

befitting attitude before the people, not only that the chief magistrate should be independent, but that that independence should be known of all men."

It will be interesting to look over the record concerning recommendations for the single term.

In his first annual message, President Jackson suggested an amendment to the constitution "to limit the service of the chief magistrate to a single term of either four or six years." This recommendation was renewed by President Jackson in his sixth annual message.

In his letter accepting the republican nomination, Mr. Hayes, in 1876, said:

The declaration of principles by the Cincinnati convention makes no announcement in favor of a single presidential term. I do not assume to add to that declaration, but believing that the restoration of the civil service to the system established by Washington and followed by the early presidents can be best accomplished by an executive officer who is under no temptation to use the patronage of his office to promote his own re-election, I desire to perform what I regard as a duty in stating now my inflexible purpose, if elected, not to be a candidate for election to a second term.

In his inaugural address, President Hayes said:

In furtherance of the reform we seek, and in other important respects a change of great importance, I recommend an amendment to the constitution prescribing a term of six years for the presidential office and forbidding a re-election.

In his first letter of acceptance Mr. Cleveland stated in very strong language the objections to a second term, saying:

When an election to office shall be the selection by the voters of one of their number to assume for a time a public trust instead of his dedication to the profession of politics; when the holders of the ballot, quickened by a sense of duty, shall avenge truth betrayed and pledges broken, and when the suffrage shall be altogether free and uncorrupted, the full realization of a government by the people will be at hand. And of the means to this end, no one would, in my judgment, be more effective than an amendment to the constitution disqualifying the president from re-election.

When we consider the patronage of this great office, the allurements of power, the temptations to retain public place once gained, and, more than all, the availability a party finds in an incumbent whom a horde of office-holders, with zeal born of benefits received and fostered by the hope of favors yet to come, stand ready to aid with money and trained political service, we recognize in the eligibility of the president for re-election a most serious danger to that calm, deliberate and intelligent political action which must characterize a government by the people.

In his letter accepting the democratic nomination in 1896 Mr. Bryan said:

So deeply am I impressed with the magnitude of the power vested by the constitution in the chief executive of the nation and with the enormous influence which he can wield for the benefit or injury of the people that I wish to enter the office, if elected, free from every personal desire except the desire to prove worthy of the confidence of my countrymen. Human judgment is fallible enough when unbiased by selfish considerations, and, in order that I may not be tempted to use the patronage of the office to advance any personal ambition, I hereby announce, with all the emphasis which words can express, my fixed determination, not, under any circumstances, to be a candidate for re-election in case this campaign results in my election."

The importance of making the president ineligible for re-election will yet be appreciated by the people generally to the extent that the prohibition will be incorporated into our constitution.

Human nature is as yet too frail to withstand the temptation to use for selfish purposes the great patronage of the executive. If it is argued that a nation might be in such a crisis that it could ill-afford a change in the administration, it may be said in reply, first, that the same argument could be made at the close of a second term, and second, that when the nation reaches a condition where only one man out

of the whole population is able to assume and properly discharge the duties of the executive it will scarcely be worth saving.

Representatives of the "National Business league" are agitating the proposition to amend the constitution so as to lengthen the presidential term to six years and making the president ineligible to re-election. Endorsements of the plan have been received from business men and organizations throughout the country. In opposing the re-election of a president, the league representatives declare: "The president during his first term, naturally anxious to succeed himself, is kept busy considering the demands of politicians and planning for a second term; meanwhile important legislation for the general good waits."

The principle affirmative argument in favor of lengthening the presidential term is that business interests are disturbed by a presidential election. If this argument is to have a controlling influence we might as well choose the executive for life, or, in order to reduce the disturbance to a minimum, establish an hereditary succession. There are political reasons in favor of the present length which outweigh any business considerations.

Jefferson was an advocate of frequent elections. In a letter written to Samuel Adams in 1800, he said: "A government by representatives elected by the people at short periods, was our object; and our maxim at that day was 'where annual election ends, tyranny begins; nor have our departures from it been sanctioned by the happiness of their effects.'"

Sixteen years later he said: "The rights of the people to the exercise and fruits of their own industry can never be protected against the selfishness of rulers, not subject to their control at short periods."

The fact that commercial reasons are deemed sufficient with some to justify the surrender of a principle absolutely necessary for the protection of the public shows the dangerous pre-eminence given to money and money making.

To lengthen the presidential term is simply to enlarge the stake for which great interests play. The trusts could increase their campaign contributions fifty per cent if they could secure control of an administration for six years instead of four.

Short terms are necessary not only to protect the people from their public servants, but also to moderate disappointment and discontent. The sooner the people can hope for remedy the more patiently do they submit to that which they consider error or injustice.

A four years term is long enough for a good president and too long for a bad one.

The Criminal Clause

In a recent issue, The Commoner said: "If it be true that the beef trust magnates have conspired to prevent the election of Mr. Roosevelt, then Mr. Roosevelt has it in his power to immediately call every one of these magnates to time. He has it in his power to place every one of these men behind the bars. The beef trust magnates care nothing for the injunction process. Like every human being, however, they are afraid of the criminal process."

Referring to this statement, the Fremont, Neb., Herald says: "Perhaps Mr. Bryan has forgotten that the 'Elkins bill' has repealed the criminal clause of the Sherman law. It was all there was in the law that had any terrors for the corporations that habitually violated it, and now it has been taken off at their demand. People generally seem to have forgotten it."

The Herald is in error. The Elkins bill did not in any way relate to the Sherman anti-trust law and did not repeal the criminal clause of that law.

The Elkins bill did repeal the provision in the anti-rebate law, providing for imprisonment; but that is an altogether different law from the Sherman law.

The Sherman law remains on the statute books just as when it was enacted. Its constitutionality has been upheld by the United State supreme court.

The chief feature of the Sherman anti-trust law, and, indeed, the very first section provides for criminal prosecution. The republican administration has not made an effort to enforce that section.

It would be well if the editor of the Fremont Herald would examine the record and show his readers that the Elkins bill had no relation whatever to the Sherman anti-trust law; also that the Sherman anti-trust law remains upon the statute book just as it was enacted and, under

republican administration, remains on the statute book unenforced.

Candidate Davis' Speech

Mr. Davis, in accepting the vice presidential nomination, while reserving for his letter a discussion of the platform, took occasion to answer the prosperity argument advanced by the republicans. The speech will be found on another page. He also pays a just tribute to labor. His own experience as a laborer ought to make him understand and sympathize with those who toil. It is to be hoped that in his letter he will touch on the specific labor planks contained in the platform which he endorses. It was not necessary for him to have said what he did about the gold standard. The convention expressly declared that the question was not involved in this campaign.

An Educational Campaign

The campaign upon which The Commoner has entered will not be concluded on election day. A great work is to be accomplished. The interest of those who are now indifferent is to be aroused. Those who are now ignorant are to be informed. Those who already appreciate the importance of public reforms are to be encouraged and this work is to be carried on upon lines clearly in the public interests.

Public ownership of the railroads is to be fought for because it is the one method of doing away with railroad ownership of the public.

The income tax is to be advocated because that plan will equitably distribute the taxation burden.

The election by the people of federal judges to serve for a limited period is to be recommended in order that the federal judge may be held accountable to the people.

Municipal ownership of public utilities is to be urged because it is the height of absurdity for the people of a city to hand over their valuable franchises in order that they may be used for the private gain of individuals.

The election of United States senators by the people is to be favored because the time has come when the people must be represented in the senate.

Do you believe in these reforms? Are you willing to lend a hand in the great educational campaign that is going on? If so, you may find in The Commoner's special subscription offer an opportunity to aid in this good work. To increase the Commoner's circulation means the widening of its sphere of influence. According to the terms of this offer, cards, each good for one year's subscription to The Commoner will be furnished in lots of five, at the rate of \$3 per lot. This places the yearly subscription rate at 60 cents.

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Anyone ordering the cards may sell them for \$1.00 each, thus earning a commission of \$2.00 on each lot sold, or he may sell them at the cost price and find compensation in the fact that he has contributed to the educational campaign.

These cards may be paid for when ordered, or they may be ordered and remittance made after they have been sold. A coupon is printed below for the convenience of those who desire to participate in this effort to increase The Commoner's circulation.

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Application for Subscription Cards	
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