

# The Commoner

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## Ratify and Resolve

As the time goes on and the senators unload their speeches, ratification seems more certain. Precedents are being considered and precedents usually control.

When the federal constitution was adopted some of the states hesitated about ratifying, but finally ratified and contented themselves with proposals for FUTURE CHANGES which they proceeded to secure. This was wise. They were able to make their fight for changes without assuming responsibility for defeat of the constitution.

So in 1898; the anti-imperialists objected to accepting the Philippine Islands from Spain, but instead of assuming the responsibility for the defeat of the treaty they voted for ratification and made their fight on a resolution declaring the nation's purpose. The fight continued for sixteen years and ended in the passage of a resolution proposed in 1898.

The situation is exactly the same today. The republicans cannot afford to assume the responsibility for the defeat of the treaty. They are much stronger if they ratify and then proceed to make a fight for such changes in the covenant as they desire. These changes can be proposed by our delegates when the league meets. If this nation cannot secure the changes it desires it can withdraw from the league if it chooses. It can in all probability secure any reasonable changes and it would not withdraw unless a very reasonable change was refused.

RATIFY and RESOLVE is the way out. That gives us ratification of the treaty and establishment of the League of Nations and still leaves the way open to secure such changes as are desired.  
W. J. BRYAN.

## The Hour Has Struck

The profiteer is called into court: Justice waits no longer. The profiteer was the darkest blot on the nation's prosecution of the war. While the soldiers were bleeding in Europe profiteers were bleeding the American people at home. Had they been content to stop with the armistice they might have escaped with their loot, but they continued to bleed the public here after the bleeding in Europe ceased. But a long suffering people are at last aroused and the profiteer problem will soon be disposed of.

The federal trade commission has reported against the packers and the shoe men, but we need a similar commission in every state and a local commission in EVERY CITY AND TOWN to deal with local profiteering. The commercial interests prevented legislation at the regular session last winter, but, now that the storm is upon them, they are taking to the cellars. The hour has struck: the time for action is here.

W. J. BRYAN.

## President Demands Drastic Laws to Stop Profiteering

President Wilson's address to congress, August 8, embodying recommendations to stop profiteering and reduce the cost of living, follows:

'Gentlemen of the Congress: I have sought this opportunity to address you because it is clearly my duty to call your attention to the present cost of living and to urge upon you with all the persuasive force of which I am capable the legislative measures which would be most effective in controlling it and bringing it down. The prices the people of this country are paying for everything that is necessary for them to use in order to live are not justified by a shortage in supply, either present or prospective, and are in many cases artificially and deliberately created by vicious practices which ought immediately to be checked by law. They constitute a burden upon us which is more unbearable because we know that it is willfully imposed by those who have the power and that it can by vigorous public action be greatly lightened and made to square with the actual conditions of supply and demand. Some of the methods by which these prices are produced are already illegal, some of them criminal and those who employ them will be energetically proceeded

against but others have not yet been brought under the law and should be dealt with at once by legislation.

### PRACTICES FAMILIAR TO ALL

I need not recite the particulars of this critical matter; the prices demanded and paid at the sources of supply, at the factory, in food markets, at the shops, in the restaurants and hotels, alike in the city and in the village. They are familiar to you. They are the talk of every domestic circle and of every group of casual acquaintances even. It is a matter of familiar knowledge also that a process has set in which is likely, unless something is done, to push prices and rents and the whole cost of living higher and yet higher, in a vicious cycle to which there is no logical or natural end. With the increase in the prices of the necessaries of life come demands for increases in wages — demands which are justified if there be no other means of enabling men to live. Upon the increase of wages there follows close an increase in the price of the products whose producers have accorded the increase — not a proportionate increase, for the manufacturer does not content himself with that, but an increase considerably greater than the added wage cost and for which the added wage cost is oftentimes hardly more than an excuse.

The laborers who do not get an increase in pay when they demand it are likely to strike, and the strike only makes matters worse. It checks production, if it affects the railways it prevents distribution and strips the markets, so that there is presently nothing to buy, and there is another excessive addition to prices resulting from the scarcity.

### INACTIVITY NOT JUSTIFIED

Those are facts and forces with which we have become only too familiar; but we are not justified because of our familiarity with them or because of any hasty and shallow conclusion that they are "natural" and inevitable, in sitting inactively by and letting them work their fatal results if there is anything that we can do to check, correct or reverse them. I have sought this opportunity to inform the congress what the executive is doing by way of remedy and control, and to suggest where effective legal remedies are lacking and may be supplied.

We must, I think, frankly admit that there is no complete immediate remedy to be had from legislation and executive action. The free processes of supply and demand will not operate of themselves and no legislative action can force them into full and natural operation until there is peace. There is now neither peace nor war. All the world is waiting — with what unnerving fears and haunting doubts, who can adequately

PROVIDES ADEQUATE PROTECTION  
IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE TREATY OF PEACE WITH GERMANY ITSELF PROVIDES ADEQUATE PROTECTION TO FRANCE AGAINST AGGRESSION FROM HER RECENT ENEMY ON THE EAST; \* \* \*— Excerpt from President Wilson's Message to congress, July 29, in transmitting the Franco-American treaty.

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