# Cloture Coming

As the time approaches for the convening of the new congress increasing thought is being given to the question of cloture in the senate. It is only a matter of time until the rules of the senate will be so changed as to permit the majority to rule; the only question is as to whether the change will be made now or later. It is inconceivable that a senate, representing the people and elected by the people, will permanently subject itself to so undemocratic a rule as that which now permits a minority to force its will upon the majority. This is a reform administration coming as the culmination of a fight that lasted for 16 years. In 1912 the house stripped the speaker of despotic power and gave the house rules consistent with representative government. In 1914 the administration was given a democratic congress, and increased by three the democratic majority in the senate. It is now possible for the senate to take the last step necessary for the instituting of a thorough democratic government at Washington, and every reason, political as well as economical, weighs in favor of immediate adoption of a cloture rule which, while preserving freedom of debate and ample time for thorough discussion of questions and measures before the senate, will put it in the power of the majority of that body to close the debate whenever an attempt is made to obstruct the will of the majority. There is much remaining to be done-business which would have been completed by the former congress but for the minority obstruction which the present rules make possible.

It is easy to understand why reactionary members of the republican party objected to a change—because the natural result of the present rule is to prevent the enactment of remedial measures, but how can any progressive democrat, progressive republican, or liberal minded member of any party justify himself in supporting the antiquated rules by which a minority is able to determine what reforms shall be inaugurated? So long as unlimited discussion is permitted, the senate program is determined, not by those who want to go forward but by those who object to any change in the present laws.

The democrats of the country are praying that the senate will put itsel? in line with the progressive tendency of the times in the matter of rules and that it will do so at once, so that the second half of President Wilson's term may be even more fruitful in legislation than the first half.

W. J. BRYAN.

Separate the passengers from the ammunition and it will be easy to protect American citizens—and why not do so?

#### DESK AND CHAIRS

Those who are interested enough to make inquiry will find that it is customary for officials to purchase from the government pieces of furniture for which they have formed an attachment. Each cabinet member, for instance, takes the chair which he has used at the president's council table, paying therefore the cost of a new one. Mr. Bryan takes his, depositing for it \$65.00. He also buys his desk chair for \$50.00 and a desk for \$250.00—the cost of new furniture of the same character. The desk is the one used by him in signing the peace treaties. Is it strange that he is fond of it?

Whatever may be said about the wisdom of "preparedness" in the future, now is not the time to enter upon new schemes for the enlargement of the army or navy. We should, by self-restraint, set the old world an example; to imitate them would simply encourage them to go farther in the fatal folly that has involved them all in the present war.

### A FATAL FOLLY

To arm the nation to the teeth in preparation for wars that should never come, and expect such a course to preserve peace, is as absurd as it would be to give a dose of poison to a friend and expect it to preserve his life.

A democratic editor residing in the east desires to connect himself with some progressive democratic paper where he will have an opportunity to write in the spirit of progressive democracy. Further information may be obtained by addressing Dept. C, The Commoner, Lincoln, Neb.

#### REPLY TO AUSTRIA

The reply to Austria published in another column should end the effort to secure an embargo on munitions of war. The American note, after pointing out that such action at this time would be unneutral, adds a reason which will appeal to peace loving people, namely, that a reversal of the existing rule on this subject would require every nation to convert itself into an armed camp and prepare in advance against every possible contingency. It would tend to establish militarism everywhere. There is not the slightest prospect of the enactment of a law placing an embargo upon munitions of war, but it is possible to separate passengers from ammunition. This ought to be done and is quite likely to be done as soon as congress meets. Such a measure will be a protection to American citizens and American interests. All friends of peace should unite to secure such legislation.

W. J. BRYAN.

The Boston Transcript declares that intervention in Mexico two years ago would have saved many lives and much money. But it neglects to state whose lives and whose money would have been saved. In order to successfully intervene in Mexico it would have required the sacrifice of thousands of American young men and the wasting of millions of American money. Either course would have meant loss of lives and the destruction of property. President Wilson's course saved American lives and American money, and he is almost solidly supported in that position.

In a recent referendum taken by the United States chamber of commerce, composed of commercial bodies the country over, the proposition: "Do you favor subventions from the government to establish regular mail and freight lines under the American flag to countries in which the commercial interests of the United States are important and to American dependencies?" received 713 affirmative and 52 negative votes. Which means that business still has its hand out for government aid — and government aid means money contributed by the people of the country.

An example of the intelligent criticism of the democratic administration by the republicans is given in the declaration of Senator Sherman that the new tariff law is a failure because it has neither reduced the cost of living nor produced revenue. Every intelligent man knows that the war has suspended the tariff law for all practical purposes. Tariff-paying goods can not come into the country from Europe to produce revenue and without their competition prices of domestic goods will not be reduced.

A western newspaper declares that if the republicans desire to succeed in 1916 they must nominate a man whose record needs no defense and whose course during the Taft-Roosevelt imbroglio was such as to offend neither side. Which sounds logical, but it should be remarked that the opinion of western newspapers is not sought by the eastern party leaders. They think they must name a man to suit the New York press.

Congressman James Mann is being placarded by the temperance people as the liquor candidate for the republican nomination for president. But it is a fairly safe wager that he isn't the only one the liquor interests are backing. They never make the mistake of centering their strength on one man and thus centering opposition on him.

The jingoes are long on threats; they seem to forget that a threat, unless it compels acceptance of the conditions stated, means either a fight or a back-down. The belligerents are now engaged in war because their threats failed to scare.

## ARBITRATION BEFORE AND AFTER

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I have never been able to understand why it is more dishonorable and cowardly to settle a controversy by arbitration before the shooting begins than it is after a few hundred thousand men are killed in battle. Can you?—Ex-Congressman Vincent of Kansas.

## Neutrality Toward Both

On another page will be found an article from the London Morning Post (quoted by the American Press on August 4th) addressed to the American people. It begins: "We have been compelled as an incident of war in that struggle for national existence which we now are waging, to interfere with the commerce of America, in common with that of all neutrals, so as to prevent our enemy from obtaining from neutrals those articles necessary for the prosecution of the war."

Here is an ADMISSION that the allies are interfering with commerce between neutrals and the reason for that interference. The American people understand both the fact and the reason, and they also understand that Germany and Austria are doing the same thing for the same reason. Both sides are interfering with the rights of neutrals, and both sides give the same reason, namely, that they are in a struggle for existence and therefore think themselves justified in doing anything that may seem necessary to success. This is their interpretation of international law. We protest against this interpretation and contend that peace, not war, is the normal state, and that nations at war should respect the rights of nations at peace. Both sides reply by pleading NECESSITY- and "NECES-SITY KNOWS NO LAW."

But my purpose in calling attention to the above admission and excuse is to emphasize the fact that these interferences with our rights are INCIDENTAL; they are not intended and do not indicate unfriendliness. Neither tide desires to injure us—we are innocent bystanders and are being hit by the bullets which are being used by the belligerents against each other. This fact should be borne in mind for 'makes a great difference whether an injury is INTENDED. It would be bad enough to go to war with people who were enemies, and want to fight us—God forbid that we should compel any nation to engage in war with us AGAINST ITS WILL.

We are in duty bound to protect our people in the enjoyment of all their rights, but we are not at liberty to ignore the conditions which we have to meet; neither are we at liberty to put the interests of a few above the welfare of the many. We need not go to war with the allies in order to enforce commercial rights; if diplomatic means fall we can resort to the treaty plan, and if that fails we can postpone final settlement "ntil the war is over and then collect the damages sustained. Neither is it necessary to go to war with Germany. If diplomatic means fail we can propose the treaty plan; if that fails we can postpone final settlement until the war is over. In the meantime we can keep our citizens from riding on belligerent ships bound for the danger zone. Those who have any sense of duty or feeling of patriotism will voluntarily avoid risks that might embarrass their government; those who lack this sense of duty and patriotic impulses should be taught to pay some attention to their country's welfare. government can force a citizen into war, it ought to be able to force a citizen to keep out of unnecessary danger.

Neutrality requires that we take the same position toward both sides—we can not play favorites. Each side, quite naturally, would like to use us against the other side; Germany would like to have us put an embargo on arms because that would help Germany; and Great Britain would like to have us stop the submarine attacks for that would help Great Britain, but this country is neutral and can not help either side. Its motto is "America first," and by observing this motto it will not only conserve the interests of its own people but it will keep itself in a position to act as mediator and assist the belligerent nations to permanent peace.

W. J. BRYAN.

Don't worry about what you will do in Heaven; the God who made the earth can be trusted to create a Heaven for his creature. We shall be busy enough if we fit ourselves for the next world by doing our duty here.

It was Emperor Kuh of China (2435 years before Christ) who said: "No virtue is higher than the love of all men, and there is no loftier aim in government than to profit all men."