

The Commoner

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A Great Congress

Speaker Clark and those associated with him in the directing of the congress just adjourned, are to be congratulated upon the splendid record made. It has no parallel when measured by the importance of the work accomplished. The tariff law realized at last the hopes which democrats for a generation have entertained of tariff reform; the new currency law is monumental and far-reaching in its effects; the repeal of the free-tolls law was most timely in view of the commercial complications that have followed the war; the anti-trust legislation goes far toward remedying the evils that have followed in the wake of private monopoly. In addition to what has been accomplished by the joint action of the senate and house, the house has done its part in supporting the president on other matters which have failed of final action of the senate. The senate has been handicapped by the rules which permit a minority to indefinitely extend debate and thus retard legislation, but with a larger democratic majority in the next senate it is almost certain that that body will so change its rules as to enable the majority to assume responsibility for legislation.

The Sixty-third congress will stand out in history as a vindication of the people's faith in the democratic party. It kept the pledges of the party, and contributed largely to the victory won last fall which gives us an increase in the senate and a majority in the house large enough for all practical purposes.

W. J. BRYAN.

THE INDIANA PRIMARY LAW

Indiana has risen to the emergency and passed a primary law. The machine politicians of Indiana have had enough influence to stay the hand of reform in that state until after all the surrounding states had acted, but the sentiment at last became so strong that the legislature gracefully yielded to the demand and enacted a law which puts the voters in control of the party machinery of the state. Senator Kern, who made a bold and courageous fight for the primary law, will be one of the first beneficiaries—it insures his renomination to the United States senate next year. The Commoner congratulates him and all who contributed to the securing of this very important reform. Right has again triumphed, and the masses have again won another victory. As for the politicians of Indiana, they have acted wisely in manifesting a willingness to trust the voters of the state. The rule of the people is spreading.

CLOTURE NECESSARY

If any one has doubted the necessity for cloture in the senate, the events of the last few weeks ought to convince him. A ship purchase bill of great importance was defeated because the minority could talk indefinitely. Two treaties dealing with questions of great magnitude failed of ratification because a minority could

talk without limit. Claims were allowed and objectionable amendments to appropriation bills were accepted because a few men could by speaking delay a vote indefinitely. Under the present rules of the senate, a man with a speech can hold up legislation as effectively as a highwayman can hold up a traveler on a country road. Let the people rule. Cloture is necessary to bring the senate into harmony with the theory of popular government.

W. J. BRYAN.

THE "HOME RULE" FRAUD

The liquor interests of Ohio won a temporary victory but they won it under a false plea, and it will lead to their overthrow. The phrase, "Home Rule" is a popular one, and the friends of the saloon made the most of it. They would have been overwhelmed with defeat if they had used a phrase which truthfully stated the real purpose of those who led the fight. "Down with the Home," or "Saloon Rule" would have been a more appropriate slogan. The fraudulent character of the contest will be understood when it is remembered that the liquor interests themselves have made "home rule" on the saloon question an impossibility. They have formed a national organization which impudently invades any community in which the liquor question is at issue.

When Lincoln, Nebraska, had a saloon fight a few years ago, the city was visited by three speakers of national reputation who were sent there to argue in favor of saloons—one went from Milwaukee, one from Chicago and one all the way from New York. If "Home Rule" is desirable, why not let the people AT HOME decide the question for themselves? Why do liquor interests of the nation band themselves together to force the sale of intoxicating liquor on any and every community? The deception worked in Ohio once, but the indignation aroused by this unexpected triumph of the rum forces will hasten the end—and there can be but one end, namely, the victory of the people over the sordid interests and the conscienceless methods of those who plot against the home and the welfare of society.

A Step Forward in Publicity

The present congress took a new step forward in the matter of publicity. During the consideration of a bill in the house providing for the appointment of an additional judge in a Georgia district, Congressman Cullop of Indiana introduced the following amendment:

"PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PRESIDENT SHALL MAKE PUBLIC ALL INDORSEMENTS MADE IN BEHALF OF THE PERSON APPOINTED AS SUCH DISTRICT JUDGE."

The same provision was added to another bill providing for the appointment of an additional judge. Mr. Cullop tried to make the amendment applicable to all appointments to the federal bench, but the general amendment was ruled out on a point of order. The precedent, however, having been established in these cases, there is no doubt that it will be applied generally, and it is a step in the right direction. The federal judges hold offices for life, and the power which they exercise is so important that the public can justly ask for information upon the matter of recommendations. It is impossible, of course, for the president to know personally all judicial applicants throughout the country; he must rely upon the recommendations made by those who do know the candidates. Those who are acquainted with inside politics know how easy it is for the favor seeking corporations to collect recommendations for those whose appointment they desire, and a well-meaning president may easily be deceived by the volume of recommendations and the high standing of the endorsers. When endorsements are made public, inquiry will be instituted as to the character of the endorsers, and then the public can judge of the reasons for the endorsements.

The amendment above referred to is another concession to the demand for publicity—a demand which has been growing and which will be granted in time in regard to all public matters. The government belongs to the people, and since those who conduct the government are attending to the people's business, there is no reason why the people should not know what is being done. Congressman Cullop deserves to be congratulated upon his success in securing a new reform.

W. J. BRYAN.

The Sixty-third congress has expired by limitation of law, but the good it did is not interred with its bones. Instead it is written in the statute books, and there is not an intelligent citizen in the country who would applaud the man who would publicly demand the repeal of any one of the great measures relating to the finance and the trusts.

The political wisdom displayed in providing that state legislatures should meet but once in two years is being vindicated at a number of state capitals this winter.

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