

The Commoner

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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Put none but ratificationists on guard. Democrats and Republicans everywhere should see to it that every candidate for the state legislature is openly pledged to vote for the ratification of the National Prohibition Amendment. Take no chances--- This is the supreme domestic issue until Constitutional Prohibition is secured.

Guaranty of Deposits Coming

Below will be found a recommendation made by Hon. John Skelton Williams, comptroller of the currency, in his recent report:

"I respectfully submit for the consideration of the congress the expediency and advantage of providing for the federal insurance or guarantee of all bona fide deposits in national banks where the balance to the credit of any one individual amounts to a sum not exceeding \$5,000.

"One of the beneficial effects of such a plan would be to bring out of its hiding places and into circulation the large amount of money which is being hoarded, and which the owners have been unwilling to place with any bank which is not guaranteed by the government. Such a law would also have the advantage of furnishing—particularly to the poorer classes, whose surplus earnings are represented solely by their savings deposits—a guarantee which would contribute greatly to their peace of mind and comfort. It would give them the assurance that their funds can not be lost by bank failure or by any financial panics. There have been too many cases where the failures of banks have brought ruin to hundreds of individuals and families and have sometimes driven men and women to suicide.

"By limiting the amount guaranteed to \$5,000 for any one depositor, we prevent the ably, efficiently, and honestly managed bank from being placed on the same competitive plane with the bank whose management is less efficient, or less commendable; for depositors whose balances

will amount to more than \$5,000 will necessarily exercise the same care and discrimination in the selection of their bank depositaries that they now use when there is no such government guarantee.

"It may be well to provide that only those deposits should receive the government's guarantee upon which the rate of interest is paid by the bank shall not exceed 3 per cent per annum. It is suggested that the government provide a fund to meet any losses which may arise under this guarantee by the imposition of a tax not exceeding one-tenth of 1 per cent per annum on the average amount of deposits affected by the guarantee, as ascertained by the banks' periodical reports to the comptroller of the currency."

Mr. Williams has made a great comptroller—none greater since the office was created—and this is his best act.

It will do more to bring savings out of hiding and to prevent bank failures than anything that has heretofore been officially recommended. The democratic platform of 1908 declared for a guaranty of deposits and five states have adopted guaranty systems, but this is the first official recognition the reform has received from the federal government.

The Commoner hastens to extend hearty congratulations to Comptroller Williams upon the signal service he renders the country in urging this security to depositors. The press should endorse the proposition with earnestness, and individuals should write their members of congress and senators to support it. Another great reform is on the way. W. J. BRYAN.

Following is the pledge of the democratic party respecting the guaranty of bank deposits, adopted by the democratic national convention of 1908:

"We pledge ourselves to legislation under which the national banks shall be required to establish a guaranty fund for the prompt payment of the depositors of any insolvent bank under an equitable system which shall be available to all state banking institutions wishing to use it."

The dries have already captured all the popular national melodies. They have "Yankee-doodle," "Dixie," "Old Kentucky Home," and "Maryland, My Maryland." The wets must content themselves with "Oh, How Dry I Am," and "We Won't go Home 'til Morning."

No War Cabinet Needed

The President is right in opposing the proposed war cabinet. It would be a confession that his cabinet had broken down and would give encouragement to the enemy. If such a measure passed it would be construed abroad as a vote of lack of confidence.

If the critics of the administration could win such a victory, they would immediately insist upon naming the new men, and would construe the vote to mean that the new men should be taken from among the critics.

In Great Britain the king must summon the opposition to form a cabinet; will the opposition take the public into their confidence and suggest the names of the new cabinet?

W. J. BRYAN.

The chief difficulty in Russia seems to be the establishment of a stable government. It is rather annoying to a well-meaning people to be forced to the necessity of sitting up every night with the government for fear somebody will unlock the stable door.

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THE ROLL OF HONOR

List of States That Have Ratified the National Prohibition Constitutional Amendment

- 1—MISSISSIPPI, January 8, 1918.
- 2—VIRGINIA, January 11, 1918.
- 3—KENTUCKY, January 14, 1918.
- 4—SOUTH CAROLINA, January 23, 1918.
- 5—NORTH DAKOTA, January 25, 1918.
- 6—MARYLAND, February, 1918.