

cases which could be looked after just as well by the courts, or why give it more power, merely to keep it busy? The Hawkeye says:

"In April last the senate adopted a resolution asking the interstate com-

**Complaints Mostly Trifling.** merce commission to furnish the senate with a state-

ment of the number of complaints made against the railroads of the country during certain periods. The commission has made its report, senate document No. 319. The report shows that the number of complaints, oral and written, big and little, is about 1,400 annually, but many of them are trifling, and most of them are disposed of by the commission without any formal hearing. In the ten years, from April 16, 1890, to April 16, 1900, there were only 180 complaints of importance enough to justify formal hearings; that is to say, an average of eighteen cases a year. In the face of such facts it is not probable that congress will give more power to the commission merely for the sake of keeping that body busy.

"Considering that there are many millions of interstate freight shipments every year, and an average of only

**Abolish the Commission.**

eighteen com-

plaints serious enough to require formal hearings, the question ought to be, why continue the commerce commission at all? Why should the country pay \$250,000 a year (which is about what the commission costs), to look after eighteen complaints against the railroads, which the courts could deal with just as well without the commission?

"The report shows that of the 180 cases in ten years, 35 were taken into the courts from the commission, so the commission itself decided only 145 cases in ten years, or an average of 14½ cases a year, besides the trivial matters which were of little importance, and which could, and no doubt would, have been adjusted, if there were no commission in existence."

**GERMAN RETALIATION.**

It must be admitted that we in this country are not in a position to complain at this imperial restriction upon our trade. In consequence of our tariff impositions, we have so far prevented the access of German products to our market that the sales of German goods in the United States for the last year or two have been considerably smaller than they were ten years ago. It was the endeavor of those who framed the present tariff law to put every possible obstacle in the way of the entrance into this country of goods of German manufacture. On the other hand, our sales in Germany have steadily increased, and during the last fiscal year were nearly twice as large as they were ten years ago.

It is not strange, in view of these

conditions, that German manufacturers and those representing them in the reichstag are not stirring themselves as energetically as they might to prevent the passage of this restrictive law. We have done what we could to spoil their trade in this country, and, if it had not been that they realized that their operatives will be compelled to pay more for their food supplies, we do not believe they would have lifted their hands to resist the adoption of a law which strikes a blow at the American export trade. The great increase of our German sales and the entire absence of increase in our German purchases indicate that conditions of exchange are much more favorable to us in Germany than those which we accord to German merchants; hence, if it were not for personal losses, all of the Germans would, doubtless, be only too well pleased to administer to us a dose of our own medicine.

This action of the German reichstag is a symptom of a popular sentiment in Europe which it would be well for those who are to shape the policy of this country for the next few years to seriously take into account. Our protection policy is making for us enemies all over the world, and doing this at a time when, in consequence of our expanded industrial resources, we are greatly in need of finding foreign markets wherever we can secure them. If we had a tariff for revenue only, giving to all people generous opportunities to trade with us, there cannot be the least doubt that many of the proposed limitations upon our export trade would never be thought of. We should then have in all of the great countries of the world a large number of trade friends, who would insist that our readiness to buy should be reciprocated by ample opportunities to sell. As it is, it is by no means unlikely that the early years of the coming century will bring with them a movement to unite the governments of Europe in an effort to shut out the entrance into their ports of merchandise of American manufacture, and this movement will be welcomed by those who might readily have been made our friends because of their desire to retaliate upon us for the restrictions which we have imposed upon them — Boston Herald.

**THE FREMONT MYTH.**

THE CONSERVATIVE has commented once or twice on a peculiar tendency among amateurs of western history to give Captain John C. Fremont credit for nearly everything that happened in this part of the country prior to about 1850. This is brought to mind again by a statement noticed in a recent book, which is so attractive that one is very reluctant to have suspicions of its accuracy aroused—Col. Henry Inman's "Great Salt Lake Trail." On page 213

of this work appears a foot-note (which may therefore not be Colonel Inman's) referring to the Smoky Hill Fork of the Republican River, and saying "this stream was named by Fremont on his second expedition of exploration to the regions of the then unknown 'Far West.' "

This is so utterly incorrect, and comes apparently from so high authority, that it illustrates very well the exasperating nature of these Fremont legends. As a matter of fact, most of the features of western topography bore their present names before Captain Fremont was born. In this case, both the Republican and its "Smokeyhill" Fork were found bearing those names by Captain Pike when he crossed to the mountains in 1806, and so appear both in his journal and on his maps. Colonel Inman's error may perhaps have arisen from a hasty reading of a passage in Fremont's record of his second journey, wherein he speaks of coming upon "a large stream, afterward known to be the Republican fork of the Kansas." Read this "afterward known as" and the error is accountable.

Considering that this belief in the Pathfinder has grown in fifty years to the present point (where even the State Historical Society gives publicity to mention of him as "the first white man known to have crossed the plains"), one must expect to see him regarded in another half-century as little less than the creator of the western portion of this continent. This extravagant popular estimation may very likely have had its root in reckless advertisement of his prowess and exploits during his candidacy for the presidency in 1856. It does not appear from his own accounts of his travels that he was conspicuously arrogant in such matters. On surmounting the comparatively modest prominence in the Wind River Mountains, since very properly known as Fremont's Peak, he recorded in his journal, "it is presumed that this is the highest peak of the Rocky Mountains," but this was natural enough, if not exactly self-obliterate. In describing Independence Rock he devotes quite a little space to the large cross which he engraved upon that ancient autograph-album of the plains, "as a symbol of the Christian faith," but makes no mention of the letters I. H. S. which Father Desmet had inscribed thereon some years before. But such little characteristics need not forbid our supposing that his present posthumous greatness has been in a great measure thrust upon him.

A. T. RICHARDSON.

**WOULD DECEIVE NO ONE.**

To repudiate the Chicago platform and nominate Bryan would be like pushing Satan out of the front door to bring him in again at the back door. It would deceive nobody.—Philadelphia Record (dem.).