

The President On Peace

In his message the president says:

"The country, I am thankful to say, is at peace with all the world, and many happy manifestations multiply about us of a growing cordiality and sense of community of interests among the nations, foreshadowing an age of settled peace and good will. More and more readily each decade do the nations manifest their willingness to bind themselves by solemn treaty to the processes of peace, the processes of frankness and fair concession. So far the United States has stood at the front of such negotiations. She will, I earnestly hope and confidently believe, give fresh proof of her sincere adherence to the cause of international friendship by ratifying the several treaties of arbitration awaiting renewal by the senate. In addition to these, it has been the privilege of the department of state to gain the assent, in principle, of no less than thirty-one nations, representing four-fifths of the population of the world, to the negotiation of treaties by which it shall be agreed that whenever differences of interest or of policy arise which cannot be resolved by the ordinary processes of diplomacy they shall be publicly analyzed, discussed, and reported upon by a tribunal chosen by the parties before either nation determines its course of action.

"There is only one possible standard by which to determine controversies between the United States and other nations, and that is compounded of these two elements: Our own honor

and our obligations to the peace of the world. A test so compounded ought easily to be made to govern both the establishment of new treaty obligations and the interpretation of those already assumed."

What a blessing it is to have in the White House one who believes in the substitution of reason for force! Our country has had since the 4th of March more opportunities to excite international friction than usually come during the same length of time, and a great deal depends upon the temper and the controlling impulses of the chief executive. Instead of assuming that war must be the result of every disagreement, the president assumes that every controversy can be adjusted by conference, and by the bringing of an enlightened public opinion to bear upon the matter in dispute. Recognizing that our nation has become the leader of the peace movement, he has determined that it shall maintain its position and that it shall press forward with this great international work whenever occasion offers. History probably presents no parallel to what has occurred since this administration began. The peace plan to which the president refers was offered to the nations less than eight months ago, and yet it has been adopted in principle by governments representing so large a percentage of the population of the world that its success is now assured.

And it is only the beginning, for each step taken in the right direction gives us courage for still further advance. W. J. BRYAN.

THE SITUATION IN MEXICO

The president in his message to congress has given to the public more fully than at any time heretofore the reasons why he has felt it his duty to refuse recognition to Huerta. He has used the word "usurper" in describing him—a strong word and yet a word justified by the means employed by General Huerta to secure control of the government of Mexico.

As head of the army, he was not only under the orders but in the confidence of the president; and yet, while Madero was being attacked by insurrectionists, Huerta turned upon the executive, made him prisoner, forced him to resign, and then permitted his assassination. Having thus taken control of the government, he held a parley with the head of the attacking forces and entered into an agreement, by which it was understood that he was to be provisional president and the insurgent leader the candidate to succeed him at an election to be called. This was the beginning of his reign; how it has continued is only too well known to the reading public. It was, of course, impossible for an administration thus created to expect moral support, and it has been as impotent to enforce physical authority. The constitutionalists, although hampered in the obtaining of arms and munitions of war, have secured control of the northern portion of the country, approximately half in geographical extent, and General Huerta has been powerless to protect either persons or property in this territory.

To recognize him would be to offer a premium on the methods which he employed and would threaten the stability of the governments in the smaller republics of Central and South America, which have already paid dearly for the ambitions of military chieftains who have exploited these countries through frequent revolutions.

If any Americans or Europeans entertained the hope that an administration so conceived and brought into existence, could conduct a stable government and make it responsive to the will of the people, such hope was shattered when General Huerta dissolved congress, imprisoned nearly half of the deputies, and assumed the dictatorial power which he now exercises. To add to his offenses, he has conducted an election which was designedly a failure and a farce, so obviously so that the new congress, though having no authority except that which it obtained at the election, has declared the election of a president null and void.

President Wilson desires peace in Mexico, and he knows that peace is only possible under conditions which give assurances of the maintenance of constitutional government. He has given Huerta an opportunity to retire with dignity

and, when he refused to do so, has isolated him from the support and sympathy of Europe and left him to a fate which will be a warning to all who may hereafter contemplate the establishment of a despotism supported by bayonets.

GAMBLING—GREAT AND SMALL

Gambling is one of the curses of the present day—not merely the small gambling which is carried on in back alleys and obscure places, but the gambling which goes on in the chambers of commerce, the boards of trade and the stock exchanges. Purchases and sales of commodities and stocks when the sellers have nothing to sell and the purchasers have no intention of receiving the goods—this may be called business, but it is nothing more nor less than gambling, and in some respects it is worse than gambling at the card table. First, it is on a larger scale than the gambling in the houses known as gambling houses; and second, the men who gamble on the markets sometimes control the markets and thus take an unfair advantage of those who enter into the game with them. A corporation whose stock rests upon actual value does not furnish much of an opportunity for exploitation. What the gambler wants is a stock whose value is uncertain, because then the market price can be juggled with. Just as a farm, whose value is to a certain extent fixed, does not furnish the same opportunity to the speculator as the mine whose value is undetermined, so the railroad stock that rests upon a value to be found in the road itself is not subject to fluctuation like the stock of a road whose dividends depend upon the ability of the manager to monopolize business.

The evil of gambling, in whatever form it may appear, is that it cultivates a desire to get something for nothing and substitutes the law of chance for God's law of "reward earned by service." Some bad habits affect only the body, at least in their beginning, but gambling immediately attacks the will and undermines the character. It is a heart disease and paralyzes one's energy. The man who becomes addicted to this vice soon ceases to be a producer because he can not content himself with the slow returns of legitimate effort; then he neglects those dependent upon him and wastes that which he has already accumulated. By this time he is ready to go a step further and use trust funds and cheat those whom he entices into a game. Sometimes the cheating is done with loaded dice or marked cards; sometimes by shells and sleight of hand; sometimes it is done on a larger scale by grain corners, wash-sales or by the manipulation of stocks. After swindling comes disgrace and often suicide. Nothing but a

higher ideal will prevent one's falling into the habit and nothing but moral regeneration will restore one who has fallen into the habit. No malady is so difficult to cure as one that attacks the will. Parents ought to warn their children against gambling; ministers ought to warn their congregations against it, and newspapers ought to point out its evils to their readers. Only when one is willing to give to society a dollar's worth of service for a dollar's worth of pay and is as careful to give good measure as he is to demand good measure is he on solid ground. An honest purpose begets honest methods and the two give peace of mind and the best assurance of success in every walk of life.

LETTERS FROM THE WORKERS

D. P. L. Hudson, Selma, Calif.—I realize the great influence of the work done by The Commoner; I am confident that The Commoner has been the chief factor in bringing about the condition that has given our party control of our national government. All democrats ought to read and heed its policies. I am enclosing a remittance for a club of six yearly subscribers at your special clubbing rate of 60c a year. Keep the good work going.

E. V. Kautsky, Colby, Wis.—I have taken pleasure in sending to you list after list of subscriptions to The Commoner; the paper has done a great work and in its present form will in my estimation do a still greater work. I am glad that I am alive to see the day that we have a national administration that is a hope and inspiration to the democrats of the rank and file. May the good work go on is my sincere wish.

DID YOU?

The 33 1-3 per cent which the Owen section of the currency committee has recommended to be held as a gold reserve for the redemption of these notes at the treasury is amply sufficient to make it a perfect currency. Did you ever notice that whenever it came to providing for the issuance of bank bills the bankers never ask to make their notes redeemable in gold? Did you ever hear a banker suggest that national bank notes should be made payable in gold at the bank counter.—Senator John F. Shafroth, Colorado.

In a recent speech President Taft said that he feels that he was deceived into granting a pardon to a New York banker, who was represented to him to be on the edge of the grave and certain to live but a few months. The pardon was granted several years ago, and the banker is again in active business life, with many years apparently ahead of him, which would seem pretty good evidence for the newly-voiced opinion of Mr. Taft. Possibly in a few more years the gentleman will also be willing to concede that he was also deceived into saying the 1909 law was the best tariff law ever enacted.

A little over a billion dollars is the total of the estimates of expenses made by the various departments of the national government, in the budget handed into congress. This is about forty millions less than their republican predecessors asked to be appropriated for the current year. Forty millions was regarded as a gigantic sum by the republican members of congress when they were talking about it as a decrease in the sugar tariff revenue.

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 January issue. 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.