

Voice of the People Against "Preparedness"

A. J. Cone, Raleigh, Fla.: I have read The Commoner's first copy and all others up to now with only one break with it, and that was when Mr. Bryan resigned the secretaryship of state, and so wrote him at the time, but now we are in harmony perfectly on the subject of Mr. Wilson's militarism, as it is called by the jingo element, "preparedness." Prepare for what? It is a truism that a man or nation can be what he wants or it wants to be. If peace in either case, so it will be, if discord and harmony or war, it will be that; for like produces like. Only a fool would buckle a pistol belt around him and start out to propagate peace. What kind of peace would such a policy bring or set up? It would be the peace of the bully, the braggart, the assassin; and how would such a peace compare with the glorious traditions of the democratic party? If preparedness makes nations good, why not by law force every man in the United States to carry a loaded pistol in his hip pocket, instead of making it penal to carry one. Who shall we prepare to fight? Will it be the widows and orphans of the dead? Or will it be that the millions of departed spirits will line our shores from New Orleans to New York? Or will they drop down unseen from above in the center of our country and scare us all to death? for material weapons would be of no use to fight spirits. Perchance the one-armed, one-legged, the maimed and crippled soldiers would tackle us. What in the name of common sense has frightened the people and the President?

Edward D. Tittmann, Hillsboro, N. M.: I wish to congratulate you on your stand with regard to the preparedness cry of the munitions makers. I lived long in Germany, though my family has been resident in St. Louis since 1832, and I know that militarism or navalism is not conducive to the development of what we Americans believe to be civil liberty. We are not like European nations, no, not even like China, for we have no Japan sitting on our front door step.

Winter Russell, Editor The Democrat, New York, N. Y.: I have read with the deepest interest and approval your wonderful oration against "Preparedness," reported in the November issue. I have often wondered if you realize how many thousands if not millions in this country feel a sense of grateful praise and admiration for the noble struggle that you are making in the face of such unjust criticism and abuse. I can not help thinking that the Prince of Peace would weep indeed if he could see the land of freedom girding itself for years of bloodshed and carnage. I devoutly hope that no sad-faced martyr of the future will have to ask this country if it does not fear in its heart that it is paying in blood for the money it made from the implements of death sent to its war-mad brothers in Europe?

Robt. B. Pinkerton, Berdan, Ill.: I am a republican, living down here in the woods. A farmer (some good soul) has ordered The Commoner sent to me. I like its ring. Us farmers want peace, the kind of peace that the Prince of Peace offered to the world, in the way He offered it. We are not afraid of any Englishman or Dutchman on earth, but we wish them well if they or any other nation attack us. We will take a "slippery elm club" if we can't get anything better, and fight them till we die, but we don't want all the

CONGRESS SHOULD NOT ACT ON "PREPAREDNESS" QUESTION WITHOUT AN EXPRESSION FROM THE PEOPLE

Following is a letter addressed to Mr. Bryan by Mr. R. J. Stipe, of Plattsburg, Mo.:

"I most heartily indorse the stand you have taken for peace and against preparedness. I think when our President made that recommendation to congress he had been misled. Preparedness and High Protection are closely allied. CONGRESS SHOULD NOT ACT ON ANY QUESTION OF SO GREAT IMPORTANCE WITHOUT AN EXPRESSION FROM THE PEOPLE, and they had no opportunity to voice their wishes. I hope congress will not put this great burden upon our people. I believe that a majority of our nation is against it. I have written to our senators and congressman my opposition to it."

money we can scratch together spent for shrapnel and dreadnaughts. We propose to stay on this side of the Atlantic and attend to our business until the dog fight is over. I want to make this confession on my bended knees: I never voted for Mr. Bryan, and I want to make this promise while I'm down, that if I ever get a chance I will vote for him. I believe he is the greatest American now living, and represents the three greatest issues before the American people—Peace, Prohibition, and Woman's Suffrage.

Helmer M. Feroe, Minneapolis, Minn.: I am intensely interested in the great work Mr. Bryan is doing, and The Commoner is such a splendid co-operator with him in that work that I will do all I can in my humble way to put this paper into as many hands as possible. Mr. Bryan is absolutely right in his fight against so-called "preparedness." President Wilson will learn to his regret that the rank and file of the American people will not follow his lead for any such policy as he attempted to lay down in his recent message to the congress. Mr. Wilson has made an admirable president up to the present time, but he will be among strangers in this new and strange undertaking for boosting war stocks.

W. H. Meadow, Shaw, Miss.: I am sending you herewith a copy of "my mind" in regard to preparedness for war and "rural credits." I have mailed copies of it to members of the United States senate and congress, and hope it may be a "drop in the ocean" for good, in the encouragement of the work being heralded by the Hon. William Jennings Bryan and others who are making the fight for world peace and wealth building among our most needy citizenship.

T. R. Wells, Sauk Centre, Minn.: I am convinced that the opposition to the preparedness plan is growing in Minnesota. Most people I talk with call it a scheme of the ammunition trust. I believe if a vote in Minnesota was to be taken the proposition would be turned down two to one. You hear it in the hotel lobbies, on street corners, on railroad trains and anywhere that people meet, a common expression, "Bryan is right—he is a man we can depend on." Personally, I have been with Mr. Bryan since '96 because I believed he was the friend of the common people. Now I am stronger in that belief than ever.

R. D. Twinam, Chattanooga, Tenn.: I voted against you once but I have learned a great deal since then. Amid all this wild talk of preparedness for war, I wish to voice my approval of your stand as an advocate of peace and arbitration. It is inconceivable

that any matter can arise between nations which, diplomacy failing, can not be settled by arbitration than by any other means. The submission to arbitration of questions of national honor, etc., seems to give some of our statesmen much unnecessary difficulty, for if national honor means anything at all, it must mean a willingness to perform our duties and obligations, and of course a willingness to discuss and arbitrate them. This is written from a sense of duty and in the belief that a word of approval and of acknowledgement of obligation from an humble fellow citizen to one who has rendered courageous and valuable services to mankind, is not entirely useless.

Mr. N. N. Whittington, Red Lodge, Mont.: Enclosed find \$1.80 to pay for club of three yearly subscriptions. I wish to help all I can in this great fight against "preparedness."

George F. Smith, Waterbury, Neb.: I am glad indeed to know that The Commoner and its distinguished editor are making such a creditable and energetic fight against the so-called national preparedness. Every patriotic man in this country ought to combat this erroneous and uncalled for idea. It's a far-reaching scheme to squander the millions of the people's money that a few persons financially interested may become enormously rich. I therefore most heartily commend the vigorous fight you are making against it, and hope to see you continue to give 'em the hot shots to the end.

Sidney M. Cuthbertson, Mayfield, Calif.: I agree with Mr. Bryan and The Commoner on the question of "preparedness." Mr. Ford has the same idea and we are all in one accord. The democrats have hopes of success in California in the coming election. Enclosed find check for subscription. During the past year I obtained eighteen subscriptions for The Commoner.

L. L. Moore, Canton, Ohio.: I am in full sympathy with Mr. Bryan in his efforts for peace and for opposition to militarism. If our country would only talk and act peace and set its foot down on militarism, it might be able to get a world's peace out of the settlement of Europe's war. But we fear that if the present military scheme is carried through we will lose our influence for peace. Europe's "preparedness" was "to keep the peace," and we know how it has done it. Best wishes for Mr. Bryan and The Commoner.

J. L. Franklin, McKinney, Tex.: As to preparedness, we are all inflexible Bryan and Wilson men, and are going to strenuously urge the present administration for second term. Bry-

an has been so universally right on all questions that it makes us a little dubious about the President's preparedness proposition.

Joseph Fry, Warsaw, Illinois: I am a republican, but like hundreds of thousands of other republicans in this country I am with William J. Bryan in this army and navy program. When Mr. Bryan resigned from the cabinet I thought that he had made a mistake, but it was not long till I discovered that he had taken the right step. Mr. Bryan is doing now what he never could have done in the cabinet against this so-called preparedness subterfuge. If Mr. Bryan succeeds in his efforts to prevent this country from having a monarchial and un-American system fastened upon it, he will go into history as the wisest American of his day, and I sincerely hope that he will.

W. L. Cory, Dunrieth, Ind.: If I were to express my feelings, it would be to repeat one-half the sentences of the November issue—so I will not attempt it. Enclosed you will please find \$3.00 for club of five yearly subscriptions.

Fred A. Allen, Altai, Neb.: When Mr. Bryan resigned from the cabinet, I said "Bryan was secretary of state, but the secretary of state was not Bryan." There are many men who could fill the office of secretary of state, but only one the place of Bryan. It is infinitely more important that America have her great Commoner than that she have any particular man for secretary of state. Grateful as I feel to Mr. Bryan for past services in behalf of justice and in defence of true American ideas, I feel that in laying down the portfolio of state, he did it to perform a greater service to his countrymen than anyone since Lincoln has been called upon to do. May his strength endure and be sufficient to win this great battle. If the President has good reason for urging the adoption of the preparedness program, it seems to me that he has failed to take the people into his confidence. He had given good reasons against it, it is up to the makers of president and congressmen to see that their creatures act in accordance with those reasons, rather than the President's statement that the people want it.

Please find enclosed check to pay for club of eight yearly subscriptions, one two-year subscription, and also for a package of twenty-five copies of the December issue of The Commoner for distribution.

W. D. Vincent, Clay Center, Kans.: Enclosed find 50c in postage stamps for which please send copies of the December issue of The Commoner to the list of names herewith; this is your special rate of two and one-half cents per copy for The Commoner where it is wanted for free distribution.

O. F. Carpenter, Supt., Weston, O.: Christmas affords me leisure to write you my appreciation of what you have done since last May to save this nation from the mad insanity of fear, of hate, of selfishness that threatens to reverse the peaceful attitude of this country toward the other nations and peoples of the earth. I am grateful for the sacrifices you have made, the unflinching courage you have shown, for the calumny you have cheerfully endured to preserve those higher ideals in whose application to the affairs of men and nations rests the hope for permanent peace,