

Write to Washington

UNITY THROUGHOUT THE NATION IS IMPERATIVELY NECESSARY DURING THE WAR—DISSENSION WOULD BE DISASTROUS. WE MUST WIN—AND DIVISION AMONG US WOULD ONLY PROLONG THE WAR AND INCREASE ITS COST. Those who advised against entering the war should be even more anxious for peace than those who advised entrance into the war—and the shortest road to peace is the ROAD STRAIGHT AHEAD.

But this does not mean that the citizen shall cease to think or to have opinions. Neither does it mean that he shall not express himself, if he expresses himself in such a way as to aid his OWN COUNTRY and not the ENEMY. Ours is a representative government, a government in which the people rule THROUGH REPRESENTATIVES. The President, no less than congress, is a servant of the people. He is elected by the people, and the authority conferred upon him is conferred by the constitution—the people speaking through their organic law. The people are supreme. That is what democracy means—a government in which the people rule.

The people speak every four years when they elect a president; they speak every two years when they elect a new house of representatives and one-third of the senate. In November, 1918, the people will at the polls, declare their approval or disapproval of the government's course and conduct, but it is not necessary, or even wise, to wait until then. The citizen can make his views known EVERY DAY by approval or protest. In time of peace this is usually done through the press, but in time of war it is better to do it by communications addressed to the authorities at Washington. Protests published in the papers are apt to find their way to Europe where their importance may be so magnified as to do injury.

If you approve of the steps taken by the government send your congratulations—the officials will be encouraged. If you are not pleased, write to the President, to your senators and your congressman. They will be glad to know your views—they will be influenced by the sentiment of the country as it reaches them—they can not learn it in any other way.

DO NOT PROTEST THROUGH THE PRESS—talk directly to those who are entrusted with the carrying on of the war. Write.

W. J. BRYAN.

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

Why are not all cities beautiful? Simply because some of them lack a moving spirit. St. John's, Kansas, is a little prairie city, no larger or more favorably situated than hundreds of other towns in the state, and yet St. John's has a beautiful park in the center of the town, with an ornamental wall around it. It has trees, flowers, and lawn to make it attractive, and it has seats for the weary to rest upon. The Woman's club did it—it was the moving spirit—and the people, when appealed to, helped.

The result is that people who visit St. John's go away pleased, and hope for an opportunity to return. St. John's furnishes an example worthy of imitation.

NOVEMBER FIRST

The churches and temperance organizations of the country should prepare for the proper celebration of November first, the day the nation's capital goes dry. It will be well worth celebrating. There should be union services in the churches and exercises in the schools. It will be a great day for the nation when the white flag of prohibition is raised over Washington.

36 TO 12

The democrats in the senate stood thirty-six to twelve—three to one—in favor of submitting the prohibition amendment. Who says that prohibition is not a democratic doctrine?

Will the democratic party of the nation endorse the thirty-six or the twelve? The day of deliverance from bondage to the liquor interests is at hand.

The war is furnishing new arguments for peace. These arguments can not be used now, but they will be useful when the war is over. They will make another such war impossible.

A JUST COMPLAINT

There is a growing complaint against the law which exempts interest on war bonds from the income tax. The objection is not so strong on the flat rate tax, but the injustice becomes more apparent when interest on these bonds is made exempt from the surtax. This surtax rises to a large per cent on the big incomes, and the bigger the income the greater the advantage of this exemption. For instance, one who pays a twenty per cent surtax receives ten times as much benefit from the exemption as a person who pays a flat rate of two per cent. The result of this discrimination in favor of the holders of large incomes is likely to be the concentration of these bonds in the hands of the rich instead of their distribution among the masses. It would be wise to limit the exemption on future issues to the flat rate—it should not include surtaxes.

THE INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

On another page will be found the announcement by George A. Briggs as candidate for the Indiana constitutional convention. While The Commoner does not undertake to decide the relative merits of candidates, it is glad to publish the platform of a candidate who puts forward the initiative and referendum as the most important provision of the proposed constitution.

Mr. Briggs is right. The most important provision in the new constitution will be the fixing of the method by which it may be amended. The initiative and referendum puts the amending of a constitution in the hands of the people—the old constitutions, by requiring a three-fifths or two-thirds vote of both houses for the submission of an amendment, gave a minority the power to thwart the will of the people. The predatory corporations and the liquor interests are the principal opponents of the initiative and referendum BECAUSE THEY FEAR THE PEOPLE.

LET THE PEOPLE RULE—the best means of assuring the rule of the people is to be found in the initiative and referendum.

HERE'S TO SENATOR SHEPPARD

Senator Sheppard of Texas, the author of the prohibition amendment, is receiving congratulations on his great victory. He DESERVES congratulations. He has made a valiant fight and has won a notable triumph.

Here's to the brave young senator from the "Lone Star State"—may he live long and prosper!

NO TERMS YET

Three years of war—and no terms yet; millions dead and billions spent, and yet no terms. Do the European nations know what they are fighting for? If not, why do they continue the fight? If they do know, why do they not take the public into their confidence and say what it is that, being done, the world can have peace?

ONLY THREE

Only three senators from dry states voted against submission—against allowing their constituents to vote on a policy to which they, the constituents, had already committed themselves.

Only three: Hardwick, Hitchcock and Underwood, and, the more's the pity, they sit on the democratic side.

SEE WHO'S COME!

Ex-President Taft is now on the chautauqua platform, earning his income in a legitimate way. There will be no loss of dignity in meeting THE PEOPLE face to face. How different from his experience when he has been in the hands of standpat committees.

PORTO RICO GOES DRY

Porto Rico has gone dry by a vote of about two to one. Good for Porto Rico. The storm center of prohibition is in the United States—the agitation is moving north through Canada and south through Latin-America.

INDEFENSIBLE DELUSION

It is difficult to understand how any friend of peace can delude himself into the belief that peace can be aided by dissensions here. United action here will hasten peace.

Why Not Terms?

On another page will be found four statements which appeared in the morning papers of July 30, at the beginning of the fourth year of the war. They are:

1st—Sir Edward Carson's statement.

2nd—Statement by Paul Painlevé, French minister of war.

3d—Statement by Dr. Michaelis, German chancellor.

4th—Statement by Foreign Minister Chudenitz of Austria.

Three things stand out prominently in these statements. 1st. All claim to be fighting a defensive war—none admit aggression or desire for conquest.

2nd—All want a PEACE THAT WILL ENDURE.

3d—Each one regards the victory of its side as necessary to a permanent peace.

All that is necessary now is the one thing that has been necessary all the time, namely, a statement by each nation of that which it regards as necessary to insure a permanent peace. This is the very thing that our President asked of the nations before we entered the war, but none of them would then state terms. When terms are stated it may bring the war to an end. We have stated that our only desire is to make democracy safe. Now let the other nations state what they are fighting for.

W. J. BRYAN.

CAPTAIN SILAS M. BRYAN

At the close of the reserve officers training camp at Fort Snelling, Minn., August 11, 1917, Silas M. Bryan was appointed captain of infantry. Captain Bryan is an only son of Charles W. Bryan, associate editor and publisher of The Commoner. He graduated from the high school of Lincoln, Nebr., in 1911, and from the University of Nebraska with the degree of A. B. in 1915. He entered the law school of Harvard university in the fall of 1915, and had just completed two years of the three year law term when he made application and was accepted three months ago in the officers training camp. He has been assigned as instructor at second training camp at Fort Snelling for officers reserve corps. Captain Bryan is in his twenty-fourth year.

THE VOTE AGAINST PROHIBITION

Following is a list of senators who voted against Senate Joint Resolution No. 17, providing for the submission of a nation-wide prohibition amendment to the Federal constitution, which passed the senate August 1, 1917, by a vote of 65 to 20:

Democrats: Broussard, Culberson, Gerry, *Hardwick, *Hitchcock, Husting, James, Lewis, Phelan, Pomerene, Reed, *Underwood. Total, 12.

Republicans: Brandegee, Calder, France, Lodge, Penrose, Wadsworth, Warren, Weeks. Total, 8. Total against, 20.

*Represent prohibition states.

In order to make the punishment fit the crime a Canadian judge sentenced a bigamist to be placed in the front line of his regiment when it went into service. It was not stated whether this was done because the man requested it, or because he deserved a position of less danger than he had been accustomed to.

The food speculator and price hoister died hard in the hall of congress, but apparently he is dead. The duty the government owes to the people who are fighting in the fields at home is not a whit less than that it owes to the men who will do it in the trenches abroad.

A traitor is a man who is guilty of treasonable conduct towards his country. Treason consists in the doing of an overt act, which means in so conducting himself as to bring himself in armed opposition to the government. When you call somebody else a traitor be sure you know what you are talking about.

The number of men who know exactly what the government should do and what the duties of each individual citizen, are, seems to increase as the war goes on. No real concern need be felt, however, so long as they leave the fighting to be done by those who have undertaken to attend to it.