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STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912

of The Commoner, published monthly at Lincoln, Nebraska, for April 1, 1917.

State of Nebraska)
County of Lancaster) ss.

Before me, a notary public in and for the state and county aforesaid, personally appeared Chas. W. Bryan, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the publisher of The Commoner, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, postal laws and regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, associate editor, and business managers are:

Publisher: Charles W. Bryan, Lincoln, Nebraska
Editor: William Jennings Bryan, Lincoln, Nebraska
Associate Editor: Charles W. Bryan, Lincoln, Neb.
Business Managers: None.

2. That the owner is: William Jennings Bryan, Lincoln, Nebraska.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

CHAS. W. BRYAN, Publisher.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 12th day of March, 1917.

J. R. FARRIS, Notary Public.

(My commission expires July 19, 1918.)

MISSPENT EFFORT

"Were half the power that fills the earth with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts
Given to relieve the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals and forts."

PROHIBITION NOW

Drink does not make good fighters. It does not turn out good work. Its manufacture uses up good foodstuffs. A nation at war has no use for drink. Russia learned it, France learned it, England learned it. Shall we learn it first—or last?—The Independent.

Extend civil service to postmasters? Why not extend it to congressmen, senators, and presidents? That would effectually put an end to the "spoils system" and substitute bureaucracy for democracy, with revolution substituted for elections.

"Next!" is the sign most conspicuously displayed in the political dental offices of Europe, where monarchial systems are extracted without pain.

"Who's Who?" will need considerable revision in Russia.

Gracefulness is a virtue—even in the abdication of a Czar.

Selection of Postmasters

The suggestion that the postmasters of the nation be selected by civil service will serve to test public sentiment on an important question, namely, whether the people shall be deprived of the right to select their postmasters. At present they select indirectly through congressmen and senators; it is now proposed to take it out of their hands entirely. "A government of the people, by the people, and for the people" is predicated on the theory that the people are interested enough to do the work necessary to insure good government, and this means a sacrifice of time and the expenditure of patriotic effort. Those who have the courage and patriotism to aid in the overthrow of great abuses and in securing remedial legislation are more worthy of reward than those whose only interest is in preparing for an examination. Eternal vigilance is the price of good government, when the people go to sleep the predatory interests take charge of the government.

Official position is the one legislative reward which a republic can bestow upon its citizens in recognition of service rendered. Monarchs can confer titles; they can make knights of their defenders and ladies of their wives, but in a government like ours, public office is the only expression of popular confidence and gratitude. CIVIL SERVICE, by eliminating the element of political merit, destroys to that extent, the incentive to make sacrifices, and in its extreme manifestation penalizes patriotism. In the eyes of the politically inactive, work—the work without which reforms are impossible, not only excites suspicion, but furnishes conclusive proof of unfitness for the position.

Among such, an office given to a worker is criticized as a "political appointment," while an office given to one who was never interested enough to sacrifice, or even to vote is applauded as a "recognition of merit."

It goes without saying that every predatory interest is enthusiastically opposed to what they call the "spoils system," for nothing so menaces the favor-seeking corporations as an alert citizenship, and nothing contributes so much to the prospect of plunder as a system which visits contempt upon those who labor to protect the public from spoliation at the hands of a few.

The masses, when they are consulted, are quick to reward activity in politics; they reward their friends with city offices, county offices, state offices and national offices. Only when direct selection is impossible—when the number is too great, or the appointees too far away—do they resort to such indirect methods as the short ballot and the civil service. No such reasons exist in the case of the postmaster. He is not only NEAR and EASILY SELECTED, but he is the official who comes CLOSEST TO THE PEOPLE and in whose PERSONALITY they are most interested. They deal with the tax collector once a year, but they come into contact with the postmaster daily.

The postmaster is not a clerk, doing an impersonal work. On the contrary, he renders a personal service, fitness for which can not be accurately determined by examination. The post office department may prescribe the qualifications, even minutely, if it can not trust the judgment of the voters who select other officials, but it can not, by a civil service examination, determine POLITENESS, COURTESY, or DISPOSITION TO BE ACCOMMODATING—qualities ESSENTIAL to satisfactory service in such a position. And, it may be added, NOTHING BUT DEPENDENCE UPON THE GOODWILL OF THE PATRONS WILL INSURE AGAINST SELFISH AND ARBITRARY MISUSE OF AUTHORITY.

The old method of selecting postmasters has outlived its usefulness—the President has no time to examine into relative merits of applicants, and it is not fair to allow a congressman, or any other local advisor of the President, to use the treasury to build up a personal machine. But the remedy is not in civil service but in a TRANSFER OF THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SELECTION TO THE PATRONS. If it is safe to take the appointment of postmasters

out of the hands of the President, senators and congressmen and give it to a civil service commissioner, it would be still safer to trust the people to be served by the postmaster.

LET THE POSTMASTER BE SELECTED BY THE PATRONS OF THE OFFICE—that is not only democratic, but it is in harmony with the principles of popular government.

If it is desired to keep the postmasters in political sympathy with the national administration, let the selection be made at a PARTY primary; if it is preferred that the wishes of the entire community shall control rather than the political complexion of the administration, let the selection be made at an election where ALL can vote, but among those shown to be qualified, selection should rest with the people. The country is not demanding a system which would discourage political activity and put a premium upon that indifference which breeds corruption and mis-use of the government.

W. J. BRYAN.

BY-PRODUCTS OF WAR

The European war has resulted in several reforms which were not in the thoughts of those responsible for its beginning.

1st. It has given a great impetus to prohibition. Russia has driven out vodka as a war measure, and Great Britain, France and Germany have adopted increasingly stringent measures against the sale of intoxicating liquors.

2nd. Russia has overthrown her Czar and blossomed forth as a government "deriving its just powers from the consent of the governed." In Germany there are rumblings—an uprising may take place there any day, and the fall of monarchy there would shake all the other thrones in Europe.

3d. Great Britain is ready for woman suffrage, the government has announced its intention to introduce this reform.

Here are three great victories for progressive ideas and they are accompanied by the promise of religious liberty where it has been denied. All of these MIGHT have come without war, and SHOULD have come without the vast expenditure of blood and treasure, but, coming as a result of war, they will appear on the credit side when the account is made up. It is not right to do evil that good may come, but when evil comes, in spite of all that can be done to prevent it, it is proper to make use of the evil to secure such good as may be extracted from it.

W. J. BRYAN.

Seventy-five members of the Nebraska house voted to give to the women of the state the right to vote for president and for municipal offices. Nineteen members of the senate were pledged to support the same bill, but four men, the majority of the sifting committee of the senate, refused to permit the bill to be brought out to be voted upon. Nebraskans who object to the plan of having a single house, as proposed by Representative Norton, on the ground that it is un-American, are respectfully informed that they don't know what they are talking about.

RUSSIA A REPUBLIC

The far east, the home of despotism, is setting the world an example. China, by a bloodless revolution, overthrew her monarchy and established a republic—twice, in fact, for the monarchical element regained power for a short time.

Scarcely had the world accustomed itself to the change in China when Russia, in even a shorter time and with less bloodshed, reconstructs her government and makes it popular in character. The transformation is startling and yet it is now ten years since Russian reformers began to predict that their country would be the next republic in Europe. The communities were already self-governing, hence the change at the top caused but little disturbance.

Russia's entrance into the sisterhood of republics causes rejoicing throughout the United States. While we are now the THIRD republic in population, we are still the oldest, and big enough to enjoy the prestige that comes from leadership in representative government.

Long live the United States of Russia.

W. J. BRYAN.