

tative of plutocracy, will dare to suggest a single natural right possessed by one human being that is not possessed by every other human being. Who will dispute that the purpose of government is to secure to the individual the enjoyment of his inalienable rights? If that is not the purpose of government, what is its true purpose? Let him who would destroy the foundation of our government furnish a better one. If all should not be protected in their inalienable right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, upon what ground shall discrimination be based? On wealth? Who says so? On intelligence? Who will affirm it? When men are thrown together and must share in a common lot the instinct of self-preservation may lead one man or one element to place restrictions upon another man or another element for the real or supposed good of the whole, but such restrictions, when defensible at all, are only defensible upon the theory that they are in reality a protection of human rights, and not a denial of them. For instance, the doctrine that a man may take a human life in the defense of his own life or in the defense of the life of another, is based upon the theory that the act is necessary to the preservation of human rights, and the penalty falls on the man who by his conduct forfeits his own rights. Men are sent to prison or the gallows for the same reason, and such punishment must be defended on the same ground. All qualifications which are placed upon suffrage, whether they fix an age limit, an educational qualification or a property qualification, are based upon the doctrine of self-defense and are defended, where they can be defended at all, not by denying the existence of inalienable rights, but by affirming that the provisions adopted are necessary for the protection of inalienable rights. The question of necessity is the only one that is open for discussion, and in the discussion of this question it must always be remembered that one may have an interest which will bias his judgment. Those, however, who admit the inalienable rights of man and endeavor to justify what may seem to be a denial of those rights, are not so apt to err as those who begin by denying the very existence of natural and inherent rights.

It must be remembered that progress is measured not so much by the discovery of new principles as by the more perfect application of the old principles. The upright man becomes better as the days go by because he more perfectly applies to his every-day life the moral principles which he adopts—as Solomon has expressed it, "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

So in a nation, its progress is measured by the manner in which it applies great fundamental principles to its national life. The truths of the Declaration of Independence cannot be denied merely because those truths were not perfectly applied by those who wrote the document. As well might we say that the Christian religion is false because those who profess to believe in its principles do not live perfect lives. The Declaration of Independence deals with the fundamental principles of government. It sets forth the basic truths upon which a republic must rest. These are axiomatic truths—self-evident truths. They were not perfectly applied in 1776—they are not perfectly applied now—and let us admit for the sake of argument that they never will be perfectly applied. But are we therefore relieved from the necessity of applying them as far as we can? If we have erred in the past, should we not endeavor to improve rather than make past sins an excuse for further failure? A republic built upon the Declaration of Independence cannot be overthrown, for it is founded upon a rock. In proportion as the self-evident truths contained in the Declaration of Independence are applied to our government, our people will be happy and our progress will be

permanent; in so far as those principles are exemplified in our national life our nation will be a light to the world and a blessing to mankind.

### Why?

Speaker Henderson's claim upon the republican nomination for congress in the Third congressional district of Iowa is to be contested this year by State Senator Courtright. The Kansas City Star, which, to say the least, is not hostile to the republican party, says:

If the republican party believes that it is for the welfare of the country that the minority should not be heard; that subserviency to the trusts is for the public welfare; that gag rule is better than free speech, then Mr. Henderson is a very useful man to his organization. But it is reasonable to believe that the great majority of those who would take note of the change would be more than reconciled to the success of Representative Henderson's republican opponent.

Why should the republican who gives cordial encouragement to the subserviency of trusts displayed by Mr. Roosevelt's administration, or who stands uncovered in the presence of the ship subsidy steal, or who has no word of protest for the many iniquities now being done in the name of the republican party—why should such a republican object because Mr. Henderson, like other eminent republicans, is subservient to trusts, and employs the gag rule for the welfare of "business interests?"

### The Crumpacker Resolution.

The following resolution, introduced by Mr. Crumpacker of Indiana, has been attracting considerable attention:

Resolved, That the speaker shall appoint a select committee, consisting of thirteen members of the house, whose duty it shall be, and who shall have full and ample power, to investigate and inquire into the validity of the election laws of the several states and the manner of their enforcement, and whether the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for president and vice president of the United States, representatives in congress, the executive and judicial officers of any of the states or the members of the legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of any of the states, being twenty-one years of age and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for crime. Said committee shall have power to subpoena and examine witnesses, under oath, and to send for records and other evidence that may be necessary for a full and complete investigation of the several subjects herein mentioned, and it shall be authorized to sit during the sessions of the house and to have such printing and binding done as it shall deem necessary. Said committee shall make a full report to the house of the result of its investigation at as early a date as is practicable.

This partisan and entirely sectional resolution is thought to be the forerunner of an effort to deprive the southern states of a part of their congressional representation, and is being discussed with considerable fervor by southern editors and public men. If any of the laws or constitutions of southern states violate the federal constitution or the amendments adopted at the close of the war the supreme court can be trusted to so decide—at least the republican leaders ought not to reflect on the court by assuming that it will not decide correctly. What effect can a congressional investigation have? Will congress forestall the decision of the court? The republicans may threaten to reduce southern representation as a punishment for strict suffrage laws, but they dare not do it, for such an act could be construed only as an abandonment of the negro. A reduction in representation could only be explained on the theory that the negro is to be placed under a perpetual disqualification and the republican party would lose the negro vote in the north if by demanding a reduction in representation it admitted that it did not intend to oppose suffrage amend-

ments in the south. To hold the negro vote in the north the republicans must keep up a pretense of indignation at any limitation on suffrage in southern states; and a reduction in representation would deprive them of a campaign issue that has been found valuable among colored voters.

### Popular Elections of Senators.

A reader of The Commoner asks for a concise statement of the advantages to be expected from the election of senators by direct vote of the people.

First—It brings the government nearer to the people—a sufficient advantage in itself, for it enables the people to select whom they wish and to punish those who betray their trust.

Second—It avoids the corruption that, with increasing frequency, is attending the election of senators by legislatures.

Third—It enables the state legislature to attend to state matters undisturbed by national politics.

The objections to the reform come, first, from those who think that the senators represent the states, and that state equality in the senate would be disturbed. They are mistaken. While the senators represent the states they do not represent the state administration, but the people of the state, and the question of equal representation is not in any way effected by the mode of election.

The second objection comes from those who have no confidence in the judgment or patriotism of the people, and fear to trust them with the selection of their representatives in the senate.

The third objection comes from people who represent great corporations and know that the corporations cannot control popular elections as effectively as they can elections by legislatures.

The fourth objection comes from rich men who think that it is cheaper or at least easier to buy a majority in the legislature than to buy a majority of the people.

### That Shameless Subsidy.

When the ship subsidy bill was before the senate several very important amendments were offered by the opposition, but all of them were defeated—even the six republicans who voted against the bill on its final passage refused to join with the democrats in the effort to improve the measure. Senator Berry of Arkansas offered three amendments which struck at the monopolistic features and the defeat of these amendments showed the extent to which the great corporations controlled the majority. The first amendment was aimed at the Standard Oil company and read as follows:

That oil tank steamers or vessels for carrying oil in barrels, cases or packages shall not be included under this act.

This amendment was, of course, defeated and the Standard Oil company is to be given a chance at the subsidy even though it is now making something like one hundred per cent on its capital stock.

The second Berry amendment was intended to protect the public against extortionate rates and read:

That freight and passenger rates on all ships or vessels drawing either mail or general subsidy under this act shall be fixed and regulated by the interstate commerce commission; and any individual or corporation violating said regulations shall forfeit an amount double the amount of their subsidy.

But no, the ship owners must be allowed to charge what they please and after they have collected all they can from patrons they are to draw a subsidy from the pockets of the taxpayers.

The third amendment offered by Mr. Berry provided that:

No port, shipper or commodity shall be discriminated against in rates of freight, or by any system of private rebates or other concessions at date of shipment or later per-