

The Commoner

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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WRITE, WRITE NOW, WRITE OFTEN

The tide in favor of a big army and a big navy has passed its flood; the ebb has begun.

As senators and congressmen assemble in Washington they bring reports from the several states and congressional districts to the effect that the masses are opposed to frenzied preparedness. The scare that has been worked up by the representatives of munition factories has exhausted itself, and even the metropolitan papers are beginning to select the things that they will **INSIST** upon in view of the impossibility of getting all that they demanded. The newspaper estimates as to the strength of the opposition are increasing, but the danger is not past. The retreat has commenced, but the opposition must not be over confident.

Every American citizen who is opposed to the proposed increase in the appropriations for the army and navy ought to write to his congressman, both of his senators and to the President. Individual letters are better than petitions because they indicate a personal interest, and a personal interest expressed by a constituent has its influence with a public servant.

It will only require four letters, one to your congressman, one to each of your senators and one to the President — only eight cents worth of postage—to give to those at Washington the benefit of your views.

Write, write now, and if one letter is not sufficient, write often.

By acting promptly you may save yourself many dollars in taxation, and what is more you may save your country from the menace of militarism and from the danger of wars which will be provoked by a policy copied from Europe, and based upon the idea that peace can be built only upon fear and threats of force. Do not delay.

W. J. BRYAN.

President's Message Analyzed

I have carefully read the President's message. We are committed to legislation which will give to the Filipinos the promise of ultimate independence with steady progress in that direction. I am sure, too, that congress will support the President in the effort to secure justice for Porto Rico. Recent events have strengthened the arguments in favor of the establishment of a government-controlled fleet of merchantmen, and events have also increased the demand for a rural credits measure written in the interest of the farmers.

But when the President touches on preparedness and suggests a scheme of taxation for carrying out the plan he enters a new field, and his revolutionary recommendations will find increasing opposition in both parties. The reasons which he gives do not support the appropriations for which he asks. Pan-Americanism, if it differs at all from the Monroe Doctrine, ought to lessen rather than increase the necessity for preparedness. If a small army and navy were sufficient to enforce the Monroe Doctrine when the Latin-American countries were suspicious of the United States, why do we need an increase now when that suspicion is removed and when the republics of Central and South America are willing to cooperate with us in the support of the Monroe Doctrine? Then, too, the enormous destruction of life in Europe will reduce the pressure over

there and make it less probable that any nation in the near future will desire to colonize Latin-America.

The President is unfortunate, also, in his suggestions in regard to taxes. The democrats will not take kindly to the idea of taxing gasoline and automobiles. A few years ago only the rich owned automobiles; now they are becoming the farmers' carry-all, and with the increased use of gasoline for agricultural purposes, the farmer would feel that he was being singled out and made to bear new burdens for the benefit of munition factories to get ready for imaginary wars.

If an additional income tax is resorted to, the democrats will, I think, insist that the bur-

den be placed on large incomes and inheritances, rather than on the incomes of those who will have to do the fighting if there is any fighting to be done.

The President's plan of taxation is quite sure to arouse opposition among the republicans, whose support is solicited, as well as among the democrats. The republicans are not likely to favor the new income taxes, and they will probably demand as a condition to their support an increase in the tariff to which the democrats will not consent.

While the President's plan to largely increase the appropriations for the army and navy ought to fail because there is no necessity for such increase, its defeat will be made more certain by the dissensions sure to arise over the different kinds of taxation.

W. J. BRYAN.

CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ANALYZED
TIME FOR MEDIATION
THE PEACE MISSION
A NATIONAL BULLETIN NEEDED
AMERICA'S INTEREST IN PEACE
THREE COMING ISSUES
TWO LAWS NEEDED
THE "INTEREST" BACK OF PREPAREDNESS
LAFOLLETTE SCORES INTERESTED "PATRIOTS"
CONGRESSMAN "CYCLONE" DAVIS WRITES THE NEW YORK WORLD
CLAUDE KITCHIN'S STATEMENT ON NATION'S PREPAREDNESS
THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

1914-1915

The first Sunday in October, 1914, was set apart as a day of prayer for peace in Europe—and now, after fourteen months more of carnage, many have become so calloused by war reports or so interested in war loans or the sale of war material that big newspapers make fun of those who talk of peace. A big change since 1914!

It is a little discouraging to work hard to remove "suspicion" and establish "confidence" in Latin-America, and then be told by the President that we must make an increase of over one hundred millions per year in the appropriations for army and navy because of Pan-Americanism. We ought to be able to reduce.