

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 Months..... .25
Six Months..... .50 Single Copy..... .10
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 19 means that payment has been received to and including the issue of January, 1919.

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.

There is a very deep-seated suspicion that the small fraction of eastern laborers who have taken for their motto, "No beer, no work," are much better acquainted with beer than they are with work.

About the most striking thing that has been developed at the various "reconstruction meetings" held was the evident desire on the part of a number of big business men to get the contract for the job at their own price.

The Des Moines Register says that "Mr. Bryan adds to his collection of loving cups while the other fellows gather up the jobs with fat salaries attached." And it might have added that Mr. Bryan is getting much the better of the bargain.

After June 30th it will again be possible to send a sealed letter anywhere in the United States for two cents. Congress has so decided, but this should not be construed as the expression of a desire on the part of members to hear more frequently from their constituents.

There is a strong suspicion that one of the reasons why the republican senators suddenly concluded that Senator LaFollette wasn't such a bad fellow after all and decided not to vote to toss him out may be that they found out his vote is needed to organize the next senate to make it republican.

The guarantee given by the government that whatever wheat was planted last September should be sold at a stipulated price was the best insurance policy that the people invested in to guard against bread troubles because of the war then in progress. The premium paid is worth the protection given.

The new chairman of the republican national committee is of the opinion, if he is correctly quoted in the papers, of being sanguine of being able to break up the solid south next year. This is fairly good evidence that he really is new at the business of running presidential campaigns in the United States.

The Germans in Nebraska have been almost a unit, whenever a woman suffrage campaign was on, in declaring that the place for women was in the home. They probably won't believe it when they read in the papers that in the German assembly that is to frame the new constitution there are thirty-four German women.

The North Dakota legislature has passed bills submitting to a vote of the people the question of issuing seventeen millions in bonds for the purpose of financing the various state ownership propositions the non-partisan league has fathered. The big dailies are very much worried over the matter, but as it happens to be the people who want these things who are to vote the bonds and pay them it is difficult to see why the editors outside should weep so copiously.

Rights of Inhabitants

In boundary disputes the one difficult problem is to deal justly with the rights of inhabitants. It has been customary to consider the resident as a part of the land and his rights have usually — at least, formerly — been considered of less importance than the title to the land. And, yet, while nations have taken land for THE SAKE OF THE LAND, regardless of the rights of the people living thereon, the rights of these people have often been an excuse, if not a justification, for war. The doctrine of "self-determination" upon which the President has laid emphasis brings this question into the limelight and, as the peace conference will have to deal with the subject in a number of cases, the following plan is submitted for consideration:

Whenever, in the settlement of any boundary dispute which takes land from one sovereignty and puts it under another, any people living on the land object to the transfer, provision should be made whereby they may remove from the land without pecuniary loss to themselves. Take for instance Alsace-Lorraine: It will be restored to France. What about the rights of Germans who have taken up their residence in that territory and own property there? It may be said with some justice that they should have known better than to have taken advantage of their country's wrong. And yet this case furnishes an opportunity for the establishment of a just principle at a time and under circumstances that will give to the precedent a far reaching influence. Let the treaty provide that any German who, during German occupancy, became a resident of Alsace-Lorraine may, upon application and a statement of his desire to return to Germany, collect from the French government the ACTUAL VALUE OF HIS PROPERTY at the time the war began, or at any other time which may be selected as the proper date. This would make it possible for any German to withdraw from the ceded territory without pecuniary loss and the property purchased by the French Government could be re-sold to those desiring to live in Alsace-Lorraine under French sovereignty. It is fair to assume that property will be worth as much under French rule as under German rule so that the plan, while protecting the rights of German residents, and relieving France from criticism, would really be no burden to France.

Alsace-Lorraine is used as an illustration but the principle is of universal application and will, it would seem, make it much easier to settle boundary disputes and adjust transfers of territory. In the Balkan states the races are badly mixed. A statement made by the Greek representative shows the percentage of Greeks in different areas to which they lay claims on the theory of self-determination. If these countries were inhabited wholly by one race the doctrine of self-determination would be an easy one, but there are very few such countries and this mixture of populations is the most difficult problem with which the commission will have to deal in the adjustment of boundaries.

Of course, not all of the residents of a different nationality would want to move. Some would remain because of business connections, others because of inter-marriage. But the offer to buy out anybody DESIRING to leave would silence criticism and take away from those who might otherwise complain an excuse which could be used to stir up discord. W. J. BRYAN.

CHINA DESERVES PROTECTION

The letter from the Chinese Student Christian association, reproduced below, presents an appeal that deserves sympathetic attention. Having abolished the liquor traffic in this country for the protection of our own people, we should not allow this outlawed business a base for its attacks on the morals of China. If intoxicants are to be carried into China, let them be supplied by the nations that have not yet awakened to the menace of alcohol. Our nation is awakened from Miami to Puget Sound, from Maine to San Diego, and cannot close her eyes to the schemes of any crime producing agency that seeks to use the American flag to shield it from the wrath of our neighbors across the Pacific. And the same logic will lead us to consider our neighbors to the south, north and east as well. This is a matter that should receive attention as soon as the new congress assembles. The letter follows:

February 8, 1919. — My dear Mr. Bryan: When the prohibition bill was ratified by a

majority of states, we, the Chinese students in this country, rejoiced over the great triumph that has been brought about by your persistent effort and the co-operation of your friends in the Anti-saloon League.

We compare the curse of opium with the scourge of liquor. We remember very vividly the struggle we had to make to conquer the evils of opium in our country, and we certainly can appreciate the efforts that have brought about the downfall of the liquor traffic in this country. Now the United States of America is, or will virtually be free from the evils of liquor, but I am very sorry to tell you that the California brewery interests have been establishing themselves in China by planning to invest as much as six million dollars in the manufacture and sale of beer throughout China. We understand very well that according to the present status of China in relation to other nations, we cannot stop any traffic that other nations wish to push through in China. We also know that you will not allow this prohibited traffic to go out of existence in this country only to become alive in China. Strong protests from many Chinese students in this country have called my attention to this matter, and many more inquiries are continuing to come in. Their sentiment against this unlawful traffic has become very intense and strong. I feel that something could be done and ought to be done against such action on the part of the American people.

Will you kindly use your influence in bringing about such legislation for international treaties between China and America as may be necessary to prevent the liquor traffic from being established in China? I can assure you that your effort will give all of the Chinese students, numbering about fourteen hundred, great encouragement and will strengthen their faith in the good will and genuine friendship of the American people. Furthermore, it will help them to distinguish between good American people and selfish ones.

W. J. WEN,
General Secretary.

What is needed in most of the state executive offices is a governor who has the vision to plan a system of legislation that will open the markets to the producers and put out of business the host of unnecessary middlemen who have fastened themselves upon distribution and are supported by the consumers. It is not very complimentary to the political acumen of those republican legislatures and executives, who were put into power because democrats had failed, to notice that they have passed up the opportunity.

A close inspection of the price list of most of the commodities offered for sale would seem to indicate that manufacturers and dealers haven't yet heard that the war is over. Or maybe they are too busy thinking up some reason for still keeping up prices to note that now is the time to drop them.

NOT IF THEY CAN HELP IT



— From New York Tribune