

Some Wise Recommendations

The President recommends independence for the Filipinos. He is right. The Filipinos have earned their right to independence; they should have it without delay.

He recommends a loan to Armenia. It ought to be made. A mandate would involve us in the jealousies and trade rivalries of the old world, but a loan is a legitimate way of extending material aid at a time when it is greatly needed.

He also urges the encouragement of cooperative marketing for the benefit of the farmers. Good. But his most important domestic recommendation has to do with profiteering. He calls attention to a need for a law "regulating cold storage in such a way as to limit the time during which goods may be kept in storage, prescribing the method of disposing of them if kept beyond the permitted period; and requiring goods released from storage in all cases to bear the date of their receipt. It would also be most servicable if it were provided that all goods released from cold storage for interstate shipment should have plainly marked upon each package the selling or market price at which they went into storage, in order that the purchaser might be able to learn what profits stood between him and the producer or the wholesale dealer. Indeed, it would be very servicable to the public if all goods destined for interstate commerce were made to carry upon every package case whose form made it possible a plain statement of the price at which they left the hands of the producer. I respectfully call your attention, also, to the recommendations of the message referred to with regard to a federal license for all corporations engaged in interstate commerce."

This would have made an excellent campaign issue.

W. J. BRYAN.

ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY

Congressman Reavis is to be commended for the ability and persistency with which he urges the reorganization of the administrative and executive departments at Washington for the purpose of putting them on a modern business basis. The economy and efficiency commission that was at work in 1911 and 1912 should have been continued until it could have reorganized all of the national executive and administrative departments. The obsolete and inefficient systems found in force at that time in the departments that were examined were a revelation to the country.

It is the opinion of those who are familiar with modern business methods that there is a great duplication of work, the most expensive methods and a great many inefficient employes that should have been dispensed with years ago. With the income of the producers of the country being cut in two on account of falling prices and without a corresponding reduction in the taxes, the effect is the same on the producers as if the taxes had been doubled. Economy and efficiency should be the watchword, and the reductions of governmental expenses by cutting out obsolete systems and duplications and the reduction of the army of employes at Washington to a strictly modern business basis should be supported by congress regardless of party affiliation. If the world war has not been fought in vain, great reductions should also be made in the construction and maintenance appropriations for the army and navy departments.

IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE EVERYBODY

No matter what one does in politics SOMEBODY will find fault. Some objected to Mr. Bryan's going into the cabinet and some criticized him for going out. Some got mad because he helped to nominate and elect President Wilson, and now some are mad because he suggests resignation as a means of hastening international peace. Some even complained because he said nothing during the campaign. In each case he did what he thought right.

SHORT MEMORIES

Mr. Bryan has done more for President Wilson and said more in praise of him than any other public man, and yet some of the President's friends forget all the service rendered and all the eulogies as soon as Mr. Bryan differs from him on a matter of public policy. But such is life.

AN EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN

On the first page of this issue will be found an outline of an educational and organization campaign to rehabilitate the Democratic party and make it an effective force to protect and promote the welfare of the masses of the people. When the national, state and municipal legislative programs are announced, Mr. Bryan will discuss in each issue of The Commoner during the coming year the various remedies offered in the different legislative programs. The legislative program will not be partisan, and the educational campaign will be a discussion of governmental principles that may be used in the public schools, colleges and universities and in the various clubs, such as the woman's clubs, commercial clubs and the many other clubs and associations where the members are studying governmental problems.

The Commoner desires the cooperation of everyone who is interested in getting these legislative programs and this educational matter into the hands of all organized groups of society. We desire to receive the names of officers, and if possible, the members of as many organized clubs or societies as can be sent us. We also desire to hear from those who are willing to assist in placing this educational matter in the editorial offices of the newspapers and periodicals of the country, in the schools and colleges, and in all the clubs and societies that are organized for general educational purposes.

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

The following dispatch from Geneva deserves attention.

"In the report of Saturday's proceedings at Geneva this appeared:

"An international military force, with an international staff, was proposed to the assembly by Senator Henri La Fontaine of the Belgium delegation. Senator La Fontaine had somewhat startled the assembly by declaring that the world was not yet ready for disarmament. 'It is necessary to say frankly to the people,' he said, 'that the time for disarmament has not yet come.' Before the world could disarm, he added, entirely different ideas from those that prevailed before the war must be inculcated and applied."

This is the view of the imperialistic nations of Europe. They seem to have learned nothing; they still rely upon force and scout at the idea of peace based upon friendship. Our nation can have no part in the European program so long as it contemplates a PEACE BASED ON TERRORISM. We should let the other nations know at once that we can no longer be faced by the exploded doctrine that "preparedness promotes peace."

Brother or Brute, which is it to be? If the world is not now ready for a peace based on friendship and cooperation, when will it be? Our nation can afford to give 10 billions for PEACE WITH DISARMAMENT. If we can't have that the war has been fought in vain.

W. J. BRYAN.

PROFITEERING IN BREAD

The Federal Trade commission finds profiteering among the millers. Note the following:

"Washington, D. C., Nov. 21—Profits of wheat flour millers in the northwest for the last five years have averaged 24.4 per cent on their average investment, according to the federal trade commission. The inquiry was begun in connection with the general food investigation.

"In 1916-17 the profit amounted to 44.7 per cent, according to the report. The average annual earnings for the five year period for the southwestern millers was 23.5 per cent, but those of the eastern group amounted to only 15.8 per cent.

"The profit of thirty-seven companies covered by the report was over twice as large in the last two years as in the first three. In 1916-17 there was returned on the investment 33.4 per cent, more than three times as large as 1913-14. The eastern group earnings in 1915-16 were only 6.5 per cent, but jumped to 30.8 per cent in 1917-18."

And yet Wall Street clamors for the repeal of the tax on excess profits. Let these profiteers keep all that they have collected? Never. The excess profits tax should be the last to be repealed.

Another Constitutional Amendment

The suggestion that the President should hasten peace by resigning has led to a discussion of the constitutional provision which delays for FOUR MONTHS the inauguration of the new president. Most parliamentary governments provide for an IMMEDIATE change when an administration loses the support of the electors. Our government is an exception, explained by the fact that our constitution was written before steam cars and electricity came into use. Why not an amendment fixing January 1st as the day for inauguration and the commencing of the new congress. Provision should be made for all the regular sessions to adjourn before the next elections so that there would not be (as there is now) a "job session" AFTER the election. Defeated congressmen should not be permitted to serve (except in case of emergencies) after defeat has made them indifferent to public needs. If we had such an amendment NOW peace could be had two months sooner and the President could at an earlier day lay down the cares of office and give attention to his impaired health.

W. J. BRYAN.

HOUSTON IS TARGET FOR STERN REBUKE

A Washington dispatch, dated Dec. 9, says: Secretary Houston's recommendations yesterday in his annual report that excess profits taxes be repealed and the higher brackets of income surtaxes be reduced were attacked today by Representative Kitchen of North Carolina, ranking Democratic member of the house ways and means committee, as "the most unwise, unjust, undemocratic and pro-republican recommendation that ever emanated from any department of the government since its beginning."

"The whole intent and policy of his recommendations," said Mr. Kitchen's statement, "are to relieve the corporate interests and millionaires, who for the last years have plundered and profiteered upon the people to the extent of fifty billions of dollars, of a billion and a half or two billions of dollars to taxes annually and place that amount upon the backs of the people; that is, the victims of such plunderers and profiteers. If the Democratic party in congress were to adopt the suggestions of Secretary Houston's report, it would be no use to hold future Democratic conventions, for no Democratic candidate hereafter would get anything like as many votes as Governor Cox did in the last election, and the Lord knows he got few enough.

"I predict that in the next congress, that in behalf of many Republican measures with respect to taxation, the Republicans will cite Secretary Houston, as well as the president, as authority for their position."

Members of congress who were defeated at the election in November will be engaged in the stupendous task of helping operate the government until the 4th of March, four months later. An administration that was repudiated at the polls at the same time will be in charge of affairs for the same period. It is easy to see along what lines the next great movement for constitutional reform will take.

If there are still any authors looking up material for books on "Why Boys Leave the Farms" they won't have very far to go to secure all the corroborative information they desire, with wheat that cost \$2.50 a bushel to raise selling at less than \$1.50 on the farm.

JUDGE LANDIS ALL RIGHT

Some criticism has been directed against Judge Landis because he has accepted a position with the baseball club, while continuing his position on the bench. Why? He is one of the most fearless judges on the bench; his resignation would be a calamity. He has been serving at a pecuniary loss; he finds an opportunity to act as advisor of those financially interested in the great national game baseball. He can raise the standard of the game without neglect of his duties as judge. He solved the problem presented to him and he solved it in a manner beneficial to himself, to the court and to the public at large. Time will vindicate the wisdom of his course.

W. J. BRYAN.