The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

VOL. 11, NO. 31 | Lincoln, Nebraska, August 11, 1911 | Whole Number 551

Why the Secret Caucus?

If the democratic members of the house did not submit to secret caucuses on public affairs there would be no doubt concerning any of their proceedings.

Why should any democratic member submit to the secret caucus? Why should not the public business which these men have to do be transacted in the open so that their constituents may be able to fix responsibility for all that they do and for all that they fail to do?

The secret caucus is one of the worst foes of popular government. If you are opposed to it write your member of congress and urge him to protest against it.

THE UNDERWOOD INCIDENT

Mr. Underwood, chairman of the ways and means committee, rose to a question of privilege last Wednesday and accused Mr. Bryan of misrepresenting his attitude on the iron and steel schedule. He quoted a Commoner editorial (of last week) entitled, "Underwood Unmasked," and denounced the charges contained in it as false. The Commoner editorial was written by Mr. Bryan and was based on a Washington dispatch which appeared in the Omaha World-Herald of July 26.

If the World-Herald report is not true Mr. Bryan withdraws his criticism, apologizes for the editorial and expresses regret that he brought the charge he did. If, however, the World-Herald report is correct—if Mr. Clark offered or supported a resolution instructing the committee to proceed to report other tariff reduction bills, including a bill to reduce the tariff on iron and steel, and Mr. Underwood led the fight against it and defeated it, Mr. Bryan has a right to draw his own conclusions as to WHY Mr. Underwood opposed Mr. Clark's resolution. It if is true, as the World-Herald says, that Mr. Kitchin referred to Mr. Underwood's investments in the steel business and expressed the fear that delay in reducing the iron and steel schedule might be attributed to that pecuniary interest, Mr. Bryan has a right to refer to the matter and to express his own opinion. The fact that Mr. Underwood wanted the steel schedule attacked first, as he declares he did, is evidence to be considered, but it is not conclusive. A tender made in court must be kept good: if he is now opposed to immediate reduction of the iron and steel schedule the public is not compelled to accept the reasons which he gives, any more than it is compelled to accept the reasons which he gave for favoring a tariff on wool.

ANOTHER HEARST CRITICISM

The Chicago Exminer, of August 3rd, publishes a Washington dispatch which begins as follows: "Democracy—the only democracy that has commanded the confidence of the people since William Jennings Bryan assumed leadership of the party fifteen years ago—today sounded the death knell of the Nebraska statesman's dictatorship."

Well, Mr. Bryan can stand this; he has long since become accustomed to receiving such compliments from the Examiner, but it pains him to read so sweeping a criticism. If the Examiner statement was that Mr. Bryan's brand of democracy had been recently repudiated, that paper might exult, but what about the democracy that Mr. Hearst supported in 1900 when he was president of the National League of Democratic clubs? And what about the Hearst democracy of 1904? That was within fifteen years; is it possible that it did not command "the confidence of the people?" The Examiner should be more discriminating—it should confine its denunciation to those democracies with which its publisher has not been identified.

TRANSFERRING THE TAX

Some of the advocates of a tax on wool insist that it is a tax on the manufacturers. They should read Chairman Underwood's speech:

"Now, I will say a great many manufacturers claim that you ought to carry 65 per cent of the tax you levy on raw wool into the ad valorem rate on the finished product as a compensation for the tax they pay, but after carefully estimating and working it out as far as the committee and the experts could, I think by carrying 50 per cent of the tax on raw wool into the ad valorem rate on the finished product you fully compensate the manufacturer."

He admits that his bill "fully compensates" the manufacturer—that is, he gives protection to the sheep owner and then transfers the burden from the manufacturer to the consumer. As we produce but a small percentage of the woolen goods consumed the larger part are imported, the manufacturer gets a big advantage out of the compensatory duty and the consumers pay it.

NO "GUMSHOE" CANDIDATE

The questions prepounded by Mr. Bryan and sent out to the different aspirants for the democratic nomination for the presidency next year have provoked considerable discussion. Governor Marshall of Indiana was the first one to respond to Mr. Bryan's list of questions. He answered them to the satisfaction of most democrats. The reactionary element at Washington ridiculed Mr. Bryan's move and denounced it as the method of a dictator. The truly democratic contingent there applauded the step. One of this latter class is Representative Robert Lee Henry of Texas, who is chairman of the house committee on rules. In discussing the move Mr. Henry had this to say of the situation:

"This is no time for pussy-footed, gumshoe and adjustable candidates for president. If they will speak out, the voters will know their positions, their pledges will be sacred and there will be no dodging, repudiating and bolting platform decrees. For twenty years we have been fighting to get up to these issues, and now let us not permit any smooth presidential artist to fool and elude the people."—South Bend (Indiana) New Era.

VARDAMAN, REFORMER

The democrats of Mississippi have selected a reformer for the United States senate. Ex-Governor Vardaman carried the primary by a considerable majority over his two opponents. The new senator is a strong character and a man of ideals. He is positive and aggressive and will be a valuable addition to the group of new senators who are trying to apply democratic principles to present conditions. Next!

A few more days and Virginia will determine whether she will send Congressman Jones to the senate to join the growing body of positive and progressive democrats or return Senator Martin to lead the diminishing group of reactionary democrats.

KERN TO THE RESCUE

Senator Kern stepped in with his amendment just in time to save the farmers' free list, after Senator Bailey's vote had defeated the bill in the form in which it passed the house. Good for Kern!

"Don't mistake the cheers of the politicians for the votes of the people."—William Archer, Jackson, Miss. **See Page 3.**

CONTENTS

THE UNDERWOOD INCIDENT
ANOTHER HEARST CRITICISM
VARDAMAN, REFORMER
ECHOES OF A SECRET CAUCUS
AN OPEN LETTER FROM MR. BRYAN
SHYING AT FREE RAW MATERIAL
O'GORMAN ALL RIGHT
FARMERS' FREE LIST BILL
HON. JOHN W. TOMLINSON
WHY MAJOR STOFER WILL NOT SUPPORT MARTIN
THE PEACE TREATIES
HOME DEPARTMENT
HON. ROBERT L. HENRY'S GREAT SPEECH ON INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES
WHETHER COMMON OR NOT
NEWS OF THE WEEK
WASHINGTON NEWS