

his recommendations are in the line of enlarged expenditures rather than retrenchment.

The subjects of immigration and naturalization are considered at length. After pointing out the desirability of immigration of the right kind he calls attention to the danger to our wage-earners of admitting "masses of men whose standard of living and whose personal customs and habits are such that they tend to lower the level of the American wage-worker." He calls attention to fraudulent naturalization, to forged certificates and to perjury in the securing of papers. He also asks for legislation specifically defining the rights of American citizens residing abroad and the rights of those who have declared their intention of becoming American citizens but have not taken upon themselves the full responsibilities of citizenship. The subject is one which deserves the attention of congress. A clear statement of the nation's policy upon this subject will protect the country against foreign complications.

The "big stick" policy is presented in the message with considerable elaboration. He attempts to back up his position with arguments in favor of a large navy, and yet all the time protesting that the navy is intended to promote peace. He speaks of "the peace of justice." There is no doubt that justice is the only basis upon which peace can be built. The question is whether justice will be promoted or thwarted by a large naval establishment.

Leaving out of consideration for the present the tendency of our action to increase the navies of other countries, necessitating another increase in our own navy, followed by another increase in other navies, etc., etc., until the people of all countries would be crushed beneath the weight of preparations for war—leaving this question out of consideration it is pertinent to ask whether such a policy as the president proposes is not likely to disturb peace rather than to promote it. The same spirit that leads a nation to adopt the "big stick" policy will lead it to use a "big stick" on slight provocation, just as the spirit that prompts one to carry a revolver prompts him to use it unnecessarily. When the president says "If the great civilized nations of the present day should completely disarm, the result would mean immediate recrudescence of barbarism in one form or

another," he aligns himself with those who lack faith in the omnipotence of right. He thus discloses his reliance upon the brute force doctrine even though he speaks approvingly of international arbitration. Total disarmament is not the alternative presented to the large navy policy; it does not necessarily follow that we must have as large a navy as the president desires or none at all. It is possible to have sufficient war vessels for the training of our navy officers and for the proper protection of our country without attempting to rival the land-grabbing nations in the number and size of our fleet. The position taken by the president is not only untenable but it involves a very dangerous error, namely, that a nation must be warlike in order to save it from barbarism and decay. It is the doctrine of the strenuous life as interpreted by the president. His theory is entirely at variance with the life and teaching of the Founder of the Christian religion. The president totally ignores the power and influence of a righteous example.

It is not surprising that with his views upon this subject he should endorse the colonial policies of European empires. He says: "There are points of resemblance in our work and the work which is being done by the British in India and Egypt, by the French in Algiers, by the Dutch in Java, by the Russians in Turkestan, by the Japanese in Formosa." He adds that we "more distinctively than any of these powers are endeavoring to develop the natives themselves so that they shall take an ever increasing share in their own government and as far as is prudent we are admitting their representatives to governmental equality with our own."

He speaks of our problems as being akin to the problems "presented to other great civilized powers which have possessions in the orient." The problem of taking possession of inferior people and utilizing them for the benefit of the conquering nations is not a new one. It is always defended on the ground of benevolence but the trust is always administered for the benefit of the governing nation rather than for the benefit of the subject. While the president earnestly hopes that the Filipinos will in the end be able to stand "if not entirely alone, yet with some such relation to the United States as Cuba now stands" he declares that

they are now "utterly incapable of exercising independence at all or of building up a civilization of their own." This theory that a civilization can be built around them or plastered over them is entirely at variance with our theory of government and we can not hold this theory without abandoning the great work that our nation has endeavored to perform for more than a century. As long as we are administering a colonial policy after the example of monarchies—after the example, even, of a despotism like Russia; while we are patterning our administration in our "possessions" after the empires of the old world, we can not hold before the oppressed of other lands the light of self-government and civil liberty. In 1898 we said to the people of Cuba that they were "and of right ought to be free and independent" and they are now governing themselves. The president now says that the Filipinos are not only utterly incapable of governing themselves, but that they "are utterly incapable of building up a civilization of their own." If the president is right in the position that he takes on the Philippine question then there is no such thing as an inalienable right as described in our Declaration of Independence. If the president is correct in the position he has taken, then these things which we have been in the habit of calling "rights" are merely privileges accorded by more powerful people to less powerful ones.

The president's imperial policy strikes at the foundation of our government, and the hopes which he expresses for the future of the Filipinos will not atone for his apostasy from American principles. The large navy and the colonial policy go hand in hand. If we are going to adopt the brute force principle which underlies the empire, we shall most assuredly need a large navy and we shall need a large army also, but it will result as it has resulted elsewhere in increasing the wealth of the exploiters and the burdens of the masses.

On the whole the president's message is a queer compound of good and bad. His recommendations are not consistently good; they are not consistently bad. They indicate a conflict between his better impulses and his Hamiltonian theories. Let us hope that in his future messages there may be more evidence of the triumph of his better impulses.

## SOME REFORMS THAT ARE WITHIN REACH

The national victory scored by the republican party delays reforms of a national character. The republican party did not recognize during the campaign the necessity for any change in existing conditions or laws. It boasted that it had been in power almost uninterruptedly for forty-four years, and it would not admit the desirability of any reform. While it is barely possible that it may undertake new legislation, it is not probable. There are, however, a few reforms that the democrats in congress might push with some prospect of success.

Reform in the tariff schedules is apparently out of the question for the present and no effective legislation is likely against the trusts. If the republicans attempt anything on the money question it will be injurious rather than helpful, because it will be in the interest of the national banks and financiers. The democrats ought to present their measures and with their speeches focus attention upon them, even though on the main questions the democratic work will have to be educational in its character.

It might be possible for the democrats to urge successfully some changes in postal matters. With the rural delivery there has come a demand for an extension of the postal note. The government ought to issue postal notes in small denominations—notes which can be purchased and used at any time by the agricultural population as well as by those in the cities who desire to make small remittances.

There is an urgent need for a local parcel delivery. The country merchant is complaining because the farmer, being able to order by mail and receive his goods from a distance, is spending his money with the large mail order houses instead of with his home merchants. It is natural—more than that, it is inevitable—that trade should follow the lines of cheapness and convenience. It would be possible to assist both the farmers and the local merchants by providing a cheap rate for the delivery of parcels by carriers, where such parcels are deposited at the post-office from which the carrier starts. The government has to pay a high rate for mail and package

carried by rail; because of the influence exerted over the postal department and over congress this rate is very much higher than the rate paid by express companies for similar service. Where the article of merchandise is deposited in the local postoffice and carried out on the rural free delivery route the government can afford to carry it at a much lower rate than it can merchandise that is shipped across the country. This discrimination in favor of the local merchant rests upon justice and will benefit both the customer and the country merchant. It will then be possible for the merchant to publish a catalogue of the articles in which he deals and furnish to his patrons in the country. With the extension of the telephone system it is possible for the farmer or his wife to order anything needed in town, and have it brought out that day or the next day by the rural delivery. Every argument that can be made in favor of a parcel rate when the parcels are sent from one end of the country to the other can be made in favor of a lower rate for the delivery of local parcels. If the democrats will take up this proposition they will find that the country merchants and the farmers will bring the necessary pressure to bear upon their representatives. Why would it not be a good plan for the readers of *The Commoner* who favor this plan to clip out this editorial and mail it to their congressmen? Representatives are quite ready to listen to the suggestions of their constituents unless those suggestions run contrary to some fixed prejudice or opinion.

There ought also to be an additional protection to bank depositors. The present regulations are not adequate for the protection of the public. We always assume that a bank is good until it fails, but when it fails the depositors then realize how insufficient for his protection the laws are. The sentiment in favor of the postal savings bank is a growing one and it grows most rapidly where there has been a bank failure, for it is still true that many will learn from calamity who refuse to learn from argument, however logical. When Mr. Bryan was in congress he tried to secure the passage of a law protecting the depositors in na-

tional banks. The bill proposed by him provided for the raising of a guaranty fund by a small tax on deposits, the tax to be suspended as soon as the fund reached a sufficient amount. The bill provided that the comptroller, upon the failure of a bank, should immediately pay all depositors in full out of the guaranty fund and then proceed to collect the assets of the bank and reimburse the fund. The bill was opposed by the larger national banks which insisted that if all banks were safe the big banks would have no advantage over the little banks. If necessary to secure the passage of a bill the provision might be made voluntary rather than compulsory—that is, banks might be permitted to accept the provisions and secure to their patrons the protection of the law, or refuse to accept the provisions and deny to their patrons the protection of the law. The patrons could then consult their own judgment in regard to places of deposit. There ought to be some place where the people, especially the poorer people, could deposit their money with absolute security, and the banks do not now provide that security. It would not only be a justice to the people to provide this protection, but it would be an encouragement to saving and economy. It is rather discouraging to one to save for several years only to find his money swallowed up by the unwise or criminal act of some bank official.

The above things are suggested as measures of relief that may be within reach. Of course the democrats of the house and senate ought to push the amendment providing for the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people. That ought to be brought forward in every congress until the senate yields and the people secure the direct election of senators.

The democrats in congress might present a measure for the purification of politics. In some of the states congressmen are compelled to file a signed and itemized account of their campaign expenditures, but this should be made a national requirement, and the law should be so stringent as to require the filing of the statement whether the money was spent by the candidate himself, by the officers of his committee or by anyone else