully, of course, the new law will be evaded by the same people who constitute the millionaire sponge class today, but in refusing to give a correct statement of the amount of their incomes, they will also be deprived of some of that adulation which the American people render to the dollar kings. The law will unquestionably be a great help for attaining better justice.—Miami (Fla.) Metropolis.

SENATOR ASHURST'S SPEECH

The maiden speech of Senator Ashurst of Arizona will be found on another page. It was appropriate that Senator Bailey should be answered by a representative of Arizona, since Mr. Taft's veto of that state's constitution on account of the recall provision brought that reform into the foreground. It required some courage for a new senator to enter the lists against Senator Bailey but the young senator has courage and he easily demolished the specious arguments offered by the retiring Texas statesman. Mr. Ashurst's reply to the argument based on the small vote sometimes cast for constitutional amendments was conclusive. He showed that important measures constantly pass the senate with a smaller percentage voting, notwithstanding the fact that the senators are paid \$7,500 per year to stay at Washington and vote. The whole speech will repay reading.

REAL PROGRESS

The democratic house of representatives in Nebraska has adopted a new rule providing for roll call in committee of the whole. The committee of the whole house is where the enemies of the public welfare frequently do their most skillful work and their agents in the legislature work faithfully for them knowing that there is no way of putting them on the written record. Often these men who are false to the public interests have their vote recorded right on the final roll call. The reform adopted in Nebraska provides for a roll call in the committee of the whole and thus requires every man to go upon record at every stage of the proceedings. A splendid reform it is and thoroughly in keeping with the democratic spirit of the day.

IN FIGHTING TRIM

Governor Wilson's message to the New Jersey legislature shows that he is in fighting trim. He urges the ratification of the income tax amendment and the amendment providing for the popular election of United States senators. He also urges state legislation dealing with the trusts as far as the power of the state goes. GOOD!