

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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To the Editors of the United States.

In The Commoner of February 21, I called attention to the fact that the House of Representatives had for the *fourth time* passed a resolution proposing a constitutional amendment providing for the election of United States Senators by a direct vote of the people. All readers of The Commoner were asked to write to their senators urging them to support the resolution. The Commoner has a circulation of 100,000 and a still larger number of readers, but these constitute but a small fraction of the people of the United States, and this reform is one that appeals to *all the people*. All editors who desire the submission of this amendment—and a large majority of the editors, republican as well as democratic and populist, desire it—are invited to make a similar request of their readers. The sentiment in favor of this change is so overwhelming that the senate ought not to require urging but experience shows that it does require it. A similar resolution has already been smothered by the senate three times and this resolution will meet a like fate unless public sentiment compels action. The Commoner is not seeking advertisement, it is seeking reform. You need not mention The Commoner's appeal. If you prefer to do so, make it *your own appeal* to your own leaders, but make the appeal at once. One million postal cards sent to the senators will insure the passage of the resolution and it will be an easy matter to secure that number if the editors of the daily and weekly papers will present the matter to their readers.

Will you make this effort? Will you prove the power of the press to advance the interests of the people?

W. J. BRYAN.

Imperialism Still an Issue.

Walter Wellman, the Washington correspondent of the Chicago Record-Herald, writing to his newspaper under recent date, says:

What is to be the future of the Philippine islands? Is the United States to hold them indefinitely, or is it to give them a promise of ultimate independence?

There is no disguising the fact that this is now the burning question in American politics. As far as now can be foreseen, it is to be an issue between the two great parties. Most people here supposed the question was settled by the presidential election of 1900 and the state elections of the following year. But it appears that it is not so. The question is up for discussion. It is being discussed. It is sure to attract a large share of public attention in the future.

Mr. Wellman points out that with respect to this issue the republicans are at a disadvantage. He says that while there is some division among republicans "the advanced expansionists believe that a solemn declaration to the effect that the United States will never grant the Filipinos their independence would be a great help in suppressing the insurrection." But according to Mr. Wellman, "the great trouble is that the national convention of the party is the only authority that can declare a policy of such transcendent magnitude. Therefore the result so far as congress is concerned is likely to be republican drifting and democratic assaults upon their rival's propositions."

It seems strange that republican leaders and republican newspapers do not realize the utter futility of imperialistic declarations. The republican congress may legislate and legislate; the republican national convention may resolve and resolve; and yet if the Filipinos aspire to liberty all this legislation and all these resolutions will have not the slightest effect in changing the current of Filipino thought and action. Every school boy in the land is familiar with the speech of the great English statesman wherein he likened the

attempt to fetter the step of freedom in America to an effort to dam up the waters of the Nile with bullrushes. This was true of England in its course toward America. It was true of Spain in its attitude toward the people of the Philippines. The republican leaders of this country will find that once the seed of liberty has taken root among the people nothing short of a realization of their honorable aspirations will satisfy those who assert the inalienable rights bestowed by God upon man.

Stifling Discussion.

The Chicago Record-Herald is responsible for the statement that Speaker Henderson and his lieutenants fear that Mr. Babcock and other republican congressmen will stand with the democrats and force consideration of the proposition to remove the tariff from the products of certain trusts. In order to avoid this danger to republican interests, the Record-Herald says the republican leaders have prepared a petition which is being circulated among the republican members of the house addressed to the committee on rules, asking that committee to bring in a rule which shall make it impossible for the house to consider tariff revision at the present session. The petition asks the committee to declare it out of order for anyone to offer as an amendment to any bill, any proposition involving a revision of the tariff schedules.

This is an interesting statement concerning the house of representatives, a body that is presumed to be thoroughly representative of the people. If a mere committee can prevent the consideration of any measure, if a mere rule can deny to a representative of the people the privilege of offering an amendment to pending measures, how can any one hope that the public interests can possibly be advanced by any legislation that may come before a republican congress?

And yet under republican rules this power is vested in a committee which is the creature of the

speaker and practically a speaker can, not only prevent the passage of any measure to which he is opposed, but he can prohibit either the discussion of or an amendment to any pending measure. Even the Chicago Record-Herald admits "such a proposition is unusual, unheard of; it has never been attempted in the memory of the oldest members. To make it out of order to suggest tariff revision, to remove the power of the house to even consider such bills if a majority so wish, is wholly unprecedented."

Another Plank Vindicated.

In one of the reports made by the industrial commission appears this suggestion: "The injunction is a high prerogative writ and should be awarded only after a most careful examination by a tribunal thoroughly competent."

Commenting upon this the Chicago Record-Herald, that eminent republican organ, admits that "Many cases have occurred, undoubtedly, where judges have hastened to interfere in labor disputes by injunction when a settlement should have been left to the police authority and ordained processes of law." It refers to "the craze for injunctions" and declares "Judges have attempted to exercise the executive and legislative functions of government by their extraordinary writs," and adds:

It is clear that such a common use of the injunction is offensive to our institutions and that the judicial effort to anticipate and prevent the action of a legislative body is a direct infraction of one of the essential principles of our government. Unless the writ is reserved for great emergencies in which there is no other recourse the danger of "government by injunction" is not the imaginary creation of a party platform, but a very real danger which should not be tolerated by the people.

The Record-Herald warns the judges to "remember that, like the rest of us, they are the servants of the law, not the masters."

This is a strange statement to come from a re-