

Commoner Comment.

Extracts From W. J. Bryan's Paper.

Why Not a Message, Now.

It is within the power of the president to assist in securing the election of senators by direct vote of the people. He has a right to urge, by a message to congress, the enactment of any measure which he regards as important. The house of representatives—a republican house—has without opposition passed a resolution submitting a constitutional amendment providing for the election of senators by direct vote of the people. This is the second time that a republican house has passed such a resolution, and two democratic houses have done the same.

There is no doubt that the resolution represents an almost unanimous demand on the part of the people. Does the president sympathize with this demand? If so, he has it in his power to aid in securing the reform. Will he do so? If he will send a message to the senate setting forth the reasons—and there are many—for the election of United States senators by popular vote, he will so focus attention upon the subject as to insure immediate consideration of the resolution, and consideration means passage, for even those senators who look to the corporations to secure their re-election will not stand out against an overwhelming sentiment like this. It has given thought and attention to questions of far less importance; will he remain silent on this great issue when he has such a splendid opportunity to give approval to a righteous demand?

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Reciprocity in Politics.

While the subject of reciprocity in tariff laws is being discussed here is another kind of reciprocity which should not be overlooked, namely, reciprocity between the people and their public servants. The people owe it to their public servants to commend and encourage them when they do well, and it is not only the privilege, but the duty of the people to condemn and rebuke officials when they betray their trust.

The public servant on the other hand, is under obligation to the people who elect him and to the party which he represents. When he becomes an agent of the party, he takes an oath that he will be honest and faithful. If he violates that oath he ought not to expect the people to be more considerate of his feelings than he has been of their rights. He should think out his course before he acts, and if he has received his price he ought not to complain if they pursue their remedy and select someone else to represent them. Why should a party support an official who has brought disgrace upon it by his unfaithfulness? If his devotion to his party is not sufficient to make him behave himself, his party ought not to be so devoted to him as to shield him from deserved punishment.

When a good official falls, his party cannot escape some censure even though the official's previous record was so good that the party's support is almost a matter of course. If a party cannot defend an official after his fall without assuming responsibility for his sins, neither is it incumbent upon a party to incur risk in defending a member of its party against the party's own verdict in court. Purity in politics requires not merely that officials shall be above suspicion. If upon suspicion let them step aside until the cloud is removed. When an official shows the first symptoms of that disastrous official disease known as "the itching palm" he should be quarantined until he is entirely recovered or until it is shown that he did not have the disease. If he has many men will prefer seclusion during the investigation and his vindication will be more complete when it comes, but the party by taking the suspicion upon itself will so weaken itself that it cannot afford to service its own even after vindication.

The democratic party has suffered occasionally because of corrupt officials in city, county, state and nation. As a matter of policy as well as a matter of principle it ought to make an example of every guilty democrat. It will be so doing with the confidence of the people and by warning democratic officials that punishment follows wrongdoing. It will lessen the number of betrayals. Let every honest democrat resolve to fearlessly prosecute every corrupt democratic official and thus make the party stand for public honor and fidelity to public interests. This policy is especially applicable to Pennsylvania politics. Even republican papers are open in their charges of corruption in high places and it is evident that some of the democrats have been besmirched by republican corruptionists. The party should be purged of these ungrateful and odorous misrepresentatives. Pennsylvania politics need purifying and the democratic party must purge itself of these rotten members if it expects to be a potent factor in the cleansing of the state.

The administration organs are explaining slavery in the Philippines. The explanation departments of the administration are kept working double shifts.

Governor Taft admits that there are 300,000 slaves in the Philippines, and that no effort has been made to free them. Perhaps some of the republican organs will tell us what Abraham Lincoln would say about this if he were alive.

Quite naturally all republican financial measures contemplate giving the banks increased control of the money supply of the country.

The reciprocity that is acceptable to the tariff barons will not be acceptable to the people at large.

It appears that Mr. Roosevelt's Minneapolis speech was uttered in his capacity as a literary man. A literary Mr. Roosevelt is quite a different individual from the chief executive, Mr. Roosevelt.

Perhaps you have noticed that Mr. Hill is not worrying half so much about the appeal to the supreme court.

The river and harbor bill covers a multitude of jobs.

Prince Henry's Visit.

Prince Henry, brother of the German emperor and representative of the German government as well as the emperor, has had an enjoyable visit in the United States and has seen a considerable portion of our country as well as a large number of our people. He has been treated with great cordiality and returns home with the assurance—if any assurance had been needed—that there is a feeling of genuine friendship between this country and Germany.

Insofar as the efforts of our people were directed toward proving the existence of false feelings those efforts were entirely commendable; insofar as they were intended to show hospitality toward the representative of a foreign government they were praiseworthy. Some may have felt an un-American terror may some day send our representative to the German legislature recently commented on the so-called democratic ways of the prince and suggested that they were purely for foreign consumption. It is entirely probable that he was more democratic here than he is at home, for here he was trying to please his host, but our envoys to the coronation will get even when they go to Europe, for they will doubtless be more democratic abroad than they would dare to be at home.

Let us hope that the visit of the prince will result in a long era of good will between the United States and Germany and that the German emperor, who long ago laid down a representative whose own achievements will enable the American people to do honor to him without giving cause for the suspicion that there is any demerit in democratic simplicity and democratic ideals.

Neutrality and the South African War.

When the Boer delegates called upon Secretary of State Hay, they were assured that it was necessary that the United States maintain a "neutral" attitude concerning the South African war. It is long ago that the government is permitting British agents to use its ports for the shipment of horses and mules to be used in Great Britain's war against the Boers. It will be difficult to condemn an intelligent man for taking an oath that he will be honest and faithful. If he violates that oath he ought not to expect the people to be more considerate of his feelings than he has been of their rights. He should think out his course before he acts, and if he has received his price he ought not to complain if they pursue their remedy and select someone else to represent them. Why should a party support an official who has brought disgrace upon it by his unfaithfulness? If his devotion to his party is not sufficient to make him behave himself, his party ought not to be so devoted to him as to shield him from deserved punishment.

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Literature in Ordinary Letters.

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CHANGE IN OPINION.

SENTIMENTS OF "THEODORE" AND OF "PRESIDENT" ROOSEVELT.

Official Position Has Made Considerable Difference in His Ideas Regarding Colonies—Presents of Chicago Chronicle Soundly.

Theodore Roosevelt, now President of the United States, once issued a book entitled, "American Ideas and Other Essays." In this book Mr. Roosevelt had considerable to say concerning colonies. Mr. Roosevelt's books may be obtained at any bookseller's counters to-day. If any one is interested to obtain the opinion of Mr. Roosevelt, the citizen, let him read the book referred to and he will find therein the following:

"At best, the inhabitants of a colony are in a cramped and unnatural state. At the worst, the establishment of a colony prevents any healthy popular growth. Some time in the dim future it may be that all the English-speaking peoples will be able to unite in some grand confederacy. However desirable this would be, it is, under existing circumstances, only a dream. At present, the only hope for a colony that wishes to attain full moral and mental growth, is to become an independent state. No English colony now stands on a footing of genuine equality with the parent state. As long as the Canadian remains a colonist, he remains in a position which is distinctly inferior to that of his cousins, both in England and in the United States. The Englishman looks down on the Canadian, as he does on anyone who holds his inferiority, and quite rightly so. Under the best circumstances, therefore, a colony is in a false position. But if the colony is in a region where the colonizing race has to do its work by means of other inferior races, the condition is much worse. From the standpoint of the race little or nothing has been gained by the English conquest and colonization of Jamaica. Jamaica has been merely turned into a negro island with a future, seemingly, much like that of San Domingo; and British Guiana, however well administered, is nothing but a colony where a few hundred or a few thousand white men hold the superior position, while the bulk of the population is composed of Indians, Negroes and Asiatics. Looked at through the vista of centuries, such a colony cannot do a state like Venezuela or Ecuador. The history of most of the South American republics is a long and bloody one, but there is at least a chance that they may develop, after infinite tribulations and sufferings, into a civilization quite as high and stable as that of such a European power as Portugal. But there is no chance for any tropical American colony owned by a northern European race."

What has happened to change Mr. Roosevelt's opinion? The policy of the administration contemplates keeping the inhabitants of the Philippines in an "unnatural state." According to the policy of the administration, the Philippine colony must continue in its present position until the time its present political and mental condition is such that it is able to take care of its own government.

But how different this is from the position which Mr. Roosevelt, the author, wishes to obtain for a colony that wishes to obtain full moral and mental growth is to become an independent state or part of an independent state.

According to Mr. Roosevelt, the author, the Philippine colony "is in a false position." Mr. Roosevelt, the author, knew that in order to become capable of self-government, men must undergo practical experience. He knew that, although a nation asserting sovereignty over a colony might postpone the governmental period, no people of the colony must undergo the same experience as that of a republic.

The statement made by Mr. Roosevelt, the author, concerning colonies, appeals to the intelligence of men; the position of Mr. Roosevelt, the President, does not commend itself to the student of history.

Mr. Roosevelt, the author, was mistaken; if the position of President Roosevelt is the correct one, then Mr. Roosevelt, the president, owes it to his countrymen to answer the arguments of Mr. Roosevelt, the author.—The Commoner.

Realizing on Its Victories.

Speaking of the proposition that the greenbacks be retired, the Chicago Chronicle says: "The only demand of that kind comes from those patriots who wish to serve their country and incidentally put money in their own pockets by issuing bank notes not specifically secured to take the place of the greenbacks." What right has the Chronicle to assign ulterior motives to the men who lay awake nights in the effort to preserve the honor and integrity of the country? Did not the people in 1896 and in 1900 declare in favor of the single gold standard and is not greenback retirement an essential feature of that policy? Why then protest against the carrying into effect of the popular will? Why deny to the national bank patriots the privilege of realizing upon their twin victories? Democrats can protest against the retirement of the greenbacks, but the Chronicle cannot do so consistently.

Old-Time Bogies Forgotten.

Notwithstanding the stubborn resistance of the Republican leaders in congress there is no mistaking the indications of a strong desire in the party for a revision of the tariff, lest the people should undertake the job in a way that would be fatal to the whole protective system. Thus far in the present contest for tariff reform not even Senator Stewart of Nevada or Representative Grosvenor of Ohio has mentioned the intrigues of the obdurate club to undermine the protective system with British gold.

A Blow at Influence.

The President's order against employees and officers of the government lobbying at Washington promises to strike in an unexpected place. For

IS TIME FOR ACTION.

OPPORTUNITY TO SECURE POPULAR ELECTION OF SENATORS.

W. J. Bryan in The Commoner Gives Good Advice to Democratic-Majority Clubs Not Always in the Right—Manufacturers Are Thinking.

A committee of the House of Representatives has reported favorably a resolution proposing a constitutional amendment providing for the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people. It must, first, secure time for consideration; second, it must pass the House by a two-thirds vote; third, it must receive consideration in the Senate; fourth, it must pass the Senate by a two-thirds vote. It passed the House during the Fifty-second, Fifty-third and Fifty-sixth Congresses, the first two being Democratic, while the Fifty-sixth was Republican. If it can be brought up for consideration there is no question that it will pass the House of Representatives, notwithstanding the fact that this Congress is Republican.

The sentiment in favor of popular election of United States Senators is overwhelming. Republicans as well as Democrats earnestly desiring the reform. Now is the time for the reform. Let every reader of The Commoner address a postal card to his member of Congress urging him to support the resolution and insist upon its immediate consideration. A few words will be sufficient; if several sign the postal card so much the better. The expense is trivial, but the result will be of incalculable value. Write at once; do not delay. Let your member of Congress know that you are watching him and that you rely upon him to represent you in this important matter.

Bankruptcy the Alternative.

The alternative of a sufficient reduction in the Dingley tariff rates on sugar is the bankruptcy of Cuba. As to this all are agreed. General Wood, President Palma, our own citizens doing business with that island join in this opinion. And we stand morally responsible for the security of the republic while the above mentioned intention is in effect. What the Republicans of the ways and means committee propose is nothing short of a national infamy.

Untaxing Beer and Tobacco.

The President, the secretary of war and the civil governor of Cuba insist that reciprocity is necessary to save Cuba's industry. Mr. Henderson assumes that the people do not favor such concessions to Cuba, and as a representative of the people he deems it his duty to respect the popular will. And yet Mr. Henderson has just repealed through the lower House a bill repealing the war tax on beer and tobacco. Did the people ask for that reduction?

Majority Rule.

A reader of The Commoner asks the question: "Is it to believe that the majority will always be right?" There is no reason to believe that a majority or a minority will always be right. There is, however, reason to believe that the rule of the majority is more apt to be right than the rule of a minority. Truth has in it such a power that a minority grows into a majority, but until it becomes a majority it cannot insist upon recognition. If a majority makes mistakes it must be remembered that a minority makes mistakes, too. And if the rule of the majority is substituted for the rule of the minority there may be any number of minorities warring with each other for the right to speak for the whole. If we deny to the majority the right to rule there is no basis upon which to build. If a minority rules it must be by force, for the moment it secures the consent of the majority it is no longer a minority.

Senator Dolliver's Position.

In his speech before the Iowa legislature Senator Dolliver said: "Nobody is any longer blind to the fact that with many of the industries in the United States the rate of duties which in 1897 were eminently proper have owing to the curious development of our commercial life, become unnecessary and in many cases absurd. They stand no longer on our statute books as a shield to American labor, but in many cases as a weapon of offense against the American market itself."

What will Senator Dolliver do by way of destroying this "weapon of offense against the American market itself?" Will Senator Dolliver acquiesce in "these absurdities," or will he exert his great influence to correct the evils?

Extravagance of Colonialism.

Extravagance seems to be inseparable from colonial administration. In time and labor, since the measure would have no chance of passage in the senate. This is doubtless true; and it is true because the senate is controlled by men who while nominally representing public really represent private interests.

No Honor for Congressmen.

There is no longer any reason why an intelligent and successful citizen should want to become a member of Congress in the lower House. Unless he be a man of conspicuous and unusual ability and can assume a position of leadership at the start he is unable to accomplish anything in Congress and is little better than an automaton voting machine, controlled and manipulated by party bosses.

Timid Leaders in the House.

If anyone inquires why it is that the senate has so greatly risen in popular esteem during the last ten years, while the house has sunk, the true answer will point to those timid and narrow-minded leaders of the house who have been so successful in making it a contemptible second in all great matters of national legislation.

What Grosvener Might Do.

Mr. Grosvener of Ohio is indulging in very just and proper denunciation of the shoddy makers, who oppose the bill to compel them to stamp all goods

WHERE HE GOT OFF.

Had Omenes Were Too Much for the Philadelphia Bar.

Detective George Fall of the city hall force was riding up town in a Thirteenth street trolley car last week when a colored man of his acquaintance came in and sat down in the next seat. After a brief chat the detective said: "Are you superstitious, Sam?" "No, sah," said Sam. "Well, stating the average duty collected by the United States on imported wools and woolens, which happens to be just about 70 per cent."

Manufacturers Think So.

The manufacturers who favored an imperial policy with the expectation that the Filipinos would be compelled to trade with the United States may lose their enthusiasm when they learn that the door must be kept open in the Philippines or it is likely to be shut in other parts of the Orient. The commercial advantages of a colonial policy may not be so glittering if we are to have no special advantages over foreigners in securing Philippine trade. Some of our manufacturers are saying: "If the trade agreement is so soon done for, what was it begun for?"

As to President Roosevelt.

The New York Tribune asserts that the Democratic press "misconstrues the meaning of" remarks that President Roosevelt engages in. Possibly from the Tribune's point of view and comment we do not "carry out Roosevelt's policy," it is not natural to suppose that our strenuous executive meant that he would carry it out in the back yard and throw it in the sewer, or in a hole, the Tribune's view of it.

Nobody Was in Command.

Admiral Sampson was not at the battle of Santiago. But what of that? The President says substantially that nobody was in command anyhow; that the captains were just sloshing about on their own hook. The President's decision has been set down as a rather shrewdly constructed document. It also invites analysis as a humorous production. It will not be taken seriously consideration by the ultimate historian of the war with Spain.

The Costly Philippines.

The inference from what Senator Bacon says is that the islands will cost us more than a \$1,000,000,000 before they are self-sustaining. In fact, their revenues ever become large enough to meet the cost of their government. As yet the value of their commerce to us is so small that it is hardly worth noticing. It will increase, of course, but to what extent no one can say with any degree of certainty.

Blind to the Storm Signals.

Speaker Henderson, blind and deaf as the rest, tells protesting Iowa merchants that the tariff must not be touched; that "it is more important now to reduce taxation upon ourselves" by cutting down internal revenue, apparently still adhering to the exploded notion that "the foreigner pays the tax." He and his kind unhappily dominating Congress pay no heed to the storm signals flying everywhere.

The War Revenue Bill.

Its wrong lies in the fact that the taxes that ought to be repealed are not internal revenue taxes, which are not burdensome, though the tax on tea is unjust, but customs taxes, maintained for the benefit of protected corporations. The bill is discreditable in the respect that it is designed to bolster up the tariff iniquity and prevent concessions to Cuba and the Philippines.

Cuba Should Be Reasonable.

Cuba must be reasonable. How can she expect that a tariff system that considers hardly anybody in this country except a few specially favored interests, is going to be benevolent or even fair to her? We certainly cannot blame Cuba for trading more with other nations and less with us when we consider the tariff laws that we have imposed upon her.

Why the Pledge Is Broken.

The Republicans in their national platform made the point that the territories should be admitted as states when they reached the standard of population. Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona have done so, but the tide in Congress has set in against their admission. The Washington Star candidly gives the reason—they are likely to go Democratic.

Explanation Due from McLaurin.

Senator McLaurin denounces as a liar the man who asserts that he was corruptly induced to vote for the Paris treaty. But he has never been able to satisfactorily explain to the democrats of South Carolina the suddenness of his conversion in favor of the treaty and the simultaneous fact that he became the dispenser of Republican spoils in his state.

Beet Sugar Growers' Concessions.

The beet sugar men are now said to be willing to make concessions to Cuba. That is to say, they are willing to make concessions of such proportions as will be of no practical value in putting the Cuban sugar industry on its feet.

An Absurdity.

"Suppose," said the friend who had been reading "Enoch Arden." "That you went away out on a sea voyage and came back to find that your wife had married another man?" "That's an absurd proposition," answered Mr. Meekton. "Henrietta would never be so careless with me as to let me go away on a sea voyage."

Population of Rome.

Under the emperors the population of Rome was more than 2,500,000. During the middle ages it was reduced to 14,000. When Victor Emmanuel made the city his capital it was 184,000; it in 1880 it had increased to 312,000; it in 1890 it was 451,000 and in 1900 it was 550,610. The estimated population in 1902 is 550,000.

The prattle of children is charming music when the little ones are your own.

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