

**CONGRESS.** The second session of the fifty-sixth congress convened Tuesday of this week. A number of important bills have already been considered in the committee and await definite action by congress at this session. Among them are the Nicaragua Canal, Army Reorganization, Rivers and Harbors, Steamship Subsidy, Philippine Civil government, and amendments to war revenue bills. If scandals and extravagant appropriations are to be prevented the last-named proposition should be given immediate consideration. A surplus is accumulating under the war revenue act that is apt to seriously impair the standing of many distinguished congressmen for economy. To keep the expenses of government down its revenues must also be kept down. Congress should reduce the revenues to meet the legitimate needs of government. In addition to abolishing the tax on insurance policies, as pointed out elsewhere, the stamp upon checks and other banking instruments of everyday use should be removed. They are very troublesome and annoying to business men, in addition to the burden of the tax.

The Nicaragua canal is Senator Morgan's pet project. If this bill is only permitted to become a law he will feel that his fame is secure. For years he has advocated the construction of an Isthmian canal and in nearly every session of congress, since he became a member, Morgan's canal bill has had a place upon the calendar. Thus far he has only succeeded in securing honorable mention for his waterway in that thrillingly sensational and highly entertaining publication known as the Congressional Record. It is quite improbable that he will succeed better this time. Congress is not yet agreed either upon the expediency of constructing the canal or upon the regulation and control of it afterwards. Quite a large contingent are in favor of fortifying the canal while another coterie are vigorously opposed to this idea. That these widely divergent opinions will be reconciled at this session is hardly to be expected.

The Steamship Subsidy bill, which was pretty thoroughly discussed and condemned by the newspapers during the last session could with perfect propriety be indefinitely postponed again. This proposition when first suggested was very unpopular and for this reason action was deferred until the present session. Public opinion, in the meantime, has not grown more friendly and there would be no great grief, aside from that of the shipbuilders interested, if the bill was defeated.

The most important action to be taken by congress is that in regard to the Philippines. We must establish a civil government for the Filipinos and con-

gress should not delay in making the needful regulations. It is high time some authoritative declaration was made to the Filipinos of our intentions and purposes. Congress, the only body competent to speak for the American people, should without unnecessary delay inform the Filipinos just what we contemplate doing, and the kind of government we intend to give them. In the formation of this government let congress be guided by a broad, generous, patriotic spirit and give to the Filipinos the largest possible local freedom consistent with their own welfare. Let the well-being and future happiness of the brown people have a part in the deliberations of the American congress. This might prove an effective way of terminating the unpleasant relations now existing.

**16 TO 1.** The manner in which some alleged economists and some pretended statesmen regain consciousness after the avalanche of November 6, 1900, which buried all their financial fallacies and other vagaries, and solemnly declare that they are still for "the unlimited coinage of silver at the sacred ratio of sixteen to one without the consent of any other nation," reminds THE CONSERVATIVE of Benjamin Disraeli's picture of a populist leader:

"Mr. Kremlin himself was distinguished for ignorance, for he had only one idea, and that was wrong."

Mr. Kremlin could have achieved renown in the campaigns of 1896 and 1900 by having become a candidate for the presidency of the United States. Men, having only one idea, and that wrong, have made records, secured great following and illustrated the value of verbiage over thoughtage in this age.

**ABOLISH INSURANCE TAX.** The holders of life insurance policies in old line companies are making a strong effort with congress for the repeal of the life insurance tax. Life insurance is not a luxury but a necessity. To make provision for the support of dependent ones is the duty of every man. Most life insurance companies are great coöperative institutions in which the policy holders are at the same time stockholders or members of the company and sharers in all its profits and losses. Unwarranted taxation merely means additional expense to the company and increases the cost of insurance to every individual member of the company. Then too, the tax is not equitably levied. The man who takes out a cheap form of policy for \$1000 with a premium of about \$20.00 pays the same tax as the man who applies for a more expensive policy with a premium of \$50.00 or \$100.00. As the revenues of the government are now larger than necessary the tax on life insurance should be abolished.

**TREE PLANTING.** The tree planters of Nebraska should be alert and ready for their work in early spring. The exhaustion of the lumber resources of the United States will have been completed before the twentieth century shall have reached middle life. The owner of each farm, big or little, should plant trees for the sake of self and posterity.

**QUITE CORRECT.** The peerless Demosthenes, who used occasionally to stir up Athens with his tongue was also a forecaster as to the oratory of the present time which was to him then a very distant future. He evidently had fore-knowledge of the spellbinder buncombe which is so lavishly distributed during political campaigns by men who mistake talk for thought. And so Demosthenes wickedly wrote:

"As a vessel is known by the sound, whether it be cracked or not; so men are proved, by their speeches, whether they be wise or foolish."

Very recently a latter-day Demosthenes said:

"If the election came off tomorrow we should win. But the republicans are getting together vast sums of money. They can buy. Our folks can sell."

And again:

"I see wan-faced women on the street who have never been to the seaside. But if I am elected all shall visit watering places—all shall get delightful vacations when the plain people shall have elected the president."

**CARNEGIE.** In a recent interview Andrew Carnegie gave out some interesting suggestions upon the subject of giving. He believes in rational giving as distinguished from indiscriminate charity. Among his most notable benefactions he places what he has induced others to give.

"Money is frequently given by men," he says, "without thought, simply to ease their conscience. Money given in that way, nine times out of ten, does no good. There is no use of helping anybody up a ladder unless he does some climbing himself. As long as you boost, the man will stay up, but as soon as you let go he falls, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. A man came to me recently and congratulated me upon having given millions to a technical institution in Pittsburg. I said: 'No, but if you congratulate me upon having induced Pittsburg to give a large sum for a public library, shake.' I wish to have on my tombstone not what I have given, but the names of those whom I have induced to give."

"What is a communist? One who has yearnings For equal division of unequal earnings."