

The Commoner.

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THE SHIPPING SUBSIDY BILL.

On another page will be found the full text of the ship subsidy bill as it passed the senate, except that a few amendments were accepted by the committee, the following being the most important ones: That contracts made under the act shall not extend beyond July 1, 1920; that not more than five million dollars shall be spent in mail subsidies in any one year before July 1, 1907, and not more than eight millions in any year after that date; that congress reserves the right to amend or repeal the law; and that foreign-built ships shall not be subject to registry for the purpose of receiving subsidy. Several important amendments intended to protect the public were voted down.

It is gratifying to know that every democrat, populist and silver republican voted against the bill and scarcely less gratifying to note that six republicans, Allison and Dolliver of Iowa, Proctor and Dillingham of Vermont, and Spooner and Quarrels of Wisconsin, voted with the democrats.

It is estimated that about five millions will be spent on ships now in existence and the amount will be increased if more ships are built. The present expenditure will be about equally divided between the Atlantic and Pacific lines and one company, the International Navigation company, will, according to Senator Vest, receive 73 per cent of the entire amount paid on Atlantic steamers. The senator denies that England subsidizes her freight vessels and asserts that the tramp steamers which have the bulk of the carrying trade have never received aid from the English government. The ship subsidy is not intended for the farmer, laborer or merchant, neither is it intended for the ship-builder. It is intended for a few wealthy ship-owners who have influence enough to secure enormous contributions from the public treasury and they will be expected as a return to contribute to the republican campaign fund. The republican party is adding one more to the list of assessable interests and the taxpayers will contribute indirectly to a corruption fund already so large that the republican committee paid back a considerable sum to the trusts after the last election. Unless the people are very blind to their own interests and very indifferent to what is going on in congress, the republican party will in the coming election suffer severely because of its subserviency to the great corporations that are so bountifully provided for out of the public treasury.

Democracy Growing in England.

The president's special envoys to witness the coronation of the king will be shocked to learn that there is a paper in London called Reynold's Newspaper (and it has a growing circulation) which is helping to organize a democratic league in that country. A recent manifesto concludes as follows:

To Caesar we appeal. We ask the people to assist us in arresting the decay of this ancient land and people. Behold, from his lonely furrow the ploughman looks up inspired by a new hope. The "hands" of industry are animated with the expectation of becoming hu-

man beings. The voice of the people drowns the roar of the machine Moloch, and the breed of human microbes—the crawling things of stock exchange and the parasites of society—decay and die. Come into the sunshine and drink anew of the wine of life. The desperate struggle for existence gives no one time to live. The masses are sinking deeper and deeper, day by day, into the iron grip of economic slavery. A Venetian oligarchy is all supreme, fooling an ignorant populace to the top of their bent. But the skies are charged with thunder, and God's lightnings threaten to burst upon the conspirators who have taken the base advantage of their position to delude a credulous people. Arise, men of England, and enter into the possession of your own estate—the land of your nativity, the nation you have built up, the country that is yours.

If the editor of the New York Tribune happens to pick up a copy of Reynold's Newspaper during his royal visit to England he will be surprised to find that democracy is growing in England while plutocracy and aristocracy are growing among the leaders of the republican party in the United States.

THE SENATE MAY OBSTRUCT.

A brief visit to the national capital convinced me that there is great danger that the senate will try to obstruct if not defeat the resolution, four times passed by the house, proposing an amendment providing for the election of senators by a direct vote of the people.

Senator Berry called the matter up a few days ago and Senator Hoar made a violent attack on the proposed change. He seemed to fear that the direct election of senators would bring that body into too close touch with the people. And with whom, or with what, should the senate be in touch if not with the people? Is it not a little inconsistent that he should be willing to trust the Filipinos with self-government and yet not willing to trust American citizens with the selection of their representatives in the United States senate? Another republican senator who owes his election to railroad influence and whose state legislature declared for the reform by an overwhelming vote, said that he was not sure that he would support the resolution. It looks as if some of the senators are willing to defeat what they know to be the will of the people on this subject rather than risk their chances of re-election before the people. It behooves all friends of the resolution to write to their senators at once. The people of Massachusetts are especially urged to act. Senator Hoar ought to be shown the strength of the popular demand. What right has he to a place in the senate except as a representative of the people of his state? If governments rest upon the consent of the governed, why not secure the consent by direct vote rather than seek it through an intermediate body that may—and often does—misrepresent the people? No one who believes in free government will hesitate to trust the people to select their public servants and a man who is afraid to trust the people ought not to expect the people to trust him.

Knowing something of the corporate influences which are at work against this reform I am led to renew the request that all readers of The Commoner write to their senators immediately unless their senators have publicly expressed themselves in favor of the resolution. If a senator ignores your letter, write again. If he opposes the resolution or is doubtful, argue the question with him. Don't delay—write now.

COMPLETE SUR- RENDER DEMANDED

The New York Times has constituted itself the special champion of the reorganizers and is lamenting because "Mr. Bryan will use his strength and the numerical strength of his following to defeat democratic reorganization." The editor of the Times with an "I-thank-thee-that-I-am-not-as-other-men" air speaks of "the immoral professions which the democratic party was led by Mr. Bryan to make." The Chicago platform was not the work of Mr. Bryan or of any one man. While the silver plank was copied from the Nebraska platform it was adopted by democratic primaries, county conventions and state conventions and it was so adopted before any large number of democrats thought of Mr. Bryan being a candidate. The Nebraska silver plank was not copied because Nebraska had adopted it, but because it expressed what the democratic party wanted to express. It is not Mr. Bryan that the Times should fear, but the people who join him in democratic principles. The Times is one of the papers that helped to elect Mr. McKinley, and now it offers to assist the democrats if they will only accept a republican platform. It is not willing to make any compromise—it demands a complete surrender on the part of those who have supported the platforms of 1896 and 1900. It complains that Mr. Bryan "will not meet them (the reorganizers) half way, and even if he would, to meet him half way would be fatal to their purpose." What is this but saying that reorganization would be a failure unless the democratic party went over half way toward the republican position on public questions? When The Commoner calls attention to such editorials as the one above referred to it is not for the purpose of disturbing harmony—for the reorganizers are the ones who are disturbing harmony—but reference is made to such editorials to show how impossible it is to keep real democrats and corporation democrats in the same party. When the party is made congenial for the men who bolted, it will not be congenial for those who voted the ticket. To invite the bolters back simply to have another test of strength is not harmony—it is riot. Harmony can only exist when the members of the party strive for the same thing and while the reorganizers openly boast that their purpose is to repudiate the party's recent utterances they cannot be sincere in their talk about uniting the party. The democrats who were courageous enough to condemn their own president when he became a tool of the Wall street syndicates still have convictions and can hardly be expected to surrender them at the demand of bolting newspapers whose stockholders are unknown to the public and whose editors lend themselves to the defense of every iniquitous scheme proposed for the plunder of the masses and the enrichment of the privileged few. Most people belong to a party as they belong to a church, not because of the number of members but because of the creed, and such people cannot be enticed from their principles by mere promises of success. But even on the low ground of expediency it would be suicidal to listen to the advice of the reorganizers because their plans would alienate more voters than they could by any pos-