

EDITORIALS FROM COMMONER READERS

Samuel Johnstone, of Saa Francisco.—Is it time yet, to call the public attention to the need of a parcels post in the United States? We would have had it years ago but for the opposition of the express companies, whose charges are "all it will bear," and the postal deficit caused by the extortionate charges of the railroad ring for carrying the United States mails. Also to note that the United States is running steamers to the isthmus and connecting with the Pacific Mail Steamship company's vessel on the Pacific, consequently dividing with them the business. That the proposed ten to seventeen years as noted in the papers from the "engineers board" to complete the canal is in line with the "competing interests" devices—thirty years would be better. But if "T. R." means "business," Chicago contracting firms will dig it in five years and be open for ships too.

Thor J. Benson, 3101 State street, Chicago.—Availing myself of what I consider a wise policy for any newspaper, be it weekly, daily or only special editions, to have a subscribers' editorial page, I herewith take this opportunity of expressing my views on a matter which I consider as standing ahead on any well-considered program of reform. The wise liberality of the citizens as manifesting itself in our recent amendment of the election laws, allowing \$5 per diem to each of the five precinct election officials and the same amount for rent of registration revision and polling places, making an expense for each city precinct containing about 1,500 inhabitants for a general election \$130 besides the expenditure for stationery, printing and postage, shows that the people are anxious to have every facility and safeguard in the protection of their elective franchise. Next year, in this city there will be three elections, municipal, judicial and general. By the use of voting machines such as the election board successfully tested in ten precincts at the recent election the number of elections districts can be reduced at least twenty-five and perhaps, 50 per cent and by consolidating all elections and making them occur annually on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, a very nice saving would be effected. This saving the election board could expend to good advantage by employing district canvassers, sworn officers of the court, and under civil service rules, to take the names of each resident of the district, to be tabulated and printed by the board, say ten days before any primary election and a copy mailed to each resident of each district, with a list and brief sketch and statement of principles of each candidate to be voted for at the primary and again at the regular election. This would bring the questions before the public, up to each citizen and he would not be dependent on the activity of the party "bosses" in order to know, when and where to register and vote and what offices, candidates or propositions to vote for. The only legitimate and necessary party organization in Chicago at the present time, under such circumstances would be general clubs, such as we have now in the Hamilton, Iroquois, Marquette, Jefferson, Cook County Republican Marching club, and the County Democracy, with committees of the same to point out men in the different districts as fit and worthy to submit to the peoples' suffrage, without denying the right of non-members to do the same. Discussion of all public questions, barring those that are narrowly politically partisan or those of a religious nature may be discussed freely in our public assembly rooms, so that a partisan campaign fund would be unnecessary.

O. O. Adams, Prairie Depot, Ohio.—I want to thank you for the kindly interest shown in the Ohio campaign. I was not able to overcome the large majority in my county, which is about 1500, but my opponent's majority was only 656. In the township where we both live the majority is about 200, but I cut that to 91. So it is not so bad as it might have been. But hurrah for Mr. Pattison, anyhow! It was a great victory for righteousness.

J. R. L. Clarkson, Moberly, Mo.—A number of men conclude to start a national bank. They buy \$50,000 worth of United States bonds, bearing 2 per cent interest. They deposit these \$50,000 of bonds and our government gives them \$50,000 of national bank notes. Thus they receive all their money back and are not out one cent. As these bonds are deposited to redeem national bank currency, they still draw interest, which these men receive. Would any sane business man do this? Of course he would not. Yet our government

does it at the expense of the people. We need a better financial system of currency than this.

A Raleigh, North Carolina, reader of The Commoner.—I see that it is reported that North Carolina received from the life insurance companies for the year 1904, \$1,952,385. Immense sum! Our insurance reports for 1904 as compiled by the insurance commissioner of North Carolina, are not yet to hand, but I copy from his report of 1903, "losses paid to the people of North Carolina during 1903 were \$853,983.80;" and this is a great sum. But behold the startling and strange and ruinous fact! The people of North Carolina gave the life insurance companies during the year 1903, the sum of \$3,256,388.60, just exactly \$2,402,404.80 more than the insurance companies gave back to the people. The interest for a year will pay almost one-fourth of the losses. The people gave insurance companies almost \$4 to \$1. The remedy: As people believe in insurance, let the state insure such of its citizens as desire to pay for insurance. Turn the stream of gold that is flowing into foreign insurance companies' vaults into the state's treasuries, and the state without taxation can pay all losses, provide for its poor, and its insane, pay its officers, and educate all of the children, and more, it will keep the money in the hands of the people, rather than pile it up in the hands of a few corporations where it can be, has been, and will be again used to oppress the masses.

A. K. Grow, Hamilton, Montana.—I was very much pleased with your criticisms of Public Opinion on business ethics. What an absurdity for any one to advance outside of the insane asylum, that the ethics of morality must be changed to fit the ethics of rebates whereby millions are filched from the plain people for the sole benefit of corporations. The evil genius of Standard Oil and other grafters have set aside graft necessary for the employment of writers of just such articles published by Public Opinion and other journals too numerous to mention; but not too numerous for the reading public to sift and analyze and find out the shape and size of the cloven hoof. And what of the writers of those articles? Do they realize the stigma which will follow them down to perdition? Can they plead the necessity for their daily bread? They can plead lax morals and indirectly a responsibility for the wrong doing of another. A McCurdy plans the stealing of millions and a writer plans a plausible and smooth article on a false premise and it draws big pay out of the stolen millions where the old adage applies with force: "Partaker as bad as the thief."

George R. McVey, Buell, Mo.—It is well understood that, as a rule, the inventor of an idea for the betterment of mankind does not receive a proper recompense for his years of study and training. Too often, he is practically buncoed out of any profit accruing from his invention by the representatives of "vested rights." Do you think you could, today, sell a patent on an idea designed to reduce the danger to the travelling public, to a railroad corporation? Try it! For ten years I was an employe of a railroad, whose policy it was to foster the inventive faculty of its em-

ployes, but demanded, for the use of its tools, an absolute cession of rights to the company's use as a quid pro quo. This was simply the Russian policy of keeping a good man where he could do the most good (for the other fellow.) You are strenuously outspoken in every stand you have taken and I have been waiting for nearly four years to hear from you on the patent branch of our government. We boast of our inventive genius, but as a matter of fact, that genius has flourished in spite of anything we have done to foster it. Assuming that all people, corporations and legislative assemblies were absolutely honest, (as our forefathers assumed) we admit the patent office laws are good; but when has there been a change in the laws of that department to head off the graft and greed that has run rampant over our country? What chance has an inventor, unless he be wealthy and practically a protegee of "vested rights", to realize the just and legitimate returns from his invention? If this federal government should institute schools for the education of inventors, assuring them means for the proper exemplification of ideas and protection from sharks of all kinds, would it be socialism, paternalism, or what? Would it be decried as a movement inimical to "vested rights?" What are vested rights? In a republic, vested rights are the legitimate use of the God given powers of men to work for the community's good; not the faculty to filch wealth from the producers and pose as the agents of divine benefaction. If every inventor had the means to carry on his experiments, do you not think the pace would grow faster, with fewer asylum victims? Does it not occur to you that some genius might discover an unknown force, somewhere, somehow, and apply it, as Morse applied the discovery of Franklin? At any rate, the absolute protection of inventive genius is incumbent on any progressive commonwealth. That is the idea. It is not an outrage to that idea to say it is the duty of every government to provide the ways and means to develop and perfect an invention that is manifestly of benefit to the state. People die by the millions to maintain their country's honor; why should that country hesitate to devote some attention to the genius of its people? What is honor as we understand it, compared with progression? Is not progression the highest honor? And is not the genius that controls and directs for the good of mankind the unknown forces of nature more entitled to the respect, assistance and protection of the nation than the lustiest warrior that ever wielded a "big stick?" Yet we say to him "there is the patent office, get a patent if you can."

Referring to an editorial recently printed in The Commoner and entitled "Paul Morton's Philosophy," Adolph B. Suess of East St. Louis, Ill., writes: "But, may not Edward Lefevre be a liar? And, is the philosophy enunciated so very wrong? Isn't it in fact correct philosophy? It unqualifiedly tells a meddling reporter to mind his own business, and Mr. Morton's answer will be applauded as being the very best expression of American manhood recently uttered, even if couched in forcible language."

THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

I promise to attend all the primaries of my party to be held between now and the next Democratic National Convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to use my influence to secure a clear, honest and straightforward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak.

Signed _____

Street _____ Postoffice _____ State _____

County _____ Voting precinct or ward _____

Fill out Blanks and mail to Commoner Office, Lincoln, Nebraska.