

Democratic Opinion Freely Expressed

(In publishing letters from readers it is hard-ly necessary to say that publication does not mean that The Commoner endorses the sentiments contained in the letters.)

A. James McDonald, Clayton, New Mexico.—I was pleased to note an article on socialism in a recent issue of The Commoner. The fact that Mr. Bryan, while holding the views he does on socialism, yet finds space in his paper for such an article, shows his breadth of view. It has long seemed to me regrettable that opponents of socialism failed to grasp several essential facts in relation to the growth of socialism. Socialists, in this country at least, are committed to pure democracy, under which the people would rule. It follows that "ideal," "radical," or "logical" socialism, or any part or measure of it, will be adopted if the people so desire; otherwise it will not. Only those, therefore, who fear the rule of the people need fear socialism, for even if it be conceded, as it need not be, that "logical" or extreme socialism would be dangerous, we know that it cannot become any more dangerous than the people themselves desire to make it. The realization of this fact would help the progressive cause by clearing the issue between those who desire more democracy and those who do not, and by securing more united effort in favor of immediate practical reforms. The Commoner is one of the best educators we have ever had and I hope it will live long and prosper.

A. J. Shively, St. Louis, Mo.—I defy any true democrat that the party can produce, to offer one excuse why Mr. Bryan ought not to be nominated. Haven't the people endorsed every principle he stands for? Didn't they sanction them on November 8? Why, then, turn him down in 1912? You can no more elect a man that won't stand for the principles he stands for than you can make a stick two feet long without two ends to it. Now let every true Jefferson democrat stand by his guns and we will nominate him and the people will elect him sure. If the reactionary democrats don't believe it let them put their ear to the ground. The convention ought to be held at St. Louis or Chicago, the most central points.

Thomas Campbell, Branchport, N. Y.—I was convinced while at the state convention at Rochester last fall that the "interests" were seeking control of the democratic party. My choice for president in 1912 is W. J. Bryan, the greatest American that ever lived. I have no second choice. As it looks to me now 1912 may be the most important campaign that any of us now living will ever see. We can't afford to trust this great struggle with an amateur. It is only logical that Mr. Bryan be the candidate, now that his principles are the life and soul of all parties today. I want to live to attend the inaugural of W. J. Bryan as president of the United States.

Henry L. Fillman, Fremont, Neb.—The democratic party can bring about real reform as long as it will voice the sentiments of the common people, and as long as the party will uphold and confide with the men who have made, and are making, the democratic party, the party of reform. If the party refuses to do so, then success will never, never, never crown its effort. Any one who is not biased will admit that William Jennings Bryan is the real "power behind the throne" in the democratic party, as much today as any time in the past. It is William Jennings Bryan more than any other man in the nation that has put the democratic party in the position of a "refuge in the time of storm." It was he that weeded out the obnoxious element in the democratic party to such an extent that when the democratic platform of 1908 was framed, fair-minded men hailed it as the greatest document of "civic righteousness" that has been produced since Abraham Lincoln issued the "emancipation proclamation." Considering that Bryan has been the exponent of a "pure democracy" in the democratic party, and that his leadership has been the means of inspiring confidence in the democratic party to such an extent that when the people finally realized the fallacy of looking to the republican party for redress, they turned to the democratic party as naturally as a duck goes to water. When you consider that it is this leadership and sound advice that has put the democratic party in as enviable position as it is today, then why, in the name of common

sense, should the democratic party ignore him now at this opportune time? Why should he be thrown overboard after bringing the democratic ship through the wild and tempestuous political sea? We, the democrats of the nation, can bring about real reform if the "would-be leaders" who have come into the fold of the democratic party, will shed their standpat conscience, put their shoulders to the wheel, help make a united stand against predatory wealth, and be like the men who have made the democratic party what it is today.

J. F. Hobbs, Marshalltown, Iowa.—I am traveling over the state considerably; also other states, and find that the men who have been voting for Mr. Bryan are Bryan men yet. They all concede that Bryan is entitled to the honors of holding the party together and in line, and its success in the last campaign. They also say the next president, if a democrat, will have to be endorsed by him, or go down to defeat. Personally, I am in favor of W. J. Bryan. Why? Because he has been honest to the party and fearless of the enemy, who are plundering the government and assailing every man who oppose them. I helped organize the Bryan Volunteers in 1908 and am ready to do it again in 1912, or for any other man who stands for the same principles that Mr. Bryan has stood for. I find a good many who are in favor of Judge Harmon, provided his record be O. K.'d. Joseph Folk has some following, as does also John W. Kern.

Practical Tariff Talks

No more fallacious statement is possible to make than that which defenders of the wool schedule assert, that because the tariff has not been changed in thirteen years it cannot be charged with responsibility for the great increase in the price of clothing for men and women. If conditions in the wool market were today what they were in 1897, when the Dingley law was passed, the tariff would be held blameless for any increase, but the fact is that if there had been no change in conditions there would have been no change in prices. The tariff has remained fixed and absolute, while the demand for wool has increased and the supply has shortened. Under the normal operation of the law of supply and demand, this shifting would advance prices, but the advance would have been uniform all over the world, if the tariff were not an interfering factor with costs in America. The increase in cloth demanded by foreign manufacturers from their home trade has been from 5 to 10 per cent, while in America it has been from 17 to 40 per cent. As we have a high tariff here and England has none, logic points out beyond dispute the cause of the difference.

But it is not necessary to depend on logic or any process of elimination to disclose the truth. A world-wide advance in the price of wool makes more necessary than ever that we have freer access to foreign wools of low grade in order that the growers of the same grades here may not pinch us. In 1897, when the Dingley law was passed, standard eighteen-ounce clay cloth sold at 95 cents the yard; in 1910 the price quoted was \$1.80. Blue serge is a cloth having the largest distribution of any manufactured and is used as a basis for the entire market on staple goods. It sold in 1898 at 85 cents a yard, while for the spring season of 1910 the price quoted was \$1.50. After the tariff bill passed the senate a little over a year ago the prices of the three qualities of serge most generally used were advanced from 75 and 95 cents and \$1.15 per yard to 97 cents, \$1.32 and \$1.50. The passage of the bill assured to the woolen trust a monopoly of the home trade, and made impossible until the next revision any effective competition from carded wool manufacturers or low-grade cloth from abroad. If the tariff had nothing to do with the price, why this increase almost immediately following its enactment?

Evidence was presented to congress by the clothing manufacturers, the men who buy the cloth from the makers of wool fabrics and who were vitally interested, that the maintenance of the old classifications and rates would cause

VICTORY FOR GUARANTEED DEPOSITS

The United States supreme court, by a decision rendered January 3, sustained the guaranteed deposits laws of Nebraska, Oklahoma and Kansas. The court declared the right of a state to require guarantee of bank deposits.

the increase that actually followed. The senate disregarded this testimony because Mr. Aldrich had made his trades for votes for this schedule, and the majority was not interested in learning the actual facts. This evidence disclosed exactly the process by which the increased cost of the cloth would be passed on to the clothing-wearer, with the addition of the profit-percentage attached by each person through whose hands it went. It was shown that dollar cloth produces four grades of suits, classified and retailed generally as follows: "Cheap," at \$10; "medium," at \$12.50; "good" at \$15; "fine" at \$18 to \$20, the difference being due to the way in which the garments were trimmed and tailored. When cloth priced to the clothing manufacturer at \$1.25 was used the retail price showed something like 30 to 35 per cent increase above the figures for clothes made from the dollar grade.

The difference between the price of clothing under the present law and that which would be made under free wool is set forth in this testimony. Frank R. Chambers, representing the National Clothiers' Association, said: "Most emphatically do we dispute the statement of Mr. Justice that the Dingley tariff has not increased the cost of clothing, and that 'durable all wool suits can be bought in the United States as low as when wool was free of duty, and as low as the cost of a similar suit in any part of the world.' On the contrary, it is beyond any possibility of dispute that when wool was free of duty the clothing trade supplied to its customers in a regular way for \$5 as good a suit as they must now pay \$10 for; and in all of the higher grades of suits far better value was given. The clothing manufacturers know because they made the suits then and they make them now." Justice had appeared before the committee with a suit he said he had paid \$10 for. Chambers said he had bought it at a merchant's bargain counter. The tariff on wool protects an industry in this country that gives protection to approximately 22,000 persons, including all the workers on the ranches. A pension of \$1,000 a year apiece would require the expenditure of but \$22,000. The clothing manufacturers say that the passage of the wool tariff in the Payne-Aldrich bill meant an addition of \$200,000,000 a year to the clothing bill of the country. C. Q. D.

GOOD BOOKS

Mr. Amos R. Wells, Tremont Temple, Boston, Mass.—Dear Sir: Answering your inquiry I beg to say that, having devoted the mature years of my life largely to the study of government, my reading has been principally along that line and I have found "The Jeffersonian Encyclopedia" (published by Funk and Wagnalls, in New York) the most valuable single book on this subject.

The late Senator Hoar spoke of Jefferson as "the foremost man who ever lived," and his life was spared until he had discussed all the principles that enter into our form of government.

Among the religious books I have found "The Fact of Christ," by Carnegie Simpson (published by Fleming H. Revell in New York and Chicago) most useful. I have also found Rev. Charles Jefferson's book entitled "Fundamentals" very useful. Yours truly, W. J. BRYAN.

DON'T BE FOOLED

The democrats cannot afford to be reactionary. The people's rule doctrine is the great doctrine with which the democrats can sweep the country. If they fall to make this the issue, if they seek alliances with the reactionaries, the progressive republicans will make this the issue and will sweep the country.—Senator Robert L. Owen.