

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Vol. 3. No. 8.

Lincoln, Nebraska, March 13, 1903.

Whole No. 112.

The Fifty-Seventh Congress

The adjournment of the Fifty-seventh congress completes the work of the federal legislators chosen in 1900. They have succeeded in increasing the expenditures of the government about 50 per cent over the expenditures of the Fifty-first congress, which startled the country with its "billion-dollar" extravagance.

The increase in the per capita cost of government is largely due to the fact that the great manufacturing industries are using the taxing power for their own enrichment and they, therefore, encourage extravagance to make an excuse for a high tariff. Then, too, the imperial policy upon which the government has embarked is adding a considerable amount to the appropriation bills. The army expenditure is more than double what it was before we began to experiment with colonialism and the navy is feeling the stimulus of the war spirit.

While heavier burdens are constantly being laid upon the people by the government, those in authority are more and more negligent of the rights and interests of the people. The failure of the president to secure, or even seriously attempt to secure, effective anti-trust legislation is the most prominent feature of the second session of congress. It will be remembered that the president made some anti-trust speeches last summer—or at least speeches which his political friends construed as antagonistic to the trusts. It was even said that Mr. Littlefield had been selected to lead the fight against monopolies. "Just wait until congress meets in December," said the president's supporters, "and then you will see a strenuous attack on the trusts." Many democrats were deceived by the noise of preparation and a minister went so far as to say that Mr. Roosevelt had been raised to the office providentially to meet the aggressions of organized wealth.

Well, congress convened and the papers told us how the bills were pouring in, how the committee was combining the good features of the various bills, and finally how a draft of the committee bill had been submitted to the attorney general. But he regarded it as "too drastic." At last the bill was drawn so as to effect only corporations hereafter organized, leaving existing trusts to continue their depredations. The democrats of the house were denied an opportunity to present amendments and the bill was rushed through and sent to the senate. The senate committee kept it until the democratic members, together with a minority of the republican members, reported it over the protest of a majority of the republicans. By the same vote the committee added an amendment making the bill apply to existing corporations as well as to future ones, but when Senator Blackburn, acting under instructions from a democratic caucus, moved to take the bill up for consideration in the senate only two republicans voted with the democrats to consider the measure.

Can anti-trust republicans be deceived any longer? It is not fair to lay all the blame on the republicans of the senate because Attorney General Knox, speaking for the administration, said that the two little clauses inserted in the

Nelson amendment and the Elkins bill in regard to rebates and publicity were entirely satisfactory. It was in the power of the president to focus attention upon this subject, to point out the necessity for strong and vigorous legislation and to insist upon immediate action, but instead of this he abandoned the fight before any decisive victory was won. Whether the president lacks purpose or only lacks moral courage is a question about which people may differ, but there is no doubt whatever that his anti-trust campaign, begun with great flourish of trumpets, has ended in an inglorious rout.

Just before adjournment Senator Elkins pointed out that for the third time the republican party had failed to keep its promise to admit the territories of Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona. Having spent the session doing little of importance it is now necessary to have an extra session of the senate in order to secure the ratification of the Panama and Cuban treaties.

Surely it must be a partisan republican who will point with pride to the record of the Fifty-seventh congress.

* Addicksism Still Lives *

The senatorial contest in Delaware has been brought to an end, but how? Not by the election of Addicks, to be sure, but by the election of one of his staunchest supporters to the long term and by the election of an anti-Addicks republican to the short term. And this is the net result of a contest that has raged for more than six years. Delaware has been without a senator for several years and now that she has two senators, one will do just what Addicks would have done and the other will vote the same as the Addicks senator on all important questions. The fight against Addicks was entirely proper, for he would be a disgrace to any legislative body, but why should the republicans fight him for trying to buy a senatorship with his own money if they are going to support men who buy senatorships with corporate money and corporate influence? Mr. Addicks might have been his own master, but many republican senators are the servants of the corporations that secure their election. Addicksism is the natural outgrowth of commercialism. If business men are to be bought with legislation that gives them money out of the pockets of the taxpayers, how can those without business be convinced that it is wrong to sell their votes for a less, but stipulated sum? Wherein has Mr. Addicks been more shameless in the use of money than Senator Hanna or Senator Quay? Why reject Addicks and swallow Addicksism?

An organization known as the National Economic League has started out to educate the people on the trust question and other economic questions from the plutocratic side. It has sent out a circular to banks throughout the country announcing that it is similar to the campaign urged against silver that enabled the republican party to save the country from bimetalism. There is no doubt that the league will be amply supplied with money, because the trusts can afford to pay liberally if they educate the people up to submission to the evils of private monopoly.

Reorganizers' Plan Disclosed

On another page will be found extracts from the Brooklyn Eagle which disclose the plans of the reorganizers. It is a full and complete confession of all that The Commoner has charged as to the purpose of the corporation democrats. They do not contemplate victory; they have intelligence enough to know that they cannot hope to win with a platform and candidate antagonistic to the rank and file of the party, but they desire to regain control of the party in order to prevent its doing anything to interfere with republican plans.

It will be noticed that the proposed platform is to be "acceptable to eastern leaders AND TO THE COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY." As the republican platform is entirely acceptable to these same interests, how can a democratic platform be equally acceptable unless it is similar in language and purport?

The Kansas City platform democrats are under a debt of gratitude to the Eagle for this early announcement of the real intentions of the reorganizers. The only hope the Cleveland-Hill democrats have of obtaining control of the party machinery rests upon their ability to deceive the voters as to their purpose. It is evident to all who know the leading reorganizers that they do not desire harmony, but are intent rather on wreaking vengeance on those who are responsible for driving the Wall street element out of the party; but many are misled by their promises. We have the same fight to make now that we made in 1895. In March of that year an address signed by about thirty members of congress called upon the silver democrats to organize within the party and secure control of the organization. More than three-fourths of the democrats of the house and senate refused to sign the address for fear of "disturbing the harmony of the party." But in less than four months the plans of the Cleveland element became so apparent that a conference was held at Memphis and the bimetallic league organized to carry out the plans set forth in the address issued in March, and this conference was attended by many who four months before refused to believe that Mr. Cleveland intended to wreck the party if it refused the demands of the financiers.

So, today, many timid democrats have hesitated to take a stand against the reorganizers, but in a few months they will find that they must either become the pliant tools of organized wealth or take up the fight for the masses as against the monopolists.

Let those democrats who are democrats from principle and not merely for hope of office read the Eagle's editorial and ask themselves what hope such a platform as it outlines and such an organization as it desires would hold out to those who believe in equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

The Eagle says that Mr. Hill has been in correspondence with certain democrats in Nebraska. That may be true, but not one of them will dare to admit that he favors Mr. Hill's nomination if he aspires to be a delegate to the next national convention. We had some Nebraska democrats of the