

There is no doubt that the latter body is almost unanimously opposed to the educational bill and yet if it dares to oppose a measure which the country, speaking through the House of Commons, really demands, it must face abolition or such a modification as would deprive it of its aristocratic character. It is now regarded as a social rather than a political institution and it will not be permitted to obstruct any legislation upon which the masses have their hearts set. The ability of the people of Great Britain to override the will of the King and to coerce the House of Lords is striking proof of the strength of the doctrine that governments derive their authority from the people and from the people alone.

Russia has been left for the last because it presents one of the most interesting pictures of governmental development that has been seen in a century. She has been a synonym for despotism; her people have known every form of tyranny and suffered every excess of arbitrary power. Seized without warrant and exiled without trial, they have drained the cup of sorrow to its dregs. At last the Czar, frightened by the threatenings from within and shamed by the criticisms from without, began to concede, a little at a time, the reforms demanded—waiting, unfortunately, until the clamor for a new and larger reform made the reform granted seem insignificant. At last came the war with Japan which exhibited the inefficiency of the government and demonstrated how important a factor patriotism is in war. The Russian soldiers, having little worth fighting for, showed themselves more expert in retreat than in advance, and a crushing defeat on land and sea taught the Czar a lesson which he ought to have learned before. If the Douma, however, can be credited to that defeat then the people of Russia won a victory far greater than the losses of the war.

The Douma, dissolved with the promise of another election, marks a new era in the national life of Russia. This body can give voice to the aspirations of the people and devote the revenues to the advancement of the interests of the masses. The first session of that body brought together as notable a group of men as ever assembled in a legislative hall. Lawyers and editors from the great cities, educators from the universities, members of the group of toil and peasants from the farms—these mingled together, all intent upon remedial legislation. The Czar had no party in the Douma—all were radicals, varying only in degrees.

The future of Russia is no longer in the keeping of the royal family; it has been transferred to the people and while there may still be revolutions and bloodshed before the popular will can find unobstructed expression, nothing is more certain than that Russia is going to have free speech, a free press, constitutional government and general education, and that with these she will take her place among the most influential of the powers.

When, one hundred and thirty years ago, the signers of the Declaration of Independence declared certain political truths to be self-evident, the kings of the world scoffed at them, but in less than one and a third centuries these truths have taken root the world around. They have spread because they appeal to the heart. Our nation has been the world's instructor because it taught in a language that all could understand. Plutocracy rests upon wealth, aristocracy rests upon birth or intellect, but democracy rests upon the heart. When wealth dominates, the mind is weakened by luxury and moral sentiments are disregarded. Even intellect can be selfish and withhold from the masses the opportunities which belong to all, but the heart furnishes an impulse that links all classes together and devises a government under which all rights are respected and all interests guarded. A democracy, therefore, a government in which the people rule, is not only the best and the strongest, but it is the only one that any generation can afford to leave as a legacy to posterity.

JEFFERSON AND LINCOLN

Some one referred to himself as "a Jefferson democrat and a Lincoln republican," which statement drew from Secretary of the Treasury Shaw the remark that Jefferson and Lincoln were alike in that they were "both Caucasian, both born in America, both twice elected president, both patriotic and both able." But Secretary Shaw said that he could think of nothing else in which they were alike, adding: "In political belief they were as unlike as is possible in men fully committed to a representative form of government. As well might a man claim to be a John Knox Calvinist or a John Wesley Armenian as to claim to be a Jefferson democrat and a Lincoln republican." Abraham Lincoln himself ought to be good authority on this point. In a letter replying to Bos-

ton republicans inviting him to attend a celebration of Jefferson's birthday, Mr. Lincoln wrote: "Your kind note inviting me to attend a festival in Boston, on the 28th instant, in honor of the birthday of Thomas Jefferson, was duly received. My engagements are such that I cannot attend. Bearing in mind that about seventy years ago two great political parties were first formed in this country, that Thomas Jefferson was the head of one of them and Boston the headquarters of the other, it is both curious and interesting that those supposed to descend politically from the party opposed to Jefferson should now be celebrating his birthday in their own original seat of empire, while those claiming political descent from him have nearly ceased to breathe his name everywhere. Remembering, too, that the Jefferson party was formed upon its supposed superior devotion to the personal rights of men, holding the rights of property to be secondary only, and greatly inferior, and assuming that the so-called democracy of today are the Jefferson, and their opponents the anti-Jefferson party, it will be equally interesting to note how completely the two have changed hands as to the principle upon which they were originally supposed to be divided. The democracy of today hold the liberty of one man to be absolutely nothing when in conflict with another man's right of property. Republicans, on the contrary, are for both the man and the dollar, but in case of conflict the man before the dollar. I remember being once much amused at seeing two partially intoxicated men engage in a fight with their great coats on, which fight, after a long and rather harmless contest, ended in each having fought himself out of his own coat and into that of the other. If the two leading parties of this day are really identical with the two in the days of Jefferson and Adams, they have performed the same feat as the two drunken men. But soberly, it is now no child's play to save the principles of Jefferson from total overthrow in this nation."

"UNCLE DAN" IS CARELESS

The St. Louis Globe-Democrat actually endorses President Roosevelt's proposition for government ownership of coal lands. The Globe-Democrat says: "The president's proposition has a socialistic look, and that may be one of the reasons why it is meeting with little superficial favor. But the idea seems wise. By holding these mineral lands out of the market they could still be made productive through lease. The difference would be that the government would get a share of the profits under the Roosevelt plan, and this would allow a reduction of taxation and an expenditure of more money by the government for the promotion of great public improvements. This looks sensible. The improvement of the country's great waterways like the Mississippi and its chief tributaries could be pushed if the government should take advantage of its remaining opportunity to hold its mineral lands, and let them for stated periods on such terms as the secretary of the interior or some administrative board should fix."

Shades of "Billy" McKee and "Joe" McCullough!

Can it be possible that "Uncle Dan" Houser habitually absents himself from the Globe-Democrat office?

POPULISM

Here we have the republican legislature in Nebraska seriously considering a two-cent fare law and actually adopting a resolution protesting against the ship subsidy; and over in Iowa we find a republican legislature unanimously adopting a resolution calling for a constitutional convention for the purpose of bringing about the popular election of United States senators and adopting, also, a two-cent fare rate, while in various other states republican legislatures are adopting laws seeking to destroy the free pass. Surely the old-time populist must pinch himself to determine whether he is alive.

Is it any wonder that when, recently, a genuine humorist offered in a republican county convention in Nebraska a copy of the Ocala platform, which he presented as his original idea, that long time denounced populist document was unanimously adopted?

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP

In a special message to congress President Roosevelt said that it would have been better if some of the eastern coal lands had been left under government control and he suggested provision in the west "against recurrence of the conditions we deplore in the east."

To this end the president suggested conservation of coal and other resources of government lands; the leasing system to be adopted in order that future generations "may not be deprived of

their birthright."

The advantages of this system are described by the president in this way:

"It may be fairly claimed among the advantages of the leasing system that:

1. It will facilitate the working of coal deposits for local markets by miners without large capital.

2. It will facilitate larger operations.

3. Prevent waste in the extraction and handling of these fuels.

4. The system can be operated in such manner as to prevent the evils of monopolistic control.

5. It will permit the government to reserve from general use fuels especially suitable for special industries; and

6. It will enable the government to protect the public against unreasonable and discriminating charges for fuel supplies."

The president has taken a long step in the argument for government ownership. It will be interesting if those republicans who denounced the editor of The Commoner for his Madison Square statement with respect to government ownership of railroads would give their opinion of Mr. Roosevelt's proposed government ownership of coal mines.



THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

As this copy of The Commoner may be read by some one not familiar with the details of the primary pledge plan, it is necessary to say that according to the terms of this plan every democrat is asked to pledge himself to attend all of the primaries of his party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and 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. Those desiring to be enrolled can either write to The Commoner approving the object of the organization and asking to have their names entered on the roll, or they can fill out and mail the blank pledge, which is printed on page 13.

Lorenzo Obert, Spartansburg, Pa.—Please find enclosed 33 signers to the primary pledge. Will send some more when I get my club filled out for The Commoner.

George M. Fee, McArthur, Ohio.—Please find enclosed 35 signers to the primary pledge.

Rev. Joseph Nichols, Musselman, Ohio.—Please find enclosed 15 primary pledge signers.

A. L. Fry, Spencerville, Ohio.—Enclosed and 87 pledges taken from my township. We have pledged nearly half of the democratic vote and expect to organize a club in the near future.

W. H. Fisch, Grass Lake, Mich.—Sends in 30 signers to the primary pledge.

W. B. Unkefer, Paris, Ohio.—Please find enclosed 5 signers to the primary pledge.

Joan Riley, Scio, N. Y.—Please find 28 signers to the primary pledge.

Louis J. Dober, Rockport, Ill.—Please find enclosed 8 signers to the primary pledge.

Victor S. Finger, Saugerties, N. Y.—Enclosed find two primary pledge signatures. I believe it a most excellent plan for hurrying the corporation men from the party.

Have long believed in government ownership of the railroads and saw little hope for its progress in either the democratic or the republican party. We will have enough voters to make a mighty party of itself if it were necessary but it is not, for the mass of democratic voters will favor it.

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NEBRASKA AND THE SHIP SUBSIDY

Both houses of the Nebraska legislature, republican, have adopted the following resolution:

Whereas, There is now pending in congress a measure in the interest of the great ship companies, known as the Ship Subsidy bill, and

Whereas, Such a measure is a direct grant of special privileges and not in the interest of the people and undoubtedly opposed by more than nine-tenths of the people of Nebraska; therefore, be it

Resolved, By the senate of Nebraska, that our senators be instructed and representatives in congress be requested to work and vote for the defeat of such measure, or any like bill, and

Resolved, That the secretary of the senate be instructed to forward a copy of these resolutions to each senator and representative in congress, and to those who have been elected but who have not yet taken their seats.

This represents the sentiments of Nebraska regardless of political prejudice and Nebraska congressmen who are tempted to vote for the ship subsidy will do well to take notice.

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The eminent railroad managers do not seem to experience any difficulty in securing facilities for hauling their water to market.