

The Commoner.

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The Publicity Law

The United States supreme court has upheld the newspaper publicity law enacted in 1912. This law provided that every newspaper or magazine must file semi-annually with the post-office department statements giving the names of the editor, managers, owners, stockholders and bond holders. Daily newspapers must give also their average daily circulation. It is further provided that editorials that have been paid for must be so designated in print. Post office officials says that 88 per cent of the publications have complied with this law. There are, however, some newspaper managers who have objected to its enforcement, but these will now be required to yield. The Commoner has long advocated such a law. It is clearly in line with good public policy. Newspaper publishers obtain a great convenience through mail privileges and the government has the right to ask that they take up those privileges with clean hands. The government has the right to ask that they put the public in possession of information concerning the motive behind the paper's appeals to its readers. Then the readers know the identity of the men who control the publication. Then they would be able to place a proper estimate upon the value of the advice that the publication gives with respect to public matters.

GOOD CITIZENSHIP DAY

This is a movement to observe the Sunday just preceding the fourth day of July each year for the purpose of impressing upon the minds of the people the practical principles of good citizenship and true patriotism in order to develop in them the highest possible type of citizenship and prepare the way for a more thoughtful observance of the Fourth of July.

While it originated with Rev. Thomas M. Evans (now of Omaha) the superintendent of Christian citizenship of the Nebraska Christian Endeavor Union, his purpose from the beginning was to make it a nation-wide movement, free from party, class or creed, to be observed by everybody everywhere after the fashion of "Mother's Day." Through a circular letter he first secured the hearty indorsement of governors from New York to Honolulu and from Michigan to Florida. Also the indorsement of such men as Wilbur F. Crafts, Josiah Strong, Francis E. Clark, Frank Hanley and many others. He then issued a circular letter to the press requesting that Sunday, July 2, 1911, be observed as "Good Citizenship Day," calling upon editors, clergymen, lecturers, Sunday schools, and young peoples' societies to give their best endeavor for the promotion of good citizenship.

The Commoner has been in hearty accord with the movement ever since its beginning and is the more enthusiastic for it having witnessed its practical workings last year. In Lincoln and Omaha ministers spoke in their pulpits on good

citizenship and in the afternoon splendid open-air meetings were held in both cities. We see in the movement untold opportunities for the betterment of our citizenship. We trust that as "Mother's Day" has emphasized a deeper love and truer devotion for motherhood so may "Good Citizenship Day" create in the heart of every citizen a keener appreciation of his opportunities and a deeper sense of his responsibilities as a citizen.

WHAT ABOUT THE SENATOR'S EMPLOYERS?

Truman G. Palmer, the beet sugar lobbyist, told the senate investigating committee that a series of charts, prepared by him argumentative against free sugar and published as a senate document had attained a circulation of 320,000 copies under the franking privileges of Senator Lodge.

The Associated Press report of the committee proceedings says: "The charts first appeared in the senate during the speech of Mr. Lodge made last July. Chairman Overman and Senator Reed developed on cross-examination that after Mr. Lodge had secured permission to print the documents, Palmer got a proof from the government printing office and revised it.

"The two senators seemed intent to emphasize that a representative of a private interest had been allowed to change something the senate had ordered printed, although Mr. Palmer denied that any material alterations had been made.

"Chairman Overman announced, however, that officials of the government printing office would be summoned to tell how such a document had been sent to private hands for revision and that if Senator Lodge wished to testify he would be allowed to do so.

"The mailing of this document, I find, would cost five cents," said Senator Reed to Palmer, "and you, therefore saved \$16,000 for your employers."

"I'm very glad to know it," replied Palmer. "But what about Senator Lodge's employer?"

The saving of this \$16,000 to this beet sugar concern shifted the expense to the government of the United States. Mr. Palmer rejoices over the saving to his employers.

Is there any reason why a United States senator should be indifferent to the interests of his employer?

"FINANCIAL TIGHTNESS"

The Wall Street Journal, hearing that an inquiry was likely to be made in Wall street by the federal government to determine the cause of the present condition of the money and stock markets, explains that—

"If President Wilson wants to know the reason for the decline in the stock market he has not far to seek. The Bank of England's minimum discount rate has not stood as high as 4½ per cent in twenty-two years in the first week in June, and the comparison is with the crisis which followed the Baring suspension twenty-three years ago. With such a rate in London at the time when money ought to be the cheapest of the year, the Paris rate stands at 4 per cent (and the bank of France is not restricted to gold in paying its obligations), while the German Reichsbank maintains a minimum discount rate of 6 per cent and would be glad enough to make it higher but for an inevitable panic at minor financial centers of eastern Europe."

"If the world's money market is like this in the first week of June, what will it be next October? Has wicked Wall street produced all this, or are we not facing a world wide crisis, which neither congress nor the president can control? The great European banks of issue do not maintain these sinister rates merely to influence American domestic politics."

Reproducing the above the Dubuque (Iowa) Telegraph-Herald says: The statement is no less interesting as a plausible explanation of the condition, than because it absolves the Wilson administration from all responsibility for it, direct or indirect.

The Right to Lobby

No one questions the right of any man or interest to be heard by congressional or legislative committees with respect to legislation that might affect a particular business. To deny such a privilege would be to reject the right of petition and that right must in popular government be preserved. There are, too, some who think that it is not improper for the lobbyist to discuss these matters with legislators as individuals. On this point there will be marked difference of opinion. It will be agreed, however, that the safer course for the best interests of all concerned would be for the representative of special interest to confine his efforts to pleas before regularly constituted committees sitting in public hearing. The legislator must be given all the arguments pro and con upon every proposition with which he is to deal. But every individual right may be preserved when these arguments are presented in a public way. In this view the time may come when representatives of special interests will be denied the privilege of making their arguments to legislators as individuals and required to make their pleas to regularly organized committees holding public sessions. In the meantime, however, it will be agreed that the occupation of every man who represents special interests in the matter of legislation at the national capital should be known to the public. Some of these lobbyists have been uncovered in the investigations set on foot by the president. Congressional investigation ought not, however, to be necessary for this purpose. There should be a law requiring every lobbyist or agent of special interests to formally register at the national capital just as these gentlemen are required to register at many of the state capitals. The public interest is entitled to every safeguard.

EMMET'S EPITAPH

Emmet's epitaph may yet be written. A writer in the New York Times says: Unless all signs fail Ireland will have home rule by 1915. The present proceedings in relation to the bill in the British house of commons may be described as purely perfunctory. Under a parliament act the lower house must pass the bill three times before the inevitable veto of the house of lords becomes inactive. The peers may amend the bill when they make up their minds to accept it seriously and the lower house may accept the amendments or insist on reintroducing the bill in precisely its present form at the next session.

The debate which will follow the second reading of the bill this session may be protracted, but it can serve no purpose. The unionists will have their say, of course, and the voice of Ulster will be heard. But it is not likely that "militant tactics" will be resorted to. Irish home rule is a foregone conclusion and the masters of "militancy" in parliament are all in favor of the bill.

AT THE GUTHRIE BANQUET

Abstract of Mr. Bryan's remarks at the Guthrie dinner at Pittsburgh:

"I am here for a double purpose: first, to introduce two distinguished gentlemen, His Excellency Viscount Chinda, who, with such ability and distinction, represents Japan at the capital of our nation, and Ambassador Guthrie, to whom has been given the honor of representing the United States at Tokio. My connection with the department having to do with foreign relations makes it appropriate that I should be present on this occasion when these representatives of their respective countries make each other's acquaintance.

"The second purpose of my visit is to pay my respects to, and express my personal regard for, these gentlemen who are entrusted with the honorable mission of representing the two coun-

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