

The Commoner

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VOL. 23, NO. 3

Lincoln, Nebraska, March, 1923

Whole Number 767

The Standard Oil Monopoly

The LaFollette committee, which has been investigating the oil question, has filed a report which ought to arouse the American people. The most sensational sentence in the report is that a dollar a gallon for gasoline is the prospect unless the government is successful in breaking the Standard Oil company's monopoly of the business.

The decision rendered several years ago dissolving the Standard Oil company was ridiculous—probably the most ridiculous that ever emanated from a high court. It actually permitted—don't laugh, dear reader, for it is serious enough for tears—the SAME MEN who controlled the Standard Oil company to RETAIN control of the SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES which had joined together to make the Standard Oil company. The average man will find it difficult to understand why it should have been called a DISSOLUTION when the same men who controlled the Standard Oil company (declared to be a monopoly) were allowed to control the subsidiary corporations and carry on the same old business at the same old stand. Since that time, these companies have added about four billions to the value of their stock, all made up from profits, and they have recently been declaring enormous stock dividends (permitted by another farcical decision of the court, only a little less absurd than Standard Oil decision).

How long will the representatives of big business in the Senate and House and the subsidized newspapers in the big cities be able to stifle legislation looking to the protection of the country from these conscienceless profiteers?

Do the readers of The Commoner now understand why Wall Street is so active in the selection of the Presidential candidates of both parties? If the plundered masses were half as vigilant in the protection of their rights as the monopolists are in overreaching the public, it would not take long to restore justice. But how can the people know so long as all the avenues of information are in private hands?

W. J. BRYAN.

THE REPUBLICAN RECORD

Last November the American people passed judgment upon the record of the administration up to election day. The unsuccessful effort to pass the ship subsidy bill at the short session has increased rather than diminished the popular indignation expressed at the polls.

The outstanding fact of the last congressional election was the growth of progressive sentiment in both parties. This was the natural result of the extreme reactionary policy of Republican leaders. They failed to meet the expectations of the voters. The farmers were the greatest sufferers and their protest was the most emphatic as shown by Republican defeats in the agricultural sections. Wherever Republicans were elect-

ed in the west it was due to the nomination of progressives like La Follette in Wisconsin, Brookhart in Iowa, and Johnson in California.

The wrath of the wage earners was aroused by the attitude of the administration in the coal and railroad strikes. This showed itself in the cities and industrial centers. The hostility of the ex-service men was expressed quite uniformly throughout the country.

There has been no attempt to restrain the profiteer; on the contrary, they have been favored by the repeal of the tax on excess profits and by the reduction in the tax on large incomes.

The arms conference was a step in the direction of world peace, but its influence has been largely neutralized by the delay of the administration in accepting invitations to participate in settlements of international disputes. The president's eleventh hour recommendation was commendable, but came too late for action.

Summed up in a sentence: The administration has been rebuked for its failure to take the people's side of pending questions. Big business has enjoyed a Belshazzar's banquet at the expense of the public. The feast was interrupted last November by the handwriting on the wall, but the administration seems unwilling to accept the popular interpretation. W. J. BRYAN.

A NATIONAL BULLETIN

Now that the reactionary Congress has adjourned and a new Congress, controlled by progressives, is in charge, it is good to lay plans for remedial legislation.

The first thing needed is a NATIONAL BULLETIN, put within the reach of all voters so that they can know WHAT they are voting about and HOW TO VOTE.

A National Bulletin is needed for three reasons; first, to let the people know what the issues are; second, to give the people arguments on both sides of questions at issue. Third, to enable candidates for President, the Senate and House, to present their claims for nomination and election, at a nominal expense, so that rich and poor will be on the same footing.

The first and third reasons are easily understood; the second reason requires elaboration. The proposed bulletin will have space for editorials by the representatives of different parties in Congress. These editors will be selected by the congressmen for whom they speak—each party and each faction in the party should have its editorial spokesman so that all the lines of thought represented in Congress shall be laid before the voters. "Let there be light;" that is all that the people need. There is enough intelligence, honesty and patriotism in the masses to insure a right solution of every problem if the facts and the arguments can be brought before the people. Now is the time to secure the National Bulletin. W. J. BRYAN.

MR. OLDFIELD'S SPEECH

On another page will be found a copy of the speech by Congressman Oldfield. He forged to the front in the past few years and is now one of our leaders in Washington. He is able, honest, courageous and he is on the side of the people all the time.

Ship Subsidy Dead

The ship subsidy is dead—it is not in any TRANCE, it is sure enough DEAD. Thus endeth one of the most daring attempts made in many a year to thwart the will of the people. Nothing except the effort to relieve the big tax payers has so much aroused the progressive element of the Republican party. With more than two-thirds Republican majority in the House, the bill passed by only twenty-four majority—and among those who voted for the bill were sixty-six of the seventy-six defeated Republican Congressmen. In other words, it took forty of the Republican congressmen, whose districts were lost to the Democrats last November, to make a majority in an overwhelmingly Republican House.

In the Senate the vote was very close, but would not have been if the defeated senators had been subtracted from the advocates of the bill.

The Democratic filibuster finally defeated the measure, but the filibuster could not have succeeded in defeating a meritorious measure. If the Republicans who favored it had been willing to make a sacrifice they could have forced a vote; but their desire to pass the bill was not as strong as the determination of the Democrats to prevent it.

But the ship subsidy bill has served its purpose. It has disclosed the extreme to which Big Business will go in its contempt for popular government—a government resting upon the consent of the governed. And it has also brought prominently before the country the menace of a congressional session held AFTER the election. The ship subsidy bill contributed the impulse necessary to carry the Norris amendment through the Senate and there is no doubt that it will be submitted at the next session.

Things are working out all right. The Republicans by their attempt to put through this iniquitous steal have awakened the country to the importance of an amendment to the Constitution. The Democrats by their filibuster defeated the attempt; hence we shall have the good of education without suffering the plunder of the treasury. W. J. BRYAN.

SENATOR ROBINSON'S STATEMENT

On another page will be found a statement by Senator Robinson in regard to a point of order made and sustained against Senator Hefin. Senator Robinson's statement speaks for itself, and furnishes an illustration of the influences that controlled at Washington. The rule of big business has been carried so far that a mere statement that a senator represents the people is resented by those who are not able to truthfully make the same statement. The next Senate will have a progressive majority and will not, therefore, be so sensitive about criticisms of Wall Street.

Senator Hefin is to be congratulated on the assertion of his right as a senator to use the language that he'd, and he is fortunate in having a term that extends into the next Congress when he can speak more freely and with less fear of rebuke. W. J. BRYAN.