

The Commoner

ISSUED MONTHLY

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About the most difficult thing in the world is to try to work up a little sympathy to hand over to the man who is complaining of the excess profits tax.

If Shakespeare was right when he said that the good is oft interred with men's bones, none of the eighteen wet state senators of Nebraska will ever lie in crowded graves.

With the great number of shipping clerks in the country it ought not to be a very difficult task to secure sufficient men to man the merchant marine we are building.

The Germans are quite sure that Kaiser Wilhelm will live forever in history. It is not the length of his stay in history, however, that is most annoying to most of the world.

With the prices of food and clothing still ascending, it would be a very good thing for the average householder if he could follow the government example of passing an urgent deficiency bill.

The ranks of those who are firmly convinced that the most effective way to remedy an evil is to pass a stringent law does not appear to have received many recruits from the ranks of the food profiteers.

Russia seems to have followed Count Tolstoy's directions as far as having turned both cheeks to be smitten, and is in a position to wish that he had left behind him some more definite directions as to what to do when that doesn't seem to work.

Every now and then some republican senator or congressman rises to his feet to inform the country that the war is not being conducted as he would run it if he were in control. Observing folks have doubtless before this noticed that one will not need to wait for any official proclamation to the effect that there is to be an election this fall in which a number of republican senators and congressmen are interested.

This is a good time to load up on Liberty bonds to the limit of your financial resources, and after you get the bonds keep them. As a security they are unexcelled, and the 4% per cent interest they bear is certain to bring more good dollars into your pocket than any of these highly-advertised speculative schemes that you read about. Help your country and yourself by buying.

Chairman Hays of the republican national committee is reputed to be backing as the ticket for 1920 Theodore Roosevelt for president and James P. Goodrich of Indiana for vice-president. Mr. Hays ought to read history to better advantage. There was once a candidate for president who also ran on the platform of "the war is a failure," but it is very difficult for the average man to remember his name.

"LAWLESSNESS AND LOYALTY"

[From the Daily Ontario, Belleville, Ontario, Canada, March 5.]

The frequent outbreaks of lawlessness in Toronto are becoming an international menace and are doing the best work in behalf of Germany that is carried out on this side of the Atlantic.

The attack on William Jennings Bryan was inspired by a twofold cause—the outworn hatred of the United States and hatred of the temperance cause that Bryan represented.

The same tendency to mob-rule was manifested in Toronto on Saturday afternoon when the same hoodlum element howled down the premier of Ontario at the very steps of the parliament buildings, and Sir William Hearst and his colleagues had to make a hasty escape inside the buildings to avoid bodily harm at the hands of the new exponents of democratic rule.

Sir William Hearst had the courage to do what politicians in this country have seldom done before, that is to give a straightforward answer to a large deputation when the answer was known to be directly at variance with the desires of the petitioners. What Sir William has lost in the estimation of the mob he will make up a hundred fold in the estimation of the substantial thinking people of the province.

It is strange that not one of the daily papers of Toronto has had the bravery to come out in clear-cut condemnation of the ruffianism and anarchy that rule their city whenever the desire is present to do so. The respectable, law-abiding element is surely in a majority in Toronto citizenship, but respectability seems helpless and terrorized before the impudent gangsters who brazenly flaunt themselves before the public as super-loyalists.

This same Toronto mob-leadership has had more to do than any other influence in stirring up and maintaining the present bitter feeling between Ontario and Quebec. The theory of the Toronto mischief-makers is that the best way to help the Allies win the war in Europe is to start a revolution of our own in Canada.

Not satisfied with their pro-German work in Canada they now want to break down the newly created harmony between Canada and the United States.

How seriously the disgraceful outbreak at the Massey hall meeting is taken in the United States is shown by the following entirely truthful and scathing editorial from The New York World. The World is one of the ablest, most widely circulated and influential journals in the United States. It is said to be very close to the President and has often been a foremost exponent of American opinion.

The editorial is headed "Lawlessness and Loyalty," and is as follows:

"Lawlessness in the name of super-loyalty as witnessed in the prohibition convention in Toronto, where Mr. Bryan was howled down, whether witnessed in Canada or the United States, is just as mischievous as some of the lawlessness inspired in these countries by super-Germanism.

"Mr. Bryan was denied a hearing by a crowd of hoodlum ex-soldiers evidently well rehearsed for the part, not because he is a prohibitionist, but on the plea, notoriously false, that he is or has been pro-German. A performance so outrageous would have been impossible even in Toronto if newspapers and politicians had not for some days before his arrival discussed various ways by which public displeasure with him could be expressed.

"That some agencies of government itself was in sympathy with the riot which they knew was to come off is shown by the fact that all the higher provincial officials and every conspicuous member of the legislature failed to attend the meeting, although their guest was an American of distinction.

"The man thus contemptuously received in a neighboring country has been three times the candidate of a great party for president of the United States, receiving almost as many votes as there are inhabitants of Canada. More than any other one person, perhaps, he was responsible for Woodrow Wilson's first nomination. For two years and three months he was secretary of state and as such signed the first Lusitania note, in which were laid down with greater force than in any other document of that time the principles on which we are now making war.

"When ruffianism in the name of loyalty subjects such a character to indignity it enters the service of the enemy, for its violence and injustice react upon the cause which it professes

to uphold. The same spirit has been exhibited in this country by mobs maltreating men and women suspected of German sympathies. It has manifested itself also in untruthful speeches and writings sensationally belittling our military efforts and slandering our leaders, all in the name of a super-patriotism, and yet nearly all giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

"In spite of the fierce passions awakened by war, it ought to be possible for civilized peoples fighting for high ideals to face the issue as they face the foe, without hooliganism and without misrepresenting each other. If when nations take arms they can not forget past differences, leaving to the law all who offend against public interests, they are poorly armed indeed, no matter how fervently they pretend to embrace the flag or with what weapons they are supplied.

"Mr. Bryan's pacifism in time of peace was the pacifism of a great majority of his countrymen. The militancy of the American people today has no more powerful supporter in private life than Mr. Bryan. It is because we were pacifists that now we are warriors. Canada, no less than Germany, may as well grasp that truth and hold to it."

DUAL OWNERSHIP

Franklin, Kentucky, Feb. 22, 1918. — Dear Mr. Bryan: Supplementing the arguments advanced in the issue of The Commoner for January, 1918, favoring the dual ownership of railways (by which is meant federal ownership and construction of trunk lines, and state or private ownership of purely intrastate or local railways) as against exclusive federal ownership, I submit these remarks.

Government ownership and construction of railways, as heretofore comprehended, has been criticised on the grounds that it will offer congressmen an opportunity to advocate the building of local lines of railway in their respective districts to obtain political advantages; and that railway construction would be secured just as federal buildings in small towns have been secured, resulting in the useless expenditure of large sums.

Under the dual plan only trunk lines would be owned and constructed out of federal funds, and local lines would be supported by state appropriations, or else built and operated by private capital. Thus dual ownership and construction will eliminate the objectionable practice in the construction of railways that has obtained in the construction of federal buildings.

To this statement I might add that the advocates of government ownership need not become discouraged whatever the results may be under the present limited operation and control of the carriers by the federal government.

Under the present plan railroad operation may be described as half public and half private. Lincoln declared that this nation could not be "half slave and half free," and in the struggle for the freedom of the highways it may be necessary to paraphrase Lincoln's statement and declare "that the highways of the nation can not be half private and half public."

It is pretty generally conceded by all students of political economy and transportation problems that competitive conditions in transportation result in an economic waste; and, therefore, economy demands the elimination of competitive conditions in transportation, resulting in a necessary monopoly. Therefore, based upon fundamental, economic principles the government of necessity must own and operate its transportation companies. All agree that "a private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable and must be destroyed"; therefore, "a necessary monopoly" must be owned and controlled by the people.

Yours very truly,
LAURENCE B. FINN,
Chairman, Kentucky Railroad Commission.

It is universally conceded that without food conservation in this country it will be impossible to adequately feed our soldiers abroad and those who are fighting with them the battles of democracy. Fifty million bushels of barley, 15 million bushels of corn and 2 million bushels of rice are yearly used in this country in the manufacture of beer. Yet brewers and beer drinkers insist upon this waste continuing while everybody else is willing to sacrifice to the limit. Patriotism can never rise to its necessary height in this country until all the foodstuffs saved go to feed our soldiers and our allies.