

IS THIS MR. RILEY?

CAN ANY ONE TELL?

In the long ago the gray haired boys of today were familiar with the song, one verse which was as follows:

Is this Mr. Riley, can anyone tell?
Is this Mr. Riley, who kapes the hotel?
If this is dear Riley, who is spoken of so highly
Then, by me soul, Riley, you're doing quite well.

This old song is recalled by an editorial that appeared in the New York Times (a paper that has persistently and bitterly assailed Mr. Bryan) of July 15:

A FEW MORE LEFT

Encouraged by his highly gratifying success in disposing of the greater part of his large and varied stock of political principles and policies to republican administrations, Mr. William J. Bryan now solicits further orders. Since you are asking the states to ratify the income tax amendment, he writes to President Taft, "why not give them a chance to vote on an amendment providing for the election of United States senators by popular vote?"

In truth, why not? It is an out-and-out Bryan policy, adopted in a left-handed sort of way by Mr. Taft, who, as Mr. Bryan reminds him, said in his speech of acceptance that he was inclined to favor the election of senators by the people. That seems to be the fate of Mr. Bryan's principles—the republicans take them for their own. He once said that, although the people had not burdened him with the cares of office, his life was not without its anxieties. He could not leave his principles out over night without losing some of them, and the missing ones he generally found at the White House. So, in succession, have gone his "issues" of railroad regulation, of the federal licenses for corporations, of a reduction of import duties, of postal savings banks, of limiting the power to issue injunctions, and now his tax "on individual and corporate incomes" has been snatched from him by a republican president and a republican congress, and goes, over half of it, to the people for their sanction, the other to the statute book.

Not one of these is of republican origination. Not one is rooted in old-fashioned republican belief. They are all alien to the policies and the professions of the republican party from

Lincoln to McKinley. Had they not been exploited and made widely popular by Mr. Bryan not one of them would have been appropriated by the republicans.

Mr. Bryan has a few more left. Like a skillful merchant he studies to please, and it's no trouble to show goods.

Should President Taft give hospitable greeting to his suggestion of a vote of the people upon the election of senators by popular vote we can imagine Mr. Bryan packing his bag with his unsold remnants and taking a train for Washington. It is no longer a full line of goods—the stock has been depleted. But he can offer the guarantee of bank deposits, and the independence of the Philippines at some fixed future date. Last of all, why should he hesitate to propose an unincumbered conveyance of the most celebrated of all his issues, the issue that nearly made him president of the United States, the free, independent, and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1?

That is going back pretty far, but Mr. Bryan has never recanted his belief in free silver coinage, and since he has seen so many of his other populist principles, once declared wild and dangerous, go into republican hands and thence to adoption, may he not reasonably hope that free silver, too, will be taken off his hands?

But that would leave Mr. Bryan without an issue, stripped bare of principles, a man without a platform to stand on, without consideration, finished, done for. Hardly. It would make him a very safe and acceptable candidate for men of all parties who are, or soon will be, disgusted with the republican party because of the shameless breaking of its pledge to reduce the tariff duties. The argument that Bryan is "ambitious, unsteady, unsafe," would fall flat, since the adoption by the republicans of such an array of his principles and policies would furnish convincing proof that he is as safe as any member of that party, as safe as Mr. Taft, far safer than Mr. Roosevelt. He was a bit ahead of the times, that is all, and he was unlucky. His enemies have profited by his inventions. But certainly they have done their utmost to prepare the way for Mr. Bryan to come into his own whenever they lose the confidence of the people.—New York Times.

POPULAR ELECTION OF SENATORS

The New York Evening Post criticised Mr. Bryan's open letter to President Taft, relating to the election of senators by the people. Later the following letter appeared in the Evening Post:

To the Editor of the Evening Post.—Sir: Referring to your editorial of July 15 on the proposed constitutional amendment for popular election of United States senators, you are undoubtedly right in saying that this issue will not be "injected into the present arena of national politics at any man's dictum." But is not this issue already very much "in" the arena of politics?

You say that "the states that very strongly desire the direct election of United States senators practically secure this desideratum by requiring pledges of candidates for the legislature." This statement can hardly be made concerning all the states, or even a majority. In very few states do the people yet run the government and bring their desires to effect. What state besides Oregon has worked out any full and practical scheme of election by the people through the pledging of candidates? Some others have more or less effective plans of popular nomination of party candidates for senator, which is quite different from popular election.

The people of the state engaged in the election of a senator are not the only persons interested or entitled to speak as to the method to be followed. That Rhode Island does not propose to allow popular election, but, with rotten boroughs in complete control of its state government, intends to continue the system by which 11 per cent of the voters can keep Aldrich in the senate to cram bunco-game tariffs down our throats, is a matter of great concern to citizens of New York and every other state. That certain states, by machine elections, keep Aldrich supplied with willing abettors like Burrows, Hale and Penrose, and with pliant tools like Smoot and Heyburn in the senate, interests us

in the most lively manner. That Kansas, Iowa, and other states, with a more popular choice, give us men like Bristow, Cummins and LaFollette, is of the greatest importance to all of us.

Legislative election of senators causes neglect of pressing state issues, injects national questions and politics where they have no place, is a fruitful source of corruption in state and city politics, and has been one of the most potent causes of the apparent failure of local government in many parts of the country. All this, in addition to giving us senators to work hand in glove with "the interests" at Washington. Can we afford to leave this matter to individual states, which may or may not "desire" this "desideratum," and, desiring, may not be able to get it?"

JESSE F. ORTON.
New York, July 17.

MR. TAFT BREAKS THE SILENCE

Nor can we see wherein President Taft has assumed even tactically a stronger position by breaking his silence. The web that the men who fought his nomination and viewed his election only as the lesser of two evils began to weave about him from the moment he made the false step of saving Cannon's face has grown tighter than ever.

He no longer has the excuse that he would not indulge in Rooseveltian "executive usurpation." His friends can not say for him, as they might if he had remained aloof, that careful study had convinced him that his campaign utterances had been too sweeping, and that the honest needs of manufacture, commerce and industry required the retention or an increase of the Dingley duties in many more cases than he had thought probable.

He was led into legislating as much as Roosevelt ever did by demanding the adoption of the corporation tax. And now he identifies himself further with the bill in its final form by demands which leave the inference that if he be

granted those he will sanction all other provisions.

Having watched the stultification of his administration until the wrongs were almost beyond repair, he now says that he has not changed his beliefs in any way. Yet he indicates that he will accept a measure which in almost all essentials is a direct denial of those beliefs.

We do not think that there is the least likelihood that the president will veto the bill when it reaches him. We do believe sincerely that he would serve his party and his own fame best by a veto.

It would be a poor record for the Aldrich-Cannon senators and congressmen to present to the country if no law resulted from the six months' disturbance of business. It would discredit the party leaders. But in the end we believe it would make for republican success and the preservation of the true protective doctrine.

It would be a broken pledge. But the enactment of the present proposals would be a thousandfold worse breach of faith. Such a law would not settle the tariff. It would undermine the whole fabric of fair protection, in which the entire country had just come to have faith.

We see but one way by which President Taft could justify fully every word he spoke the other day. Yet we fear that there is little hope of his regaining the respect and confidence of his countrymen, which have been slipping from him, by adopting that one means—the exercise of the veto power.

(The above is not a Commoner editorial. It did not appear originally in any democratic paper. It is an editorial taken from that stalwart republican newspaper, the Philadelphia North American, issue of July 19.)

SUGGESTIONS TO COMMONER READERS

J. P. Allen, Sullivan, Ind.—I think every loyal democrat and subscriber to The Commoner should add at least one new name as often as they renew their subscription and I would suggest that the name should be the name of some promising young man who will become a voter at the next election. I believe if such a policy had been pursued years ago we could have been successful at the last election. I believe if The Commoner could only be put into the hands of enough of the right kind of people, it would be more effective than any campaign fund that the republican party could ever raise. I enclose \$5. You may credit my account with balance after paying for subscriptions.

John R. Boddie, 610 Wright Building, St. Louis, Mo.—It is needless to say that The Commoner is doing great work—a work that will continue bearing fruit many years after its founder has passed away. I can not better serve my party and country than to work earnestly at all times to increase its circulation. If it could be placed in the hands of one-twentieth of the people our cause of equal rights to all and special privileges to none would soon triumph. I regret that my work in the past two years has been confined to the office, which lessens my opportunities for securing subscriptions, but will continue, as I have done since the first issue, soliciting subscriptions for it at all times and every opportunity. The money power, the privileged class, won the last election by misrepresentation, but with all the power of their money and unlimited opportunities for misrepresentation, they would have been badly beaten but for the vote of their children by inheritance—the negro, and the vote of their children by adoption—the Mormons. Long life to The Commoner and its editor.

SUGGESTS AN OPPORTUNITY, TOO

Bryan's letter to Taft, telling him to submit a senatorial election amendment suggests what we can do for our would-be if not our ex-presidents. They might be made official advisers to the successful candidates.—Topeka Capitol, republican.

It also suggested an opportunity for the republican president and the republican congress to serve the public interests.

PROSPERITY

The following profound editorial appeared in that great prosperity organ, the New York Herald, July 11, 1909:

"One evidence of the return of prosperity in New York City is the fact that most of the cheap restaurants are giving seven prunes to a portion, where they gave five eighteen months ago."