

The Commoner.

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Electing Senators

The house of representatives has, on four occasions, approved of the plan to elect United States senators by popular vote, but the senate has rejected that plan. Democrats and republicans alike favor that method yet so far as the republican congress is concerned the popular will in this reform goes unheeded. There is, however, a disposition in various sections to put the reform into effect in other ways. In Oregon they have the plan where the people declare their preference and the candidate for the legislature may, prior to election day, tell the people whether he will, in casting his vote for senator, be guided by the popular choice. In Oregon a republican legislature was chosen but the democratic candidate for senator received a majority of the votes cast at the general election and so we had the novel sight of a democratic senator being elected by a republican legislature. Nebraska has adopted that plan and, unless the threats of republican politicians to have the plan declared unconstitutional prevail, that method will be used in Nebraska this year. Where states do not have the Oregon plan a candidate for senator may be chosen by the democratic state convention. That has been done on several occasions in Nebraska and it would be well if in every state where senators are chosen this year the candidates for senator submit their claims to their party to be passed upon in state convention.

One of the important tasks of the American citizen is to reform the United States senate. The senate will be reformed when it has been brought closer to the people. Democrats must work steadily in the effort to make the popular election of senators part of our fundamental law. In the meantime, they can put their theory into practice by requiring their party to nominate the candidate for senator so that the people may know just what they have to expect in the way of a United States senator in the event of that party's success.

WOODRUFF IS BOSS

New York papers call upon New York republicans to depose Timothy L. Woodruff. These papers say that Senator Root ought to be able to take hold of the leadership in a determined way. But it was only a few days ago that Senator Root measured swords with Timothy L. Woodruff and it was clearly demonstrated that Mr. Root was not in the class graced by Mr. Woodruff.

WIDESPREAD SUFFERING

The editor of the Houston (Texas) Post and the editor of the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch have organized a mutual admiration society. The proprietors of the two papers pay the freight—and the readers suffer the consequences.

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HIGH SOUNDING PHRASES BOILED DOWN

Boil down all the high-sounding phrases in regard to the central "bank" and they come to this: A scheme devised to compel the country banks, and through them the entire business interests, to pay tribute to a central "bank" or pawn-shop for performing a service which the country banks themselves might perform more efficiently and economically.

Do not the bankers of the country realize that the creation of a central bank is but the first step to the introduction of the branch banking system in the United States?

A central bank to be efficient must have branches, and here we will have the branch system already applied to note issues.

Why should a country bank have to beg a central bank, managed in some distant 'ty, for a few notes with which to move the crops?

Which is the better judge of the local needs for currency in Dakota or in Texas—the central bank, managed by high financiers in the distant city, or the officers of the local banks who are an actual part of their business communities?

Are the country banks and the business interests they sustain to be dependent upon the pleasures of the central bank management?—Bankers Magazine, New York.

NOT ALWAYS "FOUND OUT"

The New York Times recently said: "What does it avail Mr. Taft now, what has it availed him since the Winona speech, to repeat his feeble defense of that dishonorable deception (the Payne bill)? Fifteen millions of voters can not be lied to and not find it out."

Referring to this statement the Bristol (Va.) Herald-Courier recalled the fact that it was the New York Times "which published the forged Cleveland letter during the last presidential campaign and did whatever else it could to defeat Bryan and elect Taft." The Herald-Courier might have told the editor of the New York Times that whether the people "can not be lied to and not find it out" depends in a degree upon the newspapers. When the New York Times published that Brandenburg letter, reported to have been written by Grover Cleveland, the Times plainly "lied to" the people who depend upon its columns for information. So far as The Commoner knows the Times has not told its readers that the Brandenburg letter was a forgery. So far as the New York Times was concerned, its readers were "lied to" and they have not yet found it out.

IN A BAD CAUSE

The new editor of the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch who, while he was editor of the Charlestown (S. C.) News and Courier, rendered considerable service to the republican party, refers to the late Thomas C. Platt as "one of the greatest moral forces in his party." If that is the best that may be said for the republican party, it is strange that a gentleman of Colonel Hemphill's high personal character could be persuaded to work enthusiastically, as he has, for republican party success.

OF COURSE HE LIKES IT

Andrew Carnegie pays a high tribute to the present republican tariff law. He says that Mr. Taft was right when he declared that it was the best tariff law ever put upon the statute books. Of course Mr. Carnegie likes it. He gave liberal contribution to the republican campaign fund with the understanding that the tariff measure would be "the best ever placed upon the statute books."

Good Signs

Democratic dinners held in various sections of the country nowadays are well attended and the participants show marked enthusiasm. Jefferson Day, April 13, will be generally celebrated by American democrats, notably at Washington City, and at Indianapolis.

The managers of these banquets report unusual demands for seats and in every section of the country there are signs that give the democrats reason for hope and courage. Jefferson Day ought to be observed in every county in every state of the union. Indeed at this moment when the principles of Jefferson are boldly assailed by the dominant party, it would be well if in every precinct throughout this country men could gather, not merely for the purpose of paying tribute to an individual called Jefferson, but for the more important business of holding aloft the banner upon which are inscribed the principles to which this nation owes its birth and to which it will owe its preservation. "Into the monumental act of independence," says one writer, "Jefferson poured the soul of a continent." The thing he wrote is known as the Declaration of Independence. Old-fashioned men and women revere it, but the dominant leaders of the dominant party sneer at it and violate its principles. It remains, however, "a passionate chant of human freedom" and Americans must adhere to its great central truth if they would preserve their government in the spirit in which the fathers founded it.

Let Jefferson's birthday be celebrated throughout America. The Commoner sends cordial greetings to democrats who will be assembled at Washington and Indianapolis, and at other points throughout the country. Let us observe this day, not alone for the sake of one man's memory, but for the sake of the well-being of the people of the nation that man helped to found. Let us remember that the words we use in paying tribute to Jefferson will be useless if we do not practice what we preach, applying the Jeffersonian rules to our own conduct in the politics of our country. Jefferson was a great politician. He did not, however, deal with the people as some do, holding the word of promise to the ear only to break it to the hope. He did not advocate the election, to public office, of men whose largest concern was in some special interest. With him a public office was a public trust, a public official was a public servant.

Nearly fifty years ago Abraham Lincoln wrote a tribute to Thomas Jefferson. The concluding paragraph of Mr. Lincoln's tribute is appropriate at the present time. Let that paragraph be read to democrats everywhere and not only to democrats but to men of all political parties. Mr. Lincoln said: "All honor to Jefferson, to the man, who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times and so to embalm it there that today, and in all coming days, it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling block to the very harbingers of re-appearing tyranny and oppression."

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

Democratic principles honestly applied would tend to the cure of every ill with which we are confronted. It would prohibit national incorporation because that would destroy our system of state and federal governments. It would prohibit the passage of Mr. Taft's railroad bill because that means centralized power on all railroad matters. It would prohibit ship subsidy because that means taking from the pockets of the people to put into the pockets of individuals.

When William H. Seward in 1858 delivered his famous speech on "The Irrepressible Conflict" he said that he was an earnest man talking to earnest men and he intended to devote himself to the establishment of the fact that the democratic party then in power had forfeited