

The Commoner

ISSUED MONTHLY

Entered at the Postoffice at Lincoln, Nebraska, as second-class matter.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN CHARLES W. BRYAN
Editor and Proprietor Associate Ed. and Publisher
Edit. Rms. and Business Office, Suite 207 Press Bldg.

One Year \$1.00 Three Months25
Six Months50 Single Copy10
In Clubs of Five or more, per year.75 Sample Copies Free.
Foreign Post, 25c Extra

SUBSCRIPTIONS can be sent direct to The Commoner. They can also be sent through newspapers which have advertised a clubbing rate, or through local agents, where such agents have been appointed. All remittances should be sent by post-office money order, express order, or by bank draft on New York or Chicago. Do not send individual checks, stamps, or currency.

RENEWALS—The date on your wrapper shows the time to which your subscription is paid. Thus January 16, means that payment has been received to and including the issue of January, 1916.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS—Subscribers requesting a change of address must give old as well as new address.

ADVERTISING—Rates will be furnished upon application.

Address all communications to—

THE COMMONER, LINCOLN, NEB.

"The mills of the gods grind slowly," but for evidence that they DO GRIND, see recent supreme court decision.

Possibly it was the light of one of the Steel trust's blast furnaces that blinded the eyes of Congressman Mann when he was meditating in his garden.

So Congressman Mann was in his "garden" when he yielded to the "scaredness" program. Well, well, that is where the first man was when he listened to the serpent.

In demanding "incomparably the biggest navy in the world," the President has gone "incomparably" farther than the wildest recommendations of the Navy experts and the Navy league.

Congressman Mann does not claim that he was on the road to Damascus when the sudden change took place, and his blindness, being of long standing, would not indicate that he had seen a bright light very recently.

The Security league endorses every proposed addition to the army and navy appropriations and then some. Of course the business of the scaredness organizations is to raise the bid no matter how much anybody else proposes.

Senator William Alden Smith insists that Providence entrusted us with the Philippines, and that we should, therefore, keep them. If it ever becomes a crime to acquire information as to the Lord's plans, William Alden will have no difficulty in proving an alibi.

If Congressman Mann will read his Bible he will find that there are two kinds of conversion. Paul, once a persecutor of the Christians, became an apostle of the Prince of Peace; that was conversion to righteousness. But Aaron's case was different. He started out a worshipper of the true God, but afterward—possibly influenced by the spear-makers of his day—set up a golden calf.

One of the "scaredness" organizations is sending out a picture showing the hauling of a torpedo through the streets. "as an exhibit in the preparedness campaign." Why stop there? Why not put a lot of crippled soldiers, sorrowing widows and weeping orphans on a float decorated with artificial limbs? If they want to bring war vividly before the imagination they should show its victims, not merely the attractive-looking machinery that causes death.

It would shock the public for a minister to invoke the divine blessing upon a prize fight, and yet in a prize fight the contestants risk themselves and divide the gate receipts. Is it not a little strange that ministers can convince themselves that they see the hand of God in a war waged for commercial advantage—a war in which each side wants ALL the benefits, and in which the REAL beneficiaries have OTHERS do the fighting for them?

Experts

By this time the average man has a pretty clear understanding of the army expert, and a well settled opinion in regard to him. It may, however, please the average man to know that the ruling passion in the military expert is understood by statesmen as well as by the rank and file of the people. Lord Salisbury, for instance, one of the most distinguished of the latter-day statesmen of Great Britain, is quoted as having said to Lord Cromer in Egypt, "Pay no attention to the military experts, for if they had their way, they would fortify Mars to prevent invasion from the moon."

Lord Salisbury is right. There is nothing too ridiculous for them to advise. They act upon the theory that the nation must be prepared to resist ANY ATTACK THAT CAN BE IMAGINED, no matter how improbable it may be. And there is no limit to the amount of preparedness that would become necessary, if the experts controlled the various governments, because the experts are all alike. Each group would insist that its country MUST BE BETTER PREPARED THAN ANY OTHER COUNTRY, and that means that the rivalry in preparedness must at last absorb all available money—a policy under which each nation would bankrupt itself in order to keep other nations from bankrupting it.

According to the theory of our experts, we must, in the first place, have a navy able to prevent any enemy from reaching our shores. In the second place we must have fortifications sufficient to prevent an enemy from landing if it sunk all of our ships. Then we must have an army sufficient to repel any invasion in case our navy and fortifications failed to prevent a landing. Then we must have a reserve sufficient to repel the invasion in case the regular army was not able to withstand it. And we must have all our citizens trained in the use of arms so that they could be called to the colors immediately, if the reserve was not sufficient to support the regular army in its support of the navy. Then the boys in school must be trained to be able to take the place of the adults if the war lasted long enough to exhaust the trained men when called to support the reserves, when summoned to support the regular army, when required to assist the navy, in repelling an imaginary foe.

But even this could hardly be considered COMPLETE preparedness. The women must have something to do. They are already being enlisted, and they must be taken from their ordinary duties and trained in the making of bandages for the men who may be wounded if the imaginary foe vanquishes our navy, defeats our regular army, cuts its way through our reserve force, overwhelms our host of trained citizens, and slaughters our trained schoolboys. The papers sent broadcast throughout the country a few days ago the information that one woman had agreed to build and equip two hospitals in case of an invasion.

But the limit has not yet been reached in getting ready. One of our jingo business men proposed that the manufacturing plants be so organized as to be able to turn out an inexhaustible number of motor trucks for use in case of an invasion. And why not organize an automobile corps made up of the owners of all the automobiles in the country? Ought they not to be ready at a moment's notice to carry the soldiers to the point needed to meet the attack of this imaginary foe?

Another thoughtful expert has suggested that preparedness, to be adequate, must also provide an ample supply of artificial limbs for at least two hundred and fifty thousand cripples—why should the nation be so slothful and unpatriotic as to wait until these imaginary soldiers have already lost their limbs in this imaginary war?

The country would be driven mad, or to nervous prostration, by the dreadful predictions of these professional soldiers but for the fact that their conduct furnishes a sort of soothing powder. They are to be found in undiminished numbers at the afternoon teas—this ought to be sufficient proof that the enemy is not within sight. As long as these experts continue to adorn social functions and enliven dinner parties with their presence, the country can rest assured that the enemy is far away—so far away that we are justified in postponing for the present any INCREASE in the appropriations for the army and navy.

W. J. BRYAN.

THE PROPOSED TARIFF COMMISSION

The President has announced himself in favor of a tariff commission, and it is likely to receive the endorsement of congress. The republicans have been asking for a tariff commission for a good many years, and the democrats have opposed it, on the ground that such a commission is practically useless, for two reasons: First, because the report would follow the bias of the members of the commission, and second, congress would not pay any attention to a report that was contrary to the wishes of the majority of the members. For instance, a democratic tariff commission would have no influence with a republican congress, and vice versa.

The commission was also opposed by the democrats on the ground that it was merely an effort to prevent immediate tariff reduction. Now that the reduction has been made, the democrats would be more likely to favor the commission as an excuse for not dealing with the tariff question for the present. As a motion for a continuance, it may serve a useful purpose. There is no use, however, of ignoring the fact that the findings of the commission will have very little weight in congress. A republican will favor a high tariff, no matter what reductions a democratic commission might recommend, and a democratic congress would in like manner ignore the recommendations of a republican commission.

W. J. BRYAN.

Congressman Mann, republican leader, made a very interesting speech, which has been construed by the jingo press as a patriotic, non-partisan pledge of support to the President's program on preparedness. The speech, when stripped of its rhetoric, means that the country needs preparedness and that the chief feature of preparedness is industrial independence. The conclusion—UNSTATED, but in his mind—was that a return to a protective tariff would give both industrial independence and the money for ships and soldiers—that is, the republicans will support the President's plan if the democrats will accept the republican plan of raising the money.

THE PEOPLE VS. PRESIDENT AND EX-PRESIDENT

Here are the three positions: Ex-President Roosevelt wants this nation to go to war with Germany NOW. The President, if we may judge by his recent speeches in the west, wants a big army and navy with a view to going to war with both sides. The plain, tax-paying, peace-loving people are opposed to going to war—they do not believe that we have, or are likely to have, a cause of war against Germany or against the Allies. It is better to postpone final settlement until after the war, if necessary, than to enter this unprecedented conflict.

A CALL TO CHRISTIANS

In another part of this issue will be found an appeal to the Christian citizenship of the nation by Rev. Dr. Martin D. Hardin, of the Third Presbyterian church of Chicago. Read it, have your neighbor read it. Be sure to bring it to the attention of the preachers and priests, and of those who are prominent in the various churches. It is an unanswerable argument, and can not fail to touch the conscience of those who acknowledge allegiance to Christ and hope for the triumph of his teachings.

Did you ever authorize an architect to prepare plans for a house, without first telling him what you wanted it to cost? You consult the architect about HOW to spend the amount YOU want to spend—not as to HOW much to spend. So with the army and navy experts. It is their business to show the government HOW to spend wisely what the taxpayers want to spend on preparedness—not HOW MUCH OUGHT to be spent. And yet the experts seem to feel offended if they are not allowed to decide for the people the amount to be expended.

THE "NEW PATRIOTISM"

The new patriotism which the jingoes are trying to introduce in the country consists in denouncing the government of the United States as cowardly, and belittling its ability to protect itself.

The American Defense society announces that it will establish branches in Latin America. Certainly. If the United States gets ready against imaginary foes in Europe, why should not our neighbors get ready to resist us?