

true that no other nation could claim any advantage by virtue of this treaty, it is also true that we have thereby placed ourselves under moral obligations to maintain an open canal for the ships of all nations at all times, in war as well as in peace."

Other signers of the statement are: Henry Wade Rogers, dean of the Yale law school; John Graham Brooks, lecturer on economics; Francis Lynde Stetson, attorney of New York; Ida Tarbell, historian; N. O. Nelson, manufacturer, St. Louis; E. P. Wheeler, attorney of New York; Samuel P. Capen, president of the American board of commissioners for foreign missions, Boston; Marcus M. Marks, and Thomas Mott Osborne, manufacturer, Auburn, N. Y.

THE LORIMER CASE

Denver, Colo., February 17—Editor Commoner: I enclose an editorial from the Outlook of February 4 that may be interesting. It is a pleasure to see the eastern journals showing the courage and good sense to quote from a western man, especially Mr. Bryan. It indicates, among other things, that Mr. Bryan's sayings are noted, measured and used effectively, even by those who do not support him in presidential campaigns. WAYNE C. WILLIAMS.

THE LORIMER CASE AGAIN

"We have received the following letter in defense of Senator Lorimer:

"Editors of the Outlook: I have just read your article in the Outlook of January 7, on Senator Lorimer, and am constrained to say that the misstatements, the omission of important points, the unfairness of the article all the way through, are sufficient to condemn the entire article and will to every one who has read the evidence and who wishes to know the truth and be just. * * * You do not know the feeling among the people of Illinois. The great majority believe it a conspiracy against Senator Lorimer, primarily for many reasons fostered by a great newspaper [the writer evidently refers to the Chicago Tribune, which deserves highly honorable mention in this connection] and from motives we understand out here; and only those who have paid little attention to the evidence and care little about it, but have been misled by the Outlook and other conscienceless papers and persons, doubt Lorimer. Some day, mark my word, the automatic transfer and movement of this money (the bribe money,) the source, the motive, the purpose, will be revealed, and will clear, beyond all question, Lorimer and his friends.

N. P. DAVISON.

"Jacksonville, Illinois, January 14.
"We have just four things to say in reply to Mr. Davison: First, the Outlook has very carefully followed the court evidence in the trials connected with the Lorimer case, and has gone, in many instances, to the original records in Chicago. It has made a careful examination of both the majority and the minority reports of the senate committee sent to Chicago to investigate the charges of bribery and corruption connected with Mr. Lorimer's election. Its opinion that the legislature which elected Mr. Lorimer was shamelessly corrupt is not based upon sentiment, but upon facts which are regarded even by Mr. Lorimer's defenders in the United States senate as conclusively proved. Second, we think we do know the feeling of the people of Illinois, in spite of Mr. Davison's statement to the contrary. We believe that feeling to be one of chagrin and shame, and we assert that if popular senatorial elections were in operation Mr. Lorimer would be so sure of defeat as hardly to take the trouble to be a candidate. Third, we do mark Mr. Davison's words that some day Mr. Lorimer will prove his innocence. "Some day" will not do; now is the time for Mr. Davison to make his revelations. If Mr. Lorimer's friends will bring some real evidence to show that there was no bribery and corruption in his election, the Outlook will be happy to print it. Fourth, Mr. Bryan, a few years ago, in making a public speech on the subject 'Thou Shalt Not Steal,' began his address in the following effective manner: "'Thou shalt not steal' is a self-evident proposition. A self-evident proposition is one which cannot be argued. If you should say to a man 'Thou shalt not steal,' and he replies, 'Hold on a moment—I would like to argue that with you!' don't argue with him, search him." In like manner, we say to Mr. Davison that, in view of the uncontroverted evidence, the political defenders of Mr. Lorimer's election need, not argument, but investigation."—From the Outlook.

Lincoln and the Initiative and Referendum

Sometime ago The Commoner printed the following current topic:

"An interesting story relating to Lincoln is printed in the Kansas City Star and is vouched for by Mr. A. H. McCormick. It will probably cause considerable discussion among the students of Lincoln literature. The Star's story follows: 'There are not many people who know that President Abraham Lincoln looked into the future during the civil war and prophesied that the next generation following him would see the initiative and referendum adopted by every state in the union.' This is the statement of A. H. McCormick, a member of the last legislature from Crawford county, Kansas, and republican nominee for re-election. 'I heard President Lincoln tell General Grant and General Meade that the initiative and referendum was bound to become universal in the United States,' said McCormick. 'I was a union soldier. Just a short time before the breaking of the confederate lines in front of Petersburg, President Abraham Lincoln visited General Grant at City Point on the James river. At that time I was crippled in the left arm by a musket shot and was detailed as mail agent for the Second corps. I frequently made trips from the front to City Point. One day General DeForbian gave me a letter and ordered me to deliver it to General Meade. He asked for a reply. When I entered General Meade's tent I found with him General Grant and President Lincoln and two other officers. They had evidently been talking earnestly about Switzerland. They stopped when I entered the tent. I presented my letter to General Meade. He read it and said: Tell the general 'Yes.' I was about to withdraw when a sudden thunder shower burst. General Meade turned to me and said: 'Soldier, sit down and wait for the rain to quit.' I sat on a camp stool in rather a dark corner of the tent. Apparently not noticing my presence President Lincoln continued the conversation evidently where he had left off when I came in. Turning to General Grant, he said: 'General, the day will come, but it will not be in your day or mine, when every state in this union will have the initiative and referendum. When that day comes the people will rule, the people will rule.' As he said this he brought his fist down on the table with such vehemence that he overturned the ink bottle. I knew shorthand. I sat there and took the conversation as it was given. When I returned to my camp I made two copies of President Lincoln's remarks. I sent one copy home and kept the other. I carried it in my family Bible. I still have it. It was many years after before I realized what President Lincoln had meant by the initiative and referendum. I became an advocate of the principle. It was I who introduced in the last house 'house concurrent resolution No. 2.' This called for the initiative and referendum. It was lost. I intend to try again this winter if I am sent back to the house."

Later the following self-explanatory letter was received:

The Brooklyn Economic and Social Club, Residence, 91 Hicks Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.—Brooklyn, N. Y., Dec. 5, 1910—Editor The Commoner: I am profoundly interested in the statement in The Commoner of Nov. 25th regarding Lincoln's assertion as to the initiative and referendum. Do you think it is reliable? Even in Switzerland they did not have the initiative and referendum until 1869-70, (according to Murray's New English Dictionary.) It seems somewhat remarkable that Lincoln should have made a statement of the kind, using the words conjoined together as we do today, to General Grant. It seems a little as though the good soldier must have dreamed it.

Will you not kindly give me a little word of reassurance or otherwise, as I hate to quote from so honest a man as Lincoln and not feel strongly assured of the fact that I am telling the truth.

Your kindly compliance with my request will be greatly appreciated. Respectfully yours,
F. W. MOORE.

State of Kansas, Legislative Department, House of Representatives; Topeka, Jan. 20, 1911—Editor The Commoner: Yours of January 15th at hand. Will say the interview with me was almost correct. General DeTrobiran's name is spelled DeFrobrian in the interview which is wrong. Now, when I entered the tent, I heard the word "Switzerland" used, so supposed they were referring to that. If you will look up the matter you will find that the agitation in regard to direct legislation in Switzerland commenced

in 1863 and was very intense in the winter of 1864 and 1865.

Another mistake made in the interview was that the shorthand notes are in a little pocket bible carried during the war and are on the margin of the book and not in the family bible. The copy I sent home was lost. Yours truly,
A. H. McCORMICK.

IN SWITZERLAND

The Standard Encyclopaedia says: "In some cantons of Switzerland a method resembling the referendum has been practiced since the sixteenth century. The present form was adopted in the canton of St. Gallen in 1830. In 1848, in spite of conservative opposition, the referendum was, by the action of the radicals, incorporated in the Swiss federal constitution, and in 1874 its application was extended."

The "Encyclopaedia of Social Reform" says: "The home of the referendum and the initiative is the Swiss republic, where from times almost immemorial the people of at least some of her cantons, and notoriously of Uri and Appenzell and the two Unterwalds, have met, in assemblies, or landsgemeinden, in the open, and decided laws by a direct popular vote. As however, the cantons grew in population, and the confederation took in towns and cities, this was not always possible, though the custom still obtains in Uri, Appenzell, Glarus, and the two Unterwalds. Yet even in the cities at various times all the citizens were asked to vote on certain measures, as in Berne and Zurich at the time of the reformation, to see how many were Protestants. Berne, from 1469 to 1524, is said to have taken sixty referendums. The referendum appears too, in a rudimentary form as early as the sixteenth century, in the cantons of Graubunden or Grosons and Valais, before those districts had become full-fledged members of the Swiss confederation, and while they were still known as Zugewandte Orte or associated states. Delegates from their several communes met periodically, but were always obliged to refer their decisions to the communes themselves for final approval. In the same manner the delegates from the various cantons to the old federal diet, or assembly of the Swiss confederation, referred their votes to these states. In 1802 the constitution of the Helvetic republic was referred to a popular vote. Most of the Swiss cantonal constitutional changes have been made by the referendum, and their constitutions now usually require that all such changes be thus made. St. Gall gave the people the right to prevent a law coming into force in 1831; rural Basle, in 1832; Valais, 1839; Lucerne, 1841. Valais, in 1842, passed a measure referring all laws to the people, but the people voted against the law. Vaud, in 1845, and Berne, in 1846, adopted the optional referendum. In 1868, after an agitation largely led by the socialist, Karl Burkli, the compulsory referendum was adopted and the initiative, if one-third of the members of the great council, or 3,000 citizens, demanded it. Thurgau, Berne, Schaffhausen, soon followed, till the referendum exists today in all the Swiss cantons except Fribourg. Ten have the compulsory, eight the option referendum, six the landsgemeinde. The federal referendum was established in 1874. The federal initiative was adopted by a vote taken July 5, 1891."

THE POSTAGE CONTROVERSY

The government is attempting to cure a deficit in the postal revenues by increasing the rate on the advertising pages of magazines. Some of the opponents of the increase suspect that the object of the postoffice department is less intended for raising revenue and more for embarrassing the magazines which have been prominent in reform work. Whether there is any ulterior motive or not, it is hardly wise to begin an increase in revenues by such new impositions until an honest effort has been made to correct the over-draft caused by excessive payments to the railroads. If the railroad charges for carrying mail are reduced to the level of their charges for carrying express, the postoffice department will not have so much difficulty making the receipts equal the expenditures.

The American Homestead, a monthly farm journal of national scope, will be sent to all Commoner subscribers, without additional cost, who renew their subscriptions during the month of March when this notice is mentioned.