

# Assessing Manufacturers to Raise Fund to Oppose Prohibition

## A WORD TO FRIENDS

That nearly all Commoner readers will take an active part in the fight against militarism in this country, is welcome news in this office. The thousands of letters commending the work of The Commoner are highly appreciated. Mr. Bryan is devoting his time and income to this work, and desires to co-operate with all citizens who are against militarism. Through the columns of The Commoner, he will use all the resources at his command in the fight against so-called preparedness. That preparedness leads to war is conclusively proven by the present conditions in Europe. Every one who dreads war and the results that inevitably follow war should get busy. The defeat of the policy of militarism means the saving of many dollars in taxes to each citizen, to say nothing about the cost in blood that results from wars that follow preparedness.

Write your congressman at once, and to both of your senators, and let them know how you and your neighbors feel about saddling a big army and navy on the taxpayers of this country.

If you feel that a larger circulation of The Commoner will help to uphold American ideals and traditions, then Mr. Bryan invites your active assistance in securing new readers; he must depend upon those who are in accord with him in this fight, to place subscriptions where they will do the most good. This is a real fight—a man's size fight. Those interested in the manufacture of munitions of war, building warships, furnishing army and navy supplies, a higher protective tariff, newspapers that profit by catering to such interests and the attorneys and lobbyists of the various interests that will profit at the expense of the people, are all co-operating in one gigantic effort to commit this country to the policy of militarism. The great common people of America must be awakened to the real situation; they must be made to fully understand what it means to them for our nation to forsake a policy that has been followed for more than a hundred years, and instead thereof to adopt a program of militarism, such as has brought poverty and distress to European countries, until great numbers of their people seek our shores each year for peace and contentment.

To make it easy to secure new readers, a clubbing rate of five yearly subscribers for \$3 (sixty cents each) has been made. If you can not send the five at once, just send those you secure with remittance at the rate of 60c each, and say you will try to send more later. May we depend upon your help? If you can not act just now, write the editor of The Commoner a card saying that he may count upon you, and that you will report the results of your efforts later.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR.

Comptroller of the Currency Williams was sharply called to account by big bankers for his charges of shylocking. They asserted that his criticisms applied only to some sections and are not general. Mr. Williams' reply is that he found one national bank in every three charging a usurious rate of interest and that in forty-one of the forty-eight states sworn reports of the banks themselves showed a charge of 12 per cent or more—in a few instances as high as 100 per cent—and this at a time when these banks could get all the money they needed from the federal reserve banks for from 3½ to 5 per cent. The bankers have not yet framed a reply.

One of the grave delusions entertained by the professional exploiters of the people is that the people of the United States are so distracted by world events that they are not concerned with the old problems of home government. Watch the old crowd try to put things across in the next two years.

As was expected Henry Ford is accused of promoting the peace expedition to Europe in the interest of his supposed candidacy for president. Mr. Ford is meeting the same fate that others have who have tried to make the world better, that of being accused of having some secret motive of self-interest behind every action.

The president may have some difficulty in getting republican support for his preparedness program if he puts the cost so low that it can not be urged by the G. O. P. statesmen as an excuse for raising the tariff rates.

The war-mad easterners are now referring to those who oppose their program as "professional molycoddles." Thus we see how continued discussion of a proposition brings out the strongest arguments of the debaters.

The following letters explain themselves:

Charles W. Bryan,

Associate Editor The Commoner:

I am sending you a letter which you might use in The Commoner, which in my judgment is a very clever scheme for taxing the people of this country regardless of their preference for the purpose of fighting prohibition.

You will notice that this letter is sent by each manufacturer and jobber only to people from whom the manufacturers buy goods. This makes it a cinch almost that the tax will be paid without protest, because, first, the amount is small, and second, because the party on whom it is levied does not wish to offend a good customer. It is a scheme that ought to be bawled out from the house tops, thus making those who attempt to use it rather careful about doing so on account of public sentiment. The manufacturer who received this letter did not want his name or town used in connection with it, but I assume the letter is a duplicate of what is being sent everywhere to further the propaganda.

A COMMONER SUBSCRIBER.

The following letter, addressed to a manufacturer, is the one mentioned in the above letter:

Dear Sirs:

In forwarding you our check in settlement of

attached invoice, less the amount of one per cent represented by discount stamps of the National Association of Commerce and Labor, we desire to explain that these stamps, purchased by us from said association, represent the contribution which members of the association have offered to make towards the educational campaign now being CARRIED ON BY IT AGAINST NATION WIDE PROHIBITION.

We have been asked to aid in the collection of this contribution by deducting one per cent from the invoices of all members of trades and industries allied with our own, who, realizing that their interests and ours in this campaign are identical, have consented to the same, and it is with the understanding that you are one of these, that we have deducted said discount from your invoice.

In case this understanding is erroneous, and you are neither a member, through a local manufacturers and dealers' association, or the National Association of Commerce and Labor, nor interested in contributing to its funds, we shall, upon receipt of advice from you to this effect, remit to you the amount of discount deducted, with due apologies for our error.

Very truly yours,

THE BISHOP-BABCOCK-BECKER CO.,

Sec'y & Ass't Treas.

## POPE BENEDICT CONDEMNS THE HORRORS OF WAR

A Rome cablegram, dated Dec. 6, says: The secret consistory, at which new cardinals are to be appointed and other important business transacted, began shortly after 10 o'clock this morning. Notwithstanding the world war it was preceded and attended with the same pomp as was customary under Pope Leo. The only difference today was the absence of some of the foreign cardinals, especially those from the United States.

The cardinals from the belligerent countries were almost all in the group of cardinal priests, in their order of seniority. Cardinals from the entente countries were separated by the monk Cardinal Serafini from Cardinal von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne.

Pope Benedict looked well and strong. He was full of determination, especially when delivering his allocution in which he again condemned the horrors of war. In his allocution the pope after speaking of the difficulties in convoking the sacred college because of war, said:

"In this grave and historic moment before the assembly, notwithstanding the ruin accumulating during the last sixteen months; notwithstanding that the desire for peace grows daily in many hearts and that numberless families in their sorrow long for it; notwithstanding we have tried every means which might hasten peace or allay discord, nevertheless the fatal war still grows in fury by land and sea and threatens unfortunate Armenia with extreme ruin.

"The letter which on the anniversary of the beginning of the war we addressed to the belligerent peoples and their rulers, though it received a reverent hearing, it by no means produced the beneficent effects expected.

"As vicar of Him who is the peaceful king and prince of peace we can not be but moved by the misfortunes of so many of our children; we can not but continually raise our hands in supplication to the God of mercy, entreating Him with our whole heart that he might deign in His power to end this sanguinary conflict.

"While we seek all resources to alleviate the doleful consequences, we feel obliged by our apostolic offices to inculcate anew the only means which can quickly put an end to the tremendous conflagration.

"Prepare for that peace which the whole of humanity ardently wishes for, this is a peace which is just and lasting—not advantageous to one alone of the belligerent parties.

"The way which can surely lead to this happy result is that which already has been tried and found satisfactory in similar circumstances. That is an exchange of ideas, be it direct or indirect,

based upon good will and calm deliberation and set forth with clearness, duly recognizing the aspirations of all, eliminating the unjust and impossible and taking into account with equal measure what is just and possible.

"Naturally, as in all human controversies which must be settled through the efforts of the contending parties themselves, it is absolutely necessary that concessions be made upon some point by both parties; that some of the hoped-for advantages must be renounced \* \* \* so as not to assume before God and man the enormous responsibility for the continuation of this shedding of blood, of which history records no counterpart and which, if prolonged further, might mean the beginning of decadence from the degree of prosperous civilization to which the Christian religion has raised her from nothing."

The president recommended in his message to congress that the money to secure the large sums demanded by his "preparedness program" should be secured in part by somewhat lowering the present limits of exemption in the income tax law and suggesting the figure at which the surtax shall begin to be imposed and by increasing, step by step, throughout the present graduation, the surtax itself. Kindly note the waning enthusiasm of those distinguished rich gentlemen, income taxpayers at present, for a large military program.

All prophets agree that the session of congress which began on December 6th will be a very long one. Not the least potent reason for this belief is the fact that so many republican members have speeches attacking the democratic administration that they desire to get into the record for campaign use. Apparently the idea has never penetrated that these purely partisan arraignments have practically no effect upon the minds of the voters.

We are soothingly informed that all of this great preparedness program that the east is urging upon congress can be cared for "without any appreciable burdens upon the American people." A hundred million or two hundred million isn't much of a sum in the eyes of a man who doesn't expect to have to pay it. It isn't much of an "appreciable burden" to him if the common people who create wealth pay it.

The proposition to increase the income taxes is resented in the east because it is "another piece of aggression upon people of substance." The rich easterners have so long been able to pass all taxes onto the poor that they can't understand an administration that insists on a device that actually compels them to pay a share of the cost of their own protection.