## The Commoner.

ISSUED WEEKLY

Entered at the Postoffice at Lincoln, Nebraska, as second-class matter.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN

Editor and Proprietor

RICHARD L. METCALVE

Associate Editor

Office 324-330 South 12th Street

Three Months ..... .25
Single Copy ..... .05
Sample Copies Free.
Foreign Post, 5c Extra.

SUBSCRIPTIONS can be sent direct to The Commoner. They can also be sent through newspapers which have advertised a clubbing rate, or through local agents, where sub-agents have been appointed. All remittances should be sent by postoffice money order, express order, or by bank draft on New York or Chicago. Do not send individual checks, stamps or money.

majority of our subscribers prefer not to have their subscriptions interrupted and their files broken in case they fail to remit before expiration. It is therefore assumed that continuance is desired unless subscribers order discontinuance, either when subscribing or at any time during the year.

PRESENTATION COPIES — Many persons subscribe for friends, intending that the paper shall stop at the end of the year. If instructions are given to that effect they will receive attention at the proper time,

RENEWALS—The date on your wrapper shows the time to which your subscription is paid. Thus January 21, '10, means that payment has been received to and including the last issue of January, 1910. Two weeks are required after money has been received before the date on wrapper can be changed.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS—Subscribers requesting a change of address must give old as well as new address.

ADVERTISING - Rates will be furnished upon application.

Address all communications to

THE COMMONER, Lincoln, Neb.

## If the People Rule Why Don't They Get What They Want?

In his great speech, delivered in the United States senate, Senator Owen of Oklahoma asked, "If the people really rule why don't the people get what they want?"

The Commoner has received many replies to this question and some of these are hereinafter printed:

Robert Lavington, Perry, Okla.—I think the people get what they want, all but about 96 per cent, I should judge; anyway the brainy fellows can figure along these lines to suit themselves. At this date here it takes one bushel and a peck of wheat to buy two dozen good lemons. Of course "they" get what "we" want.

Jim Williams, Burton, Ky.—No, they don't rule and never have since the time of organization. The money power has always ruled. Even in revolutionary times while our fathers fought for freedom, men like Morris, the man that so largely financed the revolutionary war, arranging to beat the laboring classes and congress favored the schemes. "What fools we mortals

J. H. Allison, Blue Lick, Mo.—The people do not rule and the reason they do not get what they want is that Senator Owen and Senator Aldrich, Joe Cannon and every representative in the houses of congress believe in private ownership of public utilities and so do a majority of the newspapers, not omitting The Commoner from the list. I notice a short article in the Appeal to Reason which reads this way: "The (Alaskan telegraph systems are owned by the United States government and as a consequence the rates are only one-fourth those charged in the states, and a still further reduction is being

## The Commoner.

planned. This is what it means to have the government serve the people service at cost." Now if a government operated by men who do not believe in public ownership can make so good a showing as that what could she do if operated by people who do believe in public ownership of all public utilities. And I finally believe unless the people take over these public utilities Senator Owen's question will be left unanswered until doom's day.

F. W. Moore, Brooklyn, N. Y .- As I have written a book to prove that the people always rule, it is with special satisfaction that I note your symposium. The people rule through public opinion, habit and custom, and would obtain what they want—that is, good wages, cheaper rents and better conditions generally-if they had a clearer understanding of government in its relation to themselves. To mention but one habit or custom, that of voting for party right or wrong-this is sufficient of itself to maintain political corruption. People are becoming more enlightened; they demand more information along the lines your paper upholds, the initiative, referendum and recall as well as other reforms which would tend to give them what they want. As a nation we are swiftly progressing toward greater intelligence, which will demand a better class of men as representatives and effective laws to protect the interests of the common people. We are entering upon a peaceful revolution, in which wealth will gradually lose its hold upon politics, and, instead of legislation favoring millionaires, a wiser and more permanent policy shall prevail favoring the common good of the masses. Thus will the intelligence of the people rule intelligently.

Charles Porter, Grinnell, Iowa .- "Why don't the people get what they want?" Apparently they do. The people voted for high cost of living, they are getting it; they voted for "protection," are they not getting it? They voted for Cannonism, Aldrichism; who can say they are not in receipt thereof? The people are getting exactly what they want, as shown by the election returns of 1908. Iowa is probably the worst tariff ridden state in the union-a farming state, the inhabitants of which by their very situation and occupation, precluded from receiving any of the tariff graft, and yet the farmers are insanely of the belief that a reduction in tariff duties would bankrupt the state and reduce every farmer to starvation. The Lacey's, Hepburns, Hulls, etc., tell them that a twentyfive cent tariff on wheat, the tariff on farm products generally is all that stands between them and dire poverty. Therefore they "vote 'er straight." The Iowa republican is getting exactly what he voted for. "Ignorance led by rascality," is the trouble. Educate the ignorant. and turn the rascals out, will restore the country to the conditions existing between 1850 and 1860.

B. S. Paddock, Manzanola, Colo .- The people do rule. The people get what they want. They trade at a store because the proprietor tells them he is selling to them cheaper than to other less favored customers. They the church that gives them the greatest social recognition, irrespective of the virtues of Christ and other members of the congregation. They vote for the judge that will favor them as against equally fair and honest litigants. They vote for a county commissioner whom they think can be "influenced" to work their end of the road. They vote for a school director that will appoint teachers favorable to their children. They vote for a police judge that allows them to disregard the law. They vote for representatives that other employers tell them are most useful to the corporations that they work for. And they get 'em all. It will be necessary for the people themselves to reform before they can reform the politicians. The principal foundation back of the present Christian civilization is the idea expressed by commonly accepted adage, "Honesty is the best policy." So long as our civic conscience is satisfied with this, we are not much better than barbaric and semibarbaric people with whom our foreign missionaries find the argument of future punishment and reward so effective.

Jasper W. Jones, Monroeville, Ind.—The people do not rule as they did prior to the war of the rebellion. President Lincoln and the congress during the war had to do drastic things—adopt measures and execute same without the consent of the people. But behind them was honesty and a motive of good for the whole people, subsequent administrations instead of

restoring to the government their just rights went further, little by little, until during the last few congresses the people of our great commonwealth are governed by two men, the leader of the senate (Aldrich), and Speaker Cannon. These two men dictate our laws; no laws pass either branch without their consent. The state of Rhode Island is not twice as large as my home county (Allen), still one of her senators practically dominates, rules and governs the other forty-five great commonwealths. The insurgents and democrats made the greatest mistake of years in failing to depose Speaker Cannon when the opportunity was within their grasp. His dethronement would have been a step in the right direction. Such a course would have gone a good length in restoring our faith in our representatives. The mistake has set the calendar back a decade. The people will again rule, but a Moses must come to lead the

E. B. Stebbins, Sturgis, Mich.—Too many representatives of "selfish greed" in both the republican and democratic parties. While the democratic party is nearer to the people of the two, it contains too many "high protective tariff" allies to be successful in administering to the needs of the people. Nine-tenths of the people are not satisfied with conditions, but are so divided they will never unite under the banner of either of the old parties. The "needs of the hour" is a new political party. If 'tis true, "history repeats itself," then is not the crisis that causes new political alignments again near at hand?

W. H. T. Wakefield, Monroe City, Kan .- The people do not get what they want because of the surprising length, breadth, thickness and density of their ignorance of the natural laws of political economy and of the true election system. People in this world must depend upon their own intelligence and virtue, plus energy and self-denial for what they get honestly. If they lack these qualities they must steal or starve, or at least sweat heroically for Morgan, Guggenheim & Co. Our system of electionsmethods of recording the peoples' will-is antiquated and crude, compelling voters to choose between two evils as to men and, except in the few referendum states, giving him no voice whatever in reference to measures. "The effective ballot," or Harve-Cridge method of voting, gives the people power to get what they want, destroys the political machine, gives perfect proportional representation. Henry George has told them what they should want, but how few know of his enlightening works. It is easy to enslave an ignorant person.

James E. Doran, St. Paul, Minn.—The people do not rule, because the representatives elected do not represent the people. Under the primary system of election laws only office-seekers secure the nominations. Under the convention system professional politicians secure the nominations, due largely to the indifference of the people as a whole to their own interests. The result is that under either system as it works out, the electors simply choose between self-nominated office-seekers, and do not have a chance to elect a capable, honest representative of the people. The remedy lies in the intelligent, conscientious citizen doing his full duty in securing representative men as nominees.

John Bray, Darlington .- I am a republican. My first vote for president was for John T. Hale, next Fremont, then Lincoln. At the last election I was puzzled to decide whether to vote for Taft or Bryan, but voted for Taft. I am an admirer of W. J. Bryan. His influence for good has been and is great. I take The Commoner, and am interested in the question, "If the people rule why don't they get what they want?" Would answer, wants are usually obtained by right action; the reason why the people do not fully rule and do not get what they want is because they do not obey the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." When the people actually obey this rule they will get what they want, for they will want good will, peace, and brotherhood based on righteousness; they will not take or want wealth, position or power obtained by unrighteousness. All past history proves that just as fast and as far as this rule has controlled human life, man has ceased to wrong or oppress his fellowman. Just as certain as two and two make four, just so certain is it that human happiness and welfare in the future depends on obedience to the golden rule. It is encouraging to know that the growing intelli-