

question had it not been for the old proverb that silence is golden while speech is only silver. His treatment of the Indian question, irrigation, rural delivery, Alaskan legislation and safety appliances for cars can also be commended.

A Municipal Depot.

The Kansas City papers are discussing the new depot project and deploring the fact that the various railroads have thus far failed to agree upon a site or plans for a joint building. Kansas City with her characteristic enterprise might build a union depot herself and not only solve the problem to her own advantage, but set an example to other cities. Why should she permit a conflict of interests on the part of the railroads to delay a long needed improvement? It is even suggested that the principal roads may build separate depots in different parts of the city and thus tax commerce to keep up several buildings instead of one.

There are many advantages that would accrue from a city depot. It could be located at a convenient point and the tracks for ingress and egress could be confined to a certain territory and raised to avoid grade crossings. New railroads could be given entrance to the city on even terms with the old ones—a thing impossible under the present system. The city could not only collect a reasonable rental for such a building, but the new depot would greatly enhance the value of property near it and the city could by condemning a sufficient quantity of land in that vicinity erect the building out the increase in the price of the condemned land.

Those who have visited Chicago with her numerous depots and St. Louis with her central station know how much more favorable one is impressed by the greater convenience of travel through the latter. There is no reason why Kansas City should not still further enhance her popularity by leading the movement toward city ownership and control of union terminals for the accommodation of the railroads and the public, as well as for the protection of the city.

Betting on Football.

A press dispatch from Boston reports that Harvard men lost about \$50,000 on the football game recently won by Yale. It is a well-known fact that thousands of dollars change hands on the result of each important game and the demoralization resulting must be considered in measuring the influence of football as a collage game. It is time that the friends of athletics were entering a protest against the sporting features of college contests; time that the collage officials were attempting to cultivate a public opinion that will discourage wagers and bets on the players. The gambling spirit is destructive of sound morality—a morality based upon equivalent exchanges. To cultivate the habit of getting something for nothing unfits a man for the real and serious work of life and puts him in training for the bucket shop and the stock market. Football will be the better for the elimination of betting.

Thomas B. Reed is Dead.

The sudden death of Thomas B. Reed removes from the arena of politics one of the most prominent figures in the republican party. No republican of the present generation has surpassed him in brilliancy, or in the impression he made upon contemporaneous history. As a leader of men he was not the equal of Blaine or McKinley, but as a complete master of those immediately associated with him he was their superior. In an extended and logical discussion there were many republicans more able and more impressive. But in short, sharp, epigrammatic and incisive statement he could not be surpassed.

"Reed's Rules," as they are commonly called, changed the house from a deliberative body into a machine for the execution of the will of a few

party leaders, and it is too soon yet to fully estimate the influence of this change upon the house of representatives and the country. The first effect has been to increase the relative importance of the senate by making it the scene of legislative debate on important questions, and until the senate is elected directly by the people the change is likely to militate against popular government. The purpose of counting a quorum was not to enable a majority to rule, because a majority could always rule without counting a quorum; but it was to enable a minority to pass laws in spite of a still smaller minority. Whenever a majority of the total membership of congress voted for a bill the bill could be passed in spite of the silence of the minority, but by counting a quorum less than a majority, with the aid of a few silent members, could, according to Reed's rules, legislate on all questions.

In 1896 Mr. Reed was a candidate for the presidency, but was defeated by the joint influence of Mr. McKinley's popularity and Mark Hanna's management.

When the question of imperialism came up for discussion, Mr. Reed differed from his party, and rather than lead a fight against the administration, retired from public life. Some thought that the sudden abandonment of his long cherished ambition to be president embittered him, but he bore his disappointment much more gracefully than some of the great party leaders in the past have done. Since his retirement from office his law practice and literary work have occupied his time and are supposed to have yielded a considerable income.

Of the great republicans who have opposed their party's policy on imperialism he is the third to die—Sherman and Harrison having preceded him.

He was an ultra-protectionist, and was a defender rather than a prosecutor of the trusts. His recent article in the North American Review was a skillful and ingenious argument against radical action for the extermination of private monopoly, and was at the same time a plea for the maintenance of a high tariff.

The Hill Bill.

Strange to say, the gold papers in discussing the recent fall in silver do not seem to consider the effect of the Hill bill in depressing the bullion value of the white metal. That bill has already passed the house, and will probably pass the senate at this session. It authorizes the secretary of the treasury to recoin silver dollars into subsidiary coin at his discretion. The effect of this bill will be two-fold: First, it will take the United States out of the market as a purchaser of silver bullion, for we have enough silver dollars on hand to furnish subsidiary coinage for a century to come. The effect of this will, of course, be felt on the price of silver bullion. Every European nation buys more or less bullion for subsidiary coinage, but when the Hill bill becomes a law this nation, the greatest producer of silver, will cease to be a purchaser.

The second effect of the bill will be to permit the secretary of the treasury to recoin all the legal tender silver dollars into subsidiary coin, which is only a limited legal tender. This enables the financiers, acting through their agent in the treasury department, to reduce the volume of real money and thus more easily control the money market.

Circumstances will determine just how fast the financiers will push their money schemes, but it is certain that they will go as far and as fast as they think the country will permit. The manner in which they pass a law or secure an administrative order and then pause until the indignation dies out, reminds one of the story told of a physician. He was called to visit a child. At last the child's life was despaired of, and the physician told the mother that it was not worth while to punish it with more medicine; that she might

give it a little water if it became restless, but that it could not live long. She watched it anxiously through the night, and in the morning thought she saw signs of improvement; she watched it through the day, and still thought it was better; she watched it through another night, and when the doctor came the second morning to inquire why he had not been notified of the child's death, the mother informed him that she believed the child was gaining. He examined it; felt its pulse, looked at its tongue, and left her with the assurance that if the child continued to improve for thirty-six hours more as it had during the past thirty-six hours it would be strong enough to take some more medicine.

Just as soon as the patient public is strong enough to take another financial dose it will receive it, for the gold standard will not be complete until gold is the only legal tender and bank notes the only credit money, and these notes will be issued on assets rather than on bonds, and the banking system will be in the hands of a central bank and its branches.

These things are all parts of a well-prepared plan, and the public will be notified of each step either after the step has been taken or so shortly before that no protest will be possible. The only way to prevent the carrying out of these schemes is to defeat the republican party, for it is today the tool of the financiers.

The "Country" Press.

During the campaigns of 1896 and 1900, and the lesser campaigns since the former date, the democratic party has found its chief newspaper support among the loyal democratic newspapers so often designated as "the country press." With a few notable exceptions the metropolitan newspapers classed as democratic deserted the democratic standard and lent their aid to the republican party. But the desertions from the ranks of "the country press" were so few that they were not noticeable. With a loyalty that could not be swerved and an ability that challenged the admiration of the opposition, "the country press" rallied to the democratic standard and performed prodigies of valor. "The country press" has ever been loyal, and because of this every democratic newspaper that is embraced in this designation deserves and should have the hearty support of democrats in its community. A well edited local newspaper exercises an important influence, not always visible to the casual observer, but always apparent when the test comes. Hundreds of such democratic weeklies and small dailies reach The Commoner's exchange table regularly, and they are a constant source of inspiration. Let democrats show by their actions that they appreciate the unswerving loyalty and tireless energy of the democratic newspapers that have stood up for the party and its principles in the face of influences that have corrupted so many metropolitan dailies. The local democratic newspapers deserve a great deal more than they usually get. Now let democrats see that their local organs get all they deserve.

The Wheat Supply.

According to the chief of the bureau of treasury statistics the wheat crop of the United States amounted in 1901 to 748,000,000 bushels and this lacked only 181,000,000 bushels of being as much as was produced that year by the five rivals of the United States, namely, Australia, with 57,000,000; Argentina, with 12,000,000; Canada, with 92,000,000; India, with 240,000,000, and Russia, with 463,000,000. France is a large producer of wheat, but is omitted from the list of competitors because she never raises enough for home consumption.

During the past ten years, according to the treasury official, the wheat product of the United States increased 232,000,000, while the product of all her rivals only increased 191,000,000.