

to their good judgment to determine whether they trespass beyond the bounds of the "limited number" contemplated by the ruling.

Personal "interest" in the circulation of "gift" or "complimentary" copies of second-class publications—either in the advertisements or subject matter—vitiates their character as such and renders them unmailable at the pound rate of postage. Yours respectfully,

EDWIN C. MADDEN,

Third Assistant Postmaster General.

The postoffice department gave out a statement to the effect that a part of *The Commoner's* circulation had been condemned. It will be seen from the above letter that the department not only has failed to condemn any part of *The Commoner's* circulation, but has given conclusive proof of the political bias of the man who occupies the important position of third assistant postmaster general and acts as a censor over the newspapers of the United States. Instead of laying down rules for the guidance of the proprietors of newspapers, he deals in generalities and innuendoes. If any definite conclusion can be drawn from the first paragraph of his letter, it is that when a subscription is made by one person for another it is not incumbent upon the proprietor of a paper to inquire WHY the subscription is made. This makes it possible for a reader of *The Commoner* to send the paper to a friend "because of the doctrines advocated," but in sending in the subscription he must be careful not to inform the editor that this is his reason for subscribing. If he likes the news columns of the paper, or if he is interested in any department of the paper except the editorial department or has any other motive that is considered laudable by the third assistant postmaster general, he need not fear to state it. But if he is interested in the Declaration of Independence, or in the overthrow of the trusts or in preventing Wall street domination of the treasury, or if he wants a third assistant postmaster general who is more interested in enforcing the law than he is in advancing the interests of the republican party, he must carefully conceal the fact from the editor, so that the editor will be ignorant of any individual or combined effort to extend the circulation of the paper. This protection, however, may not be complete, for if Mr. Madden suspects that a subscriber is trying to further the "personal ends of the individual or combination, whether the purpose of such circulation be financial advantage or otherwise," there may be trouble yet.

The editor of *The Commoner* is in favor of constitutional liberty. He feels that he has a personal interest in that subject. He also feels that his children have a personal interest in the subject, and just now the paper is devoting a good deal of time to opposing imperialism. If *The Commoner* can aid even to a small extent in the rescue of this nation from the greedy, mercenary and destructive policy supported by Mr. Madden and his employers, then the editor of the paper will feel that he has derived a personal advantage of no small proportions. The fact that he believes that the advantage would be shared by all liberty-loving people everywhere, does not prevent its being a personal advantage to him. The editor of *The Commoner* believes that he will derive a personal advantage from the overthrow of the trusts—not an advantage enjoyed by him alone, but an advantage shared by the great majority of the people of the country. Does Mr. Madden regard this as a personal end in the sense in which he uses the term? Likewise the editor of *The Commoner* is personally interested in the return of the government to its old foundations, and in greater simplicity and economy in its administration. Of course this advantage, while personal to each citizen, will be shared by all citizens. Does Mr. Madden regard this as an unlawful or prohibited personal end?

The postoffice department has been fully informed of the reasons which led to the establishment of *The Commoner*. That purpose has been

clearly proclaimed and repeatedly reiterated. *The Commoner* was established primarily for the advocacy of democratic principles, for the discussion of public questions and for the advancement of governmental, social and economic reforms. The paper contains a home department, a news department, a forum for the reproduction of editorials which appear in other weekly papers and a department wherein current events are discussed in a lighter vein; but all of these departments are subordinate to the general purpose of the paper. Is there any law which discriminates against such a paper, and if there is not, what right has Mr. Madden to make rules which condemn what the law permits? Has not such a paper as much right to second-class mail privileges as a paper printed solely for the purpose of disseminating news?

Mr. Madden has virtually withdrawn his objection to the complimentary copies sent to certain senators and members of congress, for he says that "the practice" of sending complimentary copies "has obtained for many years," adding that "the department, believing the publishers of legitimate publications could not afford nor be willing to unduly exercise the privilege, has left it entirely to their good judgment to determine whether they trespass beyond the bounds of the 'limited number' contemplated by the ruling."

There is the ruling, and the publisher of *The Commoner* (unless Mr. Madden holds that *The Commoner* is not a "legitimate publication") will continue, in the exercise of his judgment, to send complimentary copies to those fusion and democratic members of the senate and house who are not regular subscribers.

Mr. Madden suggests by way of qualification that "personal interest" in the circulation of "gift" or "complimentary" copies of second-class publications—"either in the advertisements or subject matter—vitiates their character as such and renders them unmailable at the pound rate of postage."

If Mr. Madden means to say that the editor of *The Commoner* has any such interest in the sending of these complimentary copies as would "vitate their character and render them unmailable at the pound rate of postage," he will have to come out into the open and say so. And while he is ruling on the subject of "personal interest," might it not be well for him to define the personal interest which he, as a republican politician, has in preventing the circulation of a democratic paper? If there is any law which justifies him in using his position to advance his own personal interests or the interests of the party through whose aid he draws his salary, let him quote the law and the editor of *The Commoner* will undertake to secure its repeal.

Mr. Madden mistakes his location as well as his vocation. He imagines that he is in the Philippine islands enforcing arbitrary laws for the protection of the military situation, whereas he is simply a federal official, appointed for a limited term, to administer a subordinate department of the postoffice department and to enforce the laws according to their tenure and purport. His endeavor to inject a stump speech into official communications shows that he does not fully appreciate the dignity of his position or the duty of an official.

### Who Saved Us?

There is a touch of humor in the very serious controversy now going on as to who saved the United States from European interference during the Spanish-American war. It was insisted that we ought to send envoys to the crowning of Edward VII. as a token of our appreciation of the influence which England exerted in our behalf while the Spanish-American war was in progress. Then, when Prince Henry planned his visit to the United States we began to hear of Germany's great friendliness in 1898. The controversy has waxed

hot between English papers and German papers, and between English statesmen and German statesmen. Each nation has endeavored to show not only that its own attitude was exceedingly friendly, but that the other nations would have been glad to give us trouble.

Among the documents brought out by the controversy is a communication addressed by Count von Buelow, then secretary of state, to the German emperor, transmitting a telegram from Dr. von Hollenben at Washington. It was dated April 15 and reads:

The British ambassador today took the initiative in a very remarkable manner in a new collective step of the representatives of the powers here. We suppose the queen regent made representations to the queen of England. In this sense the six representatives, at the request of the British ambassador, are telegraphing to their governments in the sense which follows:

"In view of the attitude of congress no hope of peace can any longer be sustained and the general opinion is that the powers also would have no objection to war. A good basis for fresh negotiations appears to be afforded by the note of the Spanish minister, April 10. If this view is shared by the governments it seems advisable to dispel the erroneous notion here that armed intervention in Cuba meets with the support of the civilized world. (The president, in his message of December, said it was only in that case that he desired intervention.) The representatives of the powers here think in these circumstances that the great powers might direct the attention of the American government to the Spanish note of April 10 and might declare that intervention did not appear to them to be justified. This declaration might take the form of a collective note from the powers to the representative of the United States. Such a document would produce a greater impression and the representatives of the powers here would not then incur the risk of appearing only to repeat their first step which the president, in his latest message, has not even deigned to mention. In the event of an identical note being decided upon it would be advisable to publish it at once in order that the civilized world, to whose authority the appeal is made, may be absolved from reproach in approving of this attack."

Dr. von Hollenben added for himself: "Personally I regard this demonstration somewhat coldly." The emperor upon reading it made the following marginal note: "I regard it as completely purposeless, futile and therefore prejudicial. I am against this step." Dr. Hollenben subsequently forwarded the text of the collective telegram as originally submitted by Lord Pauncefote to the other foreign representatives for communication to their governments.

These documents certainly make out a pretty strong case against the English ambassador and in favor of the German ambassador and the German emperor, but Lord Cranborne rushes to the rescue and in reply to a question in parliament declares that what Lord Pauncefote did, he did as "dean of the ambassadors at the verbal suggestion of some of his colleagues," and that whatever opinions were expressed by Lord Pauncefote during the discussion were "personal to him and not pursuant to the instruction from her majesty's government." It is also asserted that her majesty's government on receipt of the communication at once objected to the proposed action as "injudicious." And so the matter stands. But is it, after all, very material which nation was most friendly, or whether either nation was unfriendly? If other nations had joined in a protest it would have been purely a diplomatic one. There is no evidence that any of them would have cared to interfere or that all of them together would have had any disposition to attempt to restrain the United States. Nations always do that which they think will in the long run be best for themselves, and it is folly to expect that any European nation is going to injure itself in order to befriend the United States, and if European nations do what is best for them, they are not entitled to any great amount of gratitude, even although in some par-