

# The Commoner

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## Progressive Sentiment Grows

In 1920 President Harding went into office on a landslide which gave to the party not only the presidency but more than two-thirds of the House and nearly two-thirds of the Senate. The Republicans have had everything their own way; they could pass any law they wanted to pass and repeal any law they wanted to repeal. Their responsibility was complete and the country has held them to strict account. The congressional election of 1922 was a landslide for the Democrats, almost equal to the Republican landslide of 1920. A landslide differs from a victory in that in the former the success is greater than was expected by the victors. No Republican would have admitted in advance the possibility of such a defeat as that administered to the party and few Democrats would have dared to claim such a victory as that won by their party.

The Republicans lost 76 seats that they held in the last congress while the Democrats lost not a single seat. In the Senate only two Democrats were defeated while the Republicans lost 8, a net gain of 6 for the opposition. These figures do not give the full measure of the reaction against the Republican party.

Aside from the losses to the opposition, the progressive Republicans gained at the expense of the reactionaries. Brookhart of Iowa, Frazier of North Dakota, and Howell of Nebraska, augment the progressive strength in the Senate, so that progressive Republicans hold the balance of power in both houses. The only western states in which the Republicans held their own were the states in which the progressive Republicans secured control of the party machinery.

If the progressive Republicans have the courage to use the power which they have won, they can prevent the organization of both houses by the reactionaries, and make themselves masters of the situation. The fact that the progressives do hold this balance of power will tend to strengthen the progressive element in both of the old parties. The Democrats, by proposing progressive measures, can secure their passage with the aid of the progressive Republicans; and the reactionary Republicans can only secure legislation by framing their measures along progressive lines.

November seventh was a great day for the plain people; it illustrated the possibilities of popular government. When the people awaken to the need of reform they have it in their power to remedy abuses and to safeguard their rights. When the masses look back to the unprecedented majority recorded in favor of the Republicans two years ago and behold the wreckage of last month, they are inspired with new hope and new confidence in our form of government. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." W. J. BRYAN.



### THE PROGRESSIVE BLOC

On another page will be found a press dispatch reporting the formation of a progressive bloc in the next congress. Forty members of the Senate and House are claimed for this group—a sufficient number to hold the balance of power. Senator LaFollette of Wisconsin and Congressman Huddleston of Alabama are at the head of the movement; one a Republican and the other a Democrat, one from the northwest and the other from the southeast.

Success to the progressive bloc. It will prevent any reactionary legislation and can, if it will, dictate to both parties. How encouraging it is to have co-operation between the progressives of the two leading parties. Wall Street has had a bloc for a quarter of a century; the unseen hand of New York financiers has held the reactionary Republicans and Democrats together wherever big business was interested. The members of this bloc acted secretly but the bloc was no less a compact organization. The progressive bloc, having nothing to conceal, will act in the open. It will draw the line and compel timid senators and members of the House to take one side or the other. Politicians avoid issues wherever they can but, when they are compelled to act, can generally be relied upon to go with the voters. The progressive bloc will be a real influence in legislation. W. J. BRYAN.

### A CENTRAL STATES TRIO

Ralston of Indiana, Ferris of Michigan, and Neely of West Virginia give the Democratic party representation in the Senate from the central states of the northern Mississippi valley. They are all strong men.

Ralston made an excellent governor of Indiana and added to his prestige by defeating Beveridge.

Governor Ferris has enjoyed the highest honors of his state and has the distinction of defeating Townsend on the Newberry issue. His victory has already borne fruit in the resignation of Senator Newberry.

Neely of West Virginia has served in congress where he rapidly won prominence. It is a splendid trio.

## Constructive Program Needed

Now that the Democrats have a membership in the Senate and House sufficient to make remedial legislation possible, the Democratic leaders in both houses ought to get together and prepare a constructive program which will appeal to progressive Republicans. There are many things that can be done to bring the government nearer to the people and to insure more complete control of the government by the people.

One reform now within reach is a presidential primary. If the Democrats will present a bill providing for a presidential primary in ALL THE STATES on the SAME DAY at which ALL PARTIES will nominate, such primaries to be under the control of the states where the state laws provide for a primary, it will be possible to select the presidential nominees for 1924 by popular vote. In order to prevent the scandals of 1920, provision should be made to limit the expenditures of candidates so that, as near as possible, the poor may be upon an equality with the rich in their opportunity to present their claims to the public.

A reform even more necessary just now is the establishment of a National Bulletin as a means of informing the people upon the issues. The bulletin should not be a newspaper but merely a political medium through which the government could bring to the notice of the voters the subjects to be voted upon and the reasons for and against proposed legislation.

Provision should be made for editorial space in which each political group represented in congress should have access to the public in proportion to the strength of the group. If the people understand the issues and the arguments for and against the propositions submitted, they can be trusted to decide these questions aright.

The government bulletin should also furnish space to aspirants legitimately before their respective parties so that all candidates would be upon an equal footing in reaching the voters. The bulletin should be furnished to all the voters either without charge or at a minimum charge merely sufficient to indicate a desire to be informed.

Legislation is also needed to establish a tribunal for the investigation of disputes between labor and capital—not for arbitration but for an investigation which will bring out the facts and inform the public of the merits of the controversy.

Legislation is necessary to deal effectively with the profiteer. He is the evil genius that stands between the country and renewed prosperity.

While four important amendments have been adopted in recent years, others are needed. The constitution should be so changed as to permit a majority of the Senate to ratify treaties. The reasons which required a two-thirds majority