

The Commoner

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National Prohibition in Congress

In the last issue of *The Commoner* I expressed the opinion that this was not an opportune time to propose a national prohibition amendment—not because of any objection to the principle involved—I stated I would vote for the amendment if submitted) but because the submission of such an amendment at this time would divert attention from other issues pressing for consideration, without advancing the cause of prohibition.

On another page will be found the vote upon the amendment. It will be seen that while it lacked the two-thirds necessary to pass such a resolution, it received a majority of eight—a striking proof of the growing tide against the liquor business.

While the brewers and distillers are congratulating themselves that the prohibition forces could not secure a two-thirds majority, they are looking with blanched faces and trembling hearts upon the declaration, solemnly made on roll-call, that a clear majority of the people's representatives in congress are arrayed against rum selling.

As it only requires a majority to pass laws, the liquor interests see in the vote on the amendment the beginning of the end of their supremacy. The death knell of the saloon has been sounded and it is only a question of a few years when the business, now made an outlaw, will be driven from the highways and forced into the secret places, where, after a few years more of fugitive life it will meet its death. From now on the liquor business can consider itself a fugitive from justice, living in constant fear of arrest and punishment.

Many who voted for the prohibition amendment were opposed to its submission at this time, but, when compelled to vote yes or no, they preferred to ally themselves with the temperance forces rather than run the risk of being counted on the side of the saloon. Others, who have fought the liquor interests in their several states, voted against the submission of the amendment at this time because they preferred to center the fight on the states where it is at issue rather than to have the attack scattered over the entire country. These will be for a national amendment whenever they think the time is ripe for such action and in the meantime they will redouble their energies and enter with still more earnestness into the state contests against the liquor interests. The temperance element will not deal harshly with the man who voted "No," provided he is in the forefront of the battle in his state, but woe unto the man who pleads "state rights" against national prohibition and then allies himself with the liquor interests in his state! He will find it difficult to convince his constituents that his arguments against the exercise of national authority on the subject expressed his real reason for voting "No."
W. J. BRYAN.

THE GOSPEL OF HOPE

The president, in his great speech at Indianapolis, to be found on another page, presents the gospel of hope. While republican reactionaries are mourning and moaning over the successful attacks on privilege and favoritism, the president orders another charge. In his own felicitous style he defends the laws already passed and announces a progressive program for the future. Forward, march! is the command, and the party is with him.

The president is a little hard on the stand-patters, but he does not hit them a lick amiss. They deserve it.

Who says the president does not understand the Mexican situation? The Huertaites in the United States will not make any political capital out of watchful waiting.

If the republican party has any NEW THOUGHTS, let it speak now, or forever hold its peace.

The invitation to the progressive republicans—the real ones—is a standing one; they can come when they like; they will find a welcome.

The men who, influenced by mistaken zeal, are trying to involve the United States in unneutral acts, will get little comfort out of the president's speech. He pleads for a neutrality which will enable this nation, as the friend of all the belligerents, to act for all when the time of action comes.
W. J. BRYAN.

A BUSINESS MAN'S VIEWS

On another page will be found a most interesting speech delivered by Mr. Theodore F. Thieme of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, before the Federated Commercial clubs of that state, assembled at Terre Haute. It is instructive not only because of what is said, but also because it is said by a BUSINESS MAN. Mr. Thieme is a prominent manufacturer. His attention was called to some abuses that needed remedying, and when he started out to secure them he found all the evil forces of society banded together to fight any and every reform. His experience has made a real reformer out of him. Strength to his arm! May his tribe increase—we need more reformers among the business men.

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Plutocracy is Braying Again

The papers of December 22nd published a letter from President F. D. Underwood of the Erie railroad to the Marion, Ohio, chamber of commerce, declining an invitation to speak at a gathering there. In the course of his letter he refers contemptuously to "the political hacks now hammering business, who were clothed with power, and really holding back business under the breeching of reform." He continues as follows:

"I am sure that all men who think agree that it is time to call a halt. Break down political lines, if necessary, to put business men on guard; put atmospheric philosophers, political charlatans, and reformers by self-acclamation, not by record, in the stocks.

"We can all be sure that prosperity will not again come to us except upon two conditions—first, prosperity following agriculture; second, prosperity of American transportation. Regulated, it has been, regulated it must be; persecuted it has been, and persecuted it must not be. The price for that sort of political show is too high to be safe.

"In destroying the credit and thereby cutting off the purchasing power of the railroads, the financial catastrophe so created has backed into the factories and the homes.

"The political doctors of our day but typify the money changers of old. Duplicate the treatment they had. Put these we have out of our political temple; let them take their turn at short hours, low wages, and hunger."

Attention is called to a few phrases which illustrate his attitude of mind. "I am sure that all men who THINK agree that it is time to call a halt." Do only those who profit by privilege or who defend favoritism indulge in the luxury of thinking! It is a common habit with those who grow rich by controlling the instrumentalities of the government to look down on the tax payers as an "unthinking mob," but is Mr. Underwood not a little presumptuous when he excludes from the number of those who think, our scholar-president? Another phrase: "Break down political lines, if necessary, to put business men on guard." No politics among those who worship the dollar, not for a moment; with them patriotism is merely the art of standing together and dividing the spoils. But what an injustice to class all business men with the purse-proud members of the privileged class. Again, "put atmospheric philosophers, political charlatans, and reformers by self-acclamation, not by record, in the stocks." This suggests the tyranny which such men would exercise if they had the power. Any man who raised an objection to the iron rule of the predatory rich would be put in the stocks—this is the answer which the financial despot always makes to those who complain, It is the old remedy—compel them "to make bricks without straw."

But why single out sentences for attention? The letter is all of a piece; every sentence is steeped in the hatred that takes possession of