

# The Commoner.

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## Republicans Prevent Discussion.

Since the adoption of the Reed rules the republicans have allowed but scant time for the discussion of important questions. They often bring up a proposition, rush it through the committee at break-neck speed, adopt a rule allowing a few hours for debate and dispose of it before the people at large know what is going on. When the Reed rules were adopted they were defended on the ground that they were intended to cut off filibustering, but they are now used to prevent the deliberation necessary to intelligent action.

While the democrats are powerless to secure sufficient time for debate so long as the republicans are disposed to deny their request they ought to register a protest every time an attempt is made to summarily dispose of important measures. The democrats have a right to demand a roll call and on roll call they can vote no, thus throwing upon the republicans responsibility for any unreasonable curtailment of discussion.

The time allowed for debate on the Philippine tariff was grossly inadequate, and in view of the time wasted by adjournments and recesses, the limitation was utterly inexcusable. Other bills will be pressed involving the welfare of the whole country, and the democrats ought to see to it that there is ample time for debate or at least compel the republicans to bear the odium that must ultimately fall upon those who prevent a thorough discussion of public questions. If the democrats agree to a rule which allows too limited a debate, they then share responsibility with the republicans; when they resist the rule they compel the republicans to bear the responsibility alone. A resolute and persistent opposition on the part of the democratic minority will force the republicans to give more time to debate than will be allowed if the democrats surrender their contention on the theory that a contest is useless.

No effort is useless which calls public attention to vicious measures; no debate is profitless which informs the public in regard to those measures.

## Cabinet Changes.

Last week The Commoner contained the following paragraph: "Postmaster General Smith has resigned from the cabinet and a shrewd politician wire-puller has been appointed to succeed him. The changes have commenced—Next!" After the paper went to press, but before it reached subscribers, another change in the cabinet occurred, and rumor has it that the friction between the president and some other secretaries is increasing daily. Already Long and Hay have been accused of entertaining a purpose to resign. In another column will be found the New York World's comment on Mr. Payne's appointment. His selection is not only surprising when we remember the president's reiterations about "civic virtue," but it is proof positive that the president is shaping his administration to secure a nomination at the hands of the next republican convention.

The postoffice department comes into contact with more federal officials than any other department and is the most influential part of the administrative machine. Mr. Roosevelt's anxiety to control this machine in his own interests has never been made so apparent before. Of course he will not withdraw Mr. Payne's appointment, notwith-

standing the severe censure administered by the World, but he is likely to alienate those who have boasted of his independence and courage, without conciliating those who look to Mr. Hanna for counsel.

The appointment of ex-Governor Shaw to the place made vacant by the resignation of Secretary Gage is evidence of his purpose to let the financiers have their own way in the conducting of the treasury department.

If there is anything bad in finance that Mr. Shaw has not indorsed it is because the matter has not been brought to his attention. He has been an ultra-gold man and an ultra-advocate of the doctrine that the treasury department should be run according to the wishes of Wall street. On the trust question he is entirely in harmony with the corporations. At the conference of western and southern governors called to consider the trust question, he was the only one who spoke of the subject in a flippant vein—the only one who dared to espouse the cause of the trusts. As governor of Iowa he has been the friend of the corporations. With him at the head of the nation's finances the ordinary every-day people who make their living by labor will receive little consideration. With the treasury department and the post-office department in the hands of Payne and Shaw, the president makes a good start toward controlling the next republican convention, if, of course, the officeholders and the corporations can control it.

## An Instance of Tax Dodging

One of the companies established to facilitate the organization of trusts has issued an interesting little pamphlet setting forth the advantages of New Jersey over New York. At the same time the pamphlet throws a side-light upon the motives of the republican governor of New York. It quotes the New York Herald of December 6 as saying: "It was in the hope of attracting aggregations of capital to incorporate in this state that the governor had the last legislature to pass an act liberalizing the corporation laws by reducing the organization taxes from one-eighth of one per cent to one-twentieth of one per cent of their capitalization, besides making additional exemptions favorable to concerns which obtain their charters here."

The Herald complains that even these concessions were not sufficient to induce the Northern Securities company to take out a New York charter, as New Jersey was even more liberal. The pamphlet says: "The laws of New Jersey governing the formation and management of corporations are so framed as to invite confidence and investment." In another sentence the pamphlet pays a doubtful compliment to the New Jersey courts, saying: "The judiciary of New Jersey is above reproach and corporations organized in that state are not subject to nonsensical attacks."

Any law or regulation that has for its object the protection of the public or the compelling of a corporation to bear its share of public burdens is always considered "nonsensical" by those who derive profit from favoritism shown great corporations.

As an illustration of the difference between New York and New Jersey the pamphlet says: "In the year 1899 the United Verde Copper company as a New York corporation paid to New

York city taxes to about the amount of \$34,000 on an assessed valuation of \$1,433,920, to which the court of appeals said one million more might properly have been added. In the year 1900 the United Verde Copper company, as a foreign corporation, paid to New York city taxes to the amount of \$235 on an assessed valuation of \$10,000. In each case the capitalization, assets and business of the corporation were the same. The difference in annual charges between \$34,000 and \$235 represents the net disadvantage of a New York corporation."

Instead of making the laws of New York more favorable to corporations organized there, why not make the laws more stringent in regard to the foreign corporations during business there? In the instance above cited the people of New York city lost nearly \$34,000 in taxes by a nominal change in the residence of the company, and the rest of the people had to pay a little more in taxes to make up for the loss.

The only remedy suggested by corporations and friends of corporations is to relieve resident corporations of nearly all taxation in order to induce them to remain in the state, notwithstanding the fact that such a policy would permanently increase the burden upon the small property holders.

When Tom Johnson wins his Ohio fight against the tax dodgers he ought to go to New York and give some lessons down there. Or, if Mr. Johnson cannot be spared from Ohio, probably Judge Owen P. Thompson of Illinois might go to the Empire State and with the assistance of a few school teachers bring the corporations to time as he has done in his own state.

## An Unjust Discrimination.

The postoffice department is discriminating against newspapers published in the interest of political reforms. The Challenge, a socialistic paper published at Los Angeles and later at New York; the Appeal to Reason, a socialistic paper published at Girard, Kansas; the Farmers' Advocate of Topeka, Kansas, and the Pawnee Chief, of Pawnee City, Nebraska, (both the latter antagonistic to republican policies) have recently been asked to show cause why they should not be denied second class rates. The postoffice department justified its action in regard to the Challenge on the ground that that paper was violating the following provision of the statute: "Provided, however, that nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to admit to the second-class rate regular publications designed primarily for advertising purposes or for free circulation at nominal rates." It was asserted by the department that the Challenge was the personal organ of its owner and publisher; that it was a vehicle for his articles on public questions, the announcement of his lecture subjects and their places and dates; the printing of those lectures or speeches after delivery; the printing of newspaper comment thereon, and also the printing of letters and invitations to speak and the replies of the editor thereto.

The department alleged that these things filled the columns of the publication; that it contained little or no matter which did not pertain to the editor, and that he confessed his intention to advertise himself, his sayings and his doings.

Whether the editor conducted his paper in a modest way or whether he unduly injected himself into his paper is not a question with which the postoffice department has anything to do. The