

The Commoner

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WRITE, WRITE NOW, WRITE OFTEN

Last issue contained the following:

"The tide in favor of a big army and a big navy has passed its flood; the ebb has begun.

"As senators and congressmen assemble in Washington they bring reports from the several states and congressional districts to the effect that the masses are opposed to frenzied preparedness. The scare that has been worked up by the representatives of munition factories has exhausted itself, and even the metropolitan papers are beginning to select the things that they will **INSIST** upon in view of the impossibility of getting all that they demanded. The newspaper estimates as to the strength of the opposition are increasing, but the danger is not past. The retreat has commenced, but the opposition must not be over confident.

"Every American citizen who is opposed to the proposed increase in the appropriations for the army and navy ought to write to his congressman, both of his senators and to the President. Individual letters are better than petitions because they indicate a personal interest, and a personal interest expressed by a constituent has its influence with a public servant.

"It will only require four letters, one to your congressman, one to each of your senators and one to the President — only eight cents worth of postage—to give to those at Washington the benefit of your views.

"Write, write now, and if one letter is not sufficient, write often.

"By acting promptly you may save yourself many dollars in taxation, and what is more you may save your country from the menace of militarism and from the danger of wars which will be provoked by a policy copied from Europe, and based upon the idea that peace can be built only upon fear and threats of force. Do not delay."

It is evident that a great many readers of *The Commoner* followed the advice given. The senators and representatives have been "hearing from home," and it is having its effect. In the beginning, the jingo papers spoke contemptuously of the "30 democrats" who would oppose the preparedness program. In a few weeks the estimate was raised to "50 democrats." The latest estimate puts it at "80 or 90," and now republican congressmen are beginning to speak out against increased appropriations and higher taxes. Let the good work go on.

Write again; write now; write often.

W. J. BRYAN.

Why Not Trust the Democrats?

Is it expecting too much of the President to expect him to trust the democrats in congress to share with him the responsibility of deciding for what amount of preparedness the party shall stand? This having been declared by the President to be the paramount issue, is it fair to ignore the democratic majority in both houses and ask republicans to help him force his views upon his own party? What reason has he to question the patriotism of democratic senators and representatives? Were they not elected by the same voters who elected him? And have they not stood by him in carrying out the pledges of his platform when republicans did their best to defeat his measures?

Now, a new question has arisen and, on the ground that the war compels it, he asks for the adoption of a military and naval policy which the leading republicans favored BEFORE the war, but which the democratic party has OPPOSED. Why does he, ELECTED BEFORE THE WAR BEGAN, discredit the judgment of the democrats of the house, all of whom were elected after the war commenced?

All of these congressmen, if candidates for re-

election, will be affected by the action taken on preparedness—do they not deserve to be consulted?

W. J. BRYAN.

Having seen the democratic opposition in the house grow from 30 to 90 in one month, it is not strange that the manufacturers of munitions insist upon immediate action.

Rush the preparedness program through in haste and repent at leisure seems to be the motto of the jingoes.

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The Sinking of the "Persia"

The sinking of the "Persia," which has brought to our over-burdened President a new embarrassment and to the jingo press a new opportunity to shed their red ink on imaginary battlefields, calls for immediate action by congress—NOT A DECLARATION OF WAR, BUT A MEASURE OF PROTECTION AGAINST WAR.

American citizens should not be permitted to travel on belligerent ships. Why should an American, by his foolhardiness, drag his country into war or even to the verge of a diplomatic break? If he has no consideration for his own safety or for his government's welfare, he should be restrained by law.

What would we think of a citizen who, in time of riot, insisted on mingling with the mob while the mayor was trying to restore order? Little attention would be paid to his RIGHT to walk the streets at such a time: he would be reminded of his DUTY to assist his government and his fellow men.

And so today, when the WORLD IS IN A RIOT, when Europe is a slaughter house and when the blood of the slain reddens the sea beyond the three-mile limit—this is no time for Americans to talk about the assertion of rights in