

Mr. Thomas will examine the law under which his corporation is organized he will not find among the enumerated rights granted to the Lehigh Valley railroad the right to interfere with politics. No corporation created by law is granted the right, directly or indirectly, to conduct a political campaign. Not only is this right not granted, but we have a statute specifically denying this right to corporations. We have a federal statute which makes it a PENAL OFFENSE for corporations to contribute to the campaign fund of a political party—a statute made necessary by the use of corporate funds for political purposes. If President Thomas is forbidden by law to take one dollar from the treasury of his railroad to advance his own political opinions or those of his official associates, what right has he to use ten millions of dollars for political purposes. He might as well contribute the sum to the campaign fund as to use it as a club to intimidate the voters of the country.

President Thomas is a survival of a departed age. He is a sort of plutocratic appendix for which there is no present use.

Fortunately for the country the power of such men as President Thomas has been largely reduced by the new currency law which deprives the Wall street group of the means it used to employ to coerce the nation. Mr. Thomas will find that the public is in no mood to tolerate a continuance of the arrogant and insolent methods by which the managers of the large corporations have been in the habit of dominating both business and politics. He will get a little advertising by being put in the class with President Underwood of the Erie and Banker Leach of the Investment Bankers' association, but it will not be a notoriety that will be permanently pleasing to him.

W. J. BRYAN.

Washington correspondents say that the big republican politicians are seriously considering Senator Root as the next presidential nominee because they believe Colonel Roosevelt might be induced to accept the man he thought so much of that he made him his secretary of state. Just how far Mr. Root would get as a nominee may be determined by recalling that he refused to run again as a candidate for the senate from New York because he did not have sufficient faith in the intelligence of the rank and file, who now name senators, to believe they could act with discrimination. Imagine a man who holds to that opinion appealing to the average American voter.

When the government policy of conservation of natural resources was first established, westerners who had seen their neighbors grow rich from the free use of government lands and who feared they would not be able to enjoy a like opportunity, protested vigorously. The annual report of the government chief forester, made public not long ago, states that after eight years' trial, stockmen are well satisfied and that over nine million sheep and cattle were pastured last year on forest reserve lands. The government received a million dollars for the grazing privileges. Those protests that were bottomed on selfish greed were apparently justified.

A beet sugar factory in Nebraska, in settling its accounts with growers at the end of the recent financial year for that business, found that it had made so much money that its owners voluntarily paid to the growers 50 cents a ton more than they had agreed at the beginning of the planting season. The beet sugar factories of the country, it will be remembered, were all to have been compelled to close down as soon as the democratic tariff law went into effect because nobody would be found to grow the raw material for the prices they could afford to pay under the new schedule.

**IOWA DEMOCRACY'S OPPORTUNITY**

The democracy of Iowa has an opportunity to lead the fight for prohibition in that state—and it must either lead or follow, unless it is prepared to retire into obscurity for a decade. The saloon is doomed—the business is an outlaw. Its crimes against society make it impossible for any party to support it and preserve its self-respect. Now is the time to indicate the party's claim to public confidence and support. THE TEMPERANCE FORCES IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY SHOULD ORGANIZE AT ONCE. The liquor forces are organized and will have money from the national corruption fund. Surely the friends of the home will not be less active. Put only the faithful on guard.

W. J. BRYAN.

**PROHIBITION IN GREAT BRITAIN**

The readers of The Commoner have doubtless followed with interest the growth of prohibition in Europe. The war is throwing a ghastly light upon the evils of intemperance. Russia was the first of the belligerent nations to realize the menace of the traffic and she acted promptly and with remarkable results.

Then came France, with the prohibition of absinthe. The press dispatches report that her legislature is now considering the entire liquor question. Germany, too, has found restrictions necessary.

Now comes Great Britain with a terrific indictment. Lloyd George, one of the greatest men who has appeared in British politics in recent years, is quoted as saying—"We are fighting Germany, Austria, and drink, and so far as I can see the greatest of these three deadly foes is drink." He adds, "We have a great conviction based on accumulating evidence that nothing but root and branch methods would be of the slightest avail." King George, in a letter which will be found on another page, expresses a willingness to set an example in total abstinence.

It is found that even patriotism, inspired by the most pressing national needs, is not sufficient to overcome the demoralizing influence of intemperance. The war, awful as it is, will confer upon the world some real benefits if it opens the eyes of the people to the fact that the use of alcohol is even more to be feared than the slaughter of the battlefield. If, as is estimated, the people of the United States expend on liquor each day one-tenth of the cost of the war now raging in Europe, what is the cost of drink to the belligerent nations? When it is remembered that this cost is CONTINUING while war is only intermittent, is it strange that public sentiment is rising against the liquor traffic?

The high position which the United States occupies in the family of nations is shown by the fact that while other neutral nations are placed under suspicion as being willing to barter their neutrality for territory, no voice has been raised to accuse the United States of any attempt to make capital out of the misfortunes of others. The high standard of neutrality set by President Wilson at the very beginning of the war has been steadily maintained, and the various notes that have come from other countries whenever a dispute has arisen have each paid their mead of praise to him for his steadfast adherence to the policy he first laid down.

Those republicans who have been celebrating what they term democratic hard luck in having a European war interfere with the workings of the administration program already enacted into law are advised to wait awhile. It will be over a year before the next presidential campaign will be in full swing, and there is every reason to believe that business conditions, under the new freedom given commerce, will be so good that the republicans will have to abandon calamity as an issue.

With imports running lower than they have for many years, due to the prostration of industry abroad and the conversion of many merchant vessels into supply ships for war vessels, the country is now, for all practical purposes, operating under a prohibitive tariff. The wall is one that war, not legislation, has erected. If any republican tries to tell you that whatever depression exists is due to the democracy being in charge of the nation's business, cite this fact to him—and you will wait in vain for an intelligent answer.

The New York Telephone company has reduced rates that will produce a saving of \$3,000,000 a year to the people of that city. A voluntary reduction? Oh, no. It was put into effect only after public-spirited newspapers had made a hard fight and the legislature was showing signs of taking a hand in the matter. Public service corporations have learned a good many lessons, but that of voluntarily doing what they should do is not included in the number.

The hand of Providence is seen in the affairs of this nation. If the Wilson administration had not pushed through congress a currency bill that gave a long-needed mobility to our banking resources, the European war would have laid waste the business area of this entire country. Under the system in vogue in past years this country could not have escaped the worst panic in its history, when Europe began calling for gold.

**THE DRINK BILL OF THE NATIONS**

The United Kingdom's liquor bill for 1913 was higher than in 1912, and the total for 1914 was above 1913, according to unofficial figures. The totals in 1913 and 1912 were:

1913 . . . . . \$833,405,000  
1912 . . . . . 807,766,650

In the latter year the expenditures on defense were:

Army . . . . . \$138,245,000  
Navy . . . . . \$239,290,000

Thus the drink bill more than doubled the combined army and navy expenditures.

It appears from the statistical abstract of the British empire, a government work, that the consumption per capita of spirits and beer in the last year under observation, 1909, measured in gallons, was as follows in the United Kingdom, compared with other great countries:

	Spirits.	Beer.	Wine.
United Kingdom . . . . .	0.70	26.2	0.27
Germany . . . . .	1.58	22.0	1.19
France . . . . .	1.32	7.9	34.5
Russia . . . . .	1.10	* . .	* . .
United States . . . . .	1.14	16.5	0.49

\*Not counted.

In 1913 the average expenditure per head for the year for drink was \$18.10.. The average per family of five was \$90.50.

The average per head is highest in England, lower in Scotland, lowest in Ireland.

The total consumption of drink, in gallons, in the United Kingdom in the year was as follows:

Malt liquors, gallons . . . . . 1,397,314,800  
Wines, gallons . . . . . 15,206,400  
Spirits, gallons . . . . . 40,078,000

The government revenue in 1913-14 from excise duties amounted in the United Kingdom to \$197,950,000.

For 1914-15 the duties are estimated by the government at \$198,250,000.

—From the Washington Post.

Attorney General Gregory epitomizes the new policy of the administration toward business in his brief in the government's case against the International Harvester company. It is, that growth which comes by combination is unlawful, but that which comes through better serving the public than a competitor, which is growth from within, is one to be encouraged. This is only another way of saying that government should forbid the exercise of any power to stifle competition while it should encourage that which encourages competition. Who questions the soundness of such a proposition?

Prophecies, even by expert financiers, rank little higher than those of ordinary individuals. When the war storm broke, everybody was sure that Europe would unload her American stocks and bonds in the New York exchange, and to prevent a panic the exchange was closed. It was re-opened under restrictions dictated by extreme caution, and the market is now open for the sale of securities. Yet England is paying the great excess trade balances against her with gold, and not even offering promises to pay in the future.

The jitney bus has been throwing a tremendous scare into the street car companies of the west. It is popular because it meets a need that was waiting to be filled. The great problem all cities have to wrestle with is quick transportation at small cost. The jitney may or may not be the answer, but it seems to be an intelligent effort toward a desirable end.

**TORIES PLAN TO NOMINATE REACTIONARY**

In an interview published in the Milwaukee Journal, Senator LaFollette of Wisconsin is quoted as follows concerning the plans of the republican standpatters for the campaign of 1916:

"It looks now as though the standpat republicans will endeavor to nominate a candidate of the most extreme reactionary type. They seem to have regained confidence in their ability to win, and to be planning a campaign along their own lines. President Wilson, I think, was stronger some time back than he is now. When the European war started, there was a general feeling of satisfaction that Wilson was president, instead of someone who might have embroiled us in this war. There has been a falling off in business since the war started, however, and, of course, the administration will be blamed by those who are not able to discern the real causes."

W. J. BRYAN.