

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Vol. 2. No. 3.

Lincoln, Nebraska, February 7, 1902.

\$1.00 a Year.

Time For Action—Write at Once.

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, and, 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 again, notwithstanding the fact that this congress is republican.

The sentiment in favor of the popular election of United States senators is overwhelming, republicans as well as democrats earnestly desiring the reform. Now is the time for the voters to act. 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 inestimable 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.

"Dear Sir:

"I HOPE YOU WILL SUPPORT, AND URGE THE IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION OF, THE RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ELECTION OF SENATORS BY DIRECT VOTE OF THE PEOPLE. YOUR CONSTITUENTS HERE ARE IN FAVOR OF THE CHANGE. IF YOU ARE AGAINST THE AMENDMENT PLEASE LET ME KNOW WHY."

If each reader of The Commoner will send some such communication as the above to his member of congress at once, action will be hastened. If you have another postal card to spare write to Speaker Henderson and ask him to set an early day for the consideration of this resolution.

The editors of the weekly papers are requested to call this matter to the attention of their readers either by publishing this editorial or by presenting the subject in their own language. Concerted action will win. The readers of The Commoner alone might be sufficient to hasten consideration, but with all the readers of all the weekly papers writing to their representatives in congress there can be no doubt of success. Now is the time to act; send the postal card at once.

The Commoner, Condensed.

When the first year of The Commoner was completed I went over the files of the paper and collected the editorials which dealt with subjects of a permanent character, and these editorials are in the hands of the publishers. The book will be issued as soon as the work can be properly done and the readers of The Commoner will be notified when it is ready for shipment. Orders already received and hereafter received will be promptly filled.

In reviewing the work of the year I have been surprised at the ground covered, and have found it difficult to condense the material into a volume of

reasonable size. Those who have taken an interest in the paper and who indorse its general policy will find The Commoner, Condensed, a valuable addition to their libraries. I am glad that I have been able to secure its publication upon terms which enable me to offer the book at so low a price. Those who send \$1.50 will receive the paper for another year together with The Commoner, Condensed, bound in cloth. Those who send \$1.25 will receive The Commoner for another year with The Commoner, Condensed, bound in paper. (This offer is also open to new subscribers.) Those who have already renewed their subscriptions can secure the book in cloth for 50 cents or the paper-bound edition for 25 cents.

Exciting Times in the Senate.

Those who think that there is general acquiescence in the republican policy in the Philippines will do well to follow the debates in the senate. A few days ago the following dispatch was read before that body:

Manila, Jan. 24, 1902.—Both the civil and military authorities here deprecate the publication in the Philippines of Professor Schurman's Boston speech and the minority report in the senate on the Philippine tariff bill, which, they say, are liable to have a bad effect on the Filipinos.

General Wheaton, commander of the department of the North Philippines, says men have been sent to prison here for remarks such as those of Professor Schurman, and that if what he advocates was accomplished it would mean the expenditure of much treasure and the shedding of blood like water. Now, as before, he adds, 50,000 soldiers are required in these islands for at least five years. It will then be possible to form a government based on that of the colonies of Holland and Great Britain, they having proved the most successful managers of oriental races.

Comments upon the dispatch aroused a latent feeling that made the session extremely interesting. Senator Teller suggested that "anybody who would criticise the speech that Professor Schurman made at Boston would criticise the Declaration of Independence if he dared to." It was at first thought that General Wheaton had criticised the minority report upon the Philippine tariff bill, but a closer reading of the dispatch shows that General Wheaton only criticised the language used by Professor Schurman. It is to be hoped that later reports will acquit General Wheaton of having found fault with what Mr. Schurman said, for certainly the president of the first Philippine commission has a right to discuss the instructions given him by the president, and also to comment upon the sentiment which he found among the Filipinos. It is fortunate that the American people have a chance to hear from some one besides army officers, for while General Wheaton is one of the best of our army officers he is apt to consider everything from the soldier's standpoint.

A Postoffice Ruling.

The postoffice department has given out information in regard to correspondence which has passed between the third assistant postmaster general and the editor of The Commoner, but the newspapers have not accurately reported the action of the department. Objection having been made by outside parties to the action of the editor of The Commoner in sending the paper free to certain democratic and fusion members of the senate and house who had not subscribed for the same,

the case was submitted to the postoffice department with a request for a ruling thereon. Mr. Madden's answer not being sufficiently explicit the following further inquiry has been submitted:

Lincoln, Neb., Jan. 31, 1902.

Hon. Edwin C. Madden, Washington.

Dear Sir: I am in receipt of your favor of January 25th, but it does not give a direct answer to the question which I submitted. You say that in case of a bona fide gift a person may subscribe for another, and yet in your ruling you seem to place a limitation upon this provision of the law, namely, that a person is not allowed to subscribe for another, even as a bona fide gift, when the subscription is made because of the doctrines advocated by the paper. Is it incumbent upon the proprietor of a paper to inquire into the reason for a subscription when the subscription is received?

You state in another paragraph that "no objection has been made to a publisher sending a few complimentary copies," but you add that from what is said in the letter it will not be difficult for me to "differentiate." The number of copies sent to members and senators is small compared with the circulation, and I would like a construction of the word "few" in this connection. Does it mean "few" absolutely, or "few" relatively? If a publisher having a circulation of one thousand is permitted to send ten complimentary copies, would a paper having a circulation of one hundred thousand be permitted to send one hundred times ten?

The copies which I have sent complimentary do not amount to one-half of 1 per cent of the total circulation. I ask, therefore, for a ruling that will enable me to comply with the wishes of the department. If one-half of 1 per cent does not exceed the "few" permitted by your ruling, my list is not subject to criticism. If the term "few" is not relative, but is intended to cover some fixed number, please let me know the number in order that I may either discontinue those in excess of the number or pay pound rates upon them.

Appreciating your prompt reply, I am, very truly yours,

(Signed)

W. J. BRYAN.

As soon as the department construes the word "few" I shall know whether the free copies sent to senators and members are entitled to be mailed at second-class rates. The ruling, however, whatever it may be, will have no effect upon the general circulation of the paper. The copies mailed to members and senators who are not regular subscribers constitute an inconsiderable part of the circulation, and it will not be a great drain upon The Commoner's exchequer if they must be paid for at pound rates. They are sent because The Commoner is constantly discussing questions involved in national politics and often quotes from authorities that might not otherwise be brought to the attention of our legislators.

The only part of the controversy that concerns the general public is the ruling which takes out of the legitimate list of subscriptions those made by one person for another when the person subscribing for the other does so because of "the principles advocated." To class such subscriptions with those made in the interest of an advertiser is not only illogical, but absurd, and opens the door to grave abuses. This ruling ought to be corrected by act of congress and the weekly papers throughout the country should bring the matter to the attention of their congressmen and senators.

Money in Politics.

Among the criticisms made by reorganizers against the democratic national committee, one of the most prominent is that it failed to collect a sufficient campaign fund. Just prior to the cam-