

The Commoner.

nected with the work of Mr. Hull's committee. The Credit-Mobilier scandal relegated a large number of congressmen to private life, and yet the connection between Mr. Hull, the chairman of the military committee, and Mr. Hull, the capitalist, is much closer than the connection between an ordinary congressman and the Credit-Mobilier.

Mr. Hull says if the time ever comes when he is not permitted to invest in a legitimate enterprise, he will leave politics. But would he have invested in this enterprise if he had been out of politics? He is president of the company, was there any reason for his selection other than his political prominence?

Mr. Hull is too intelligent a man not see the impropriety of his position, and it indicates a very low standard of morality when his republican colleagues in the House defend his action.

When John Quincy Adams entered the House of Representatives he sold his bank stock in order that he might not be pecuniarily interested in legislation on that subject. The difference between Mr. Adams and Mr. Hull is obvious.

A few years ago a Senate committee investigated the charge that certain senators had speculated in sugar stock while the senate was considering the tariff on sugar, and everybody recognized that it was not legitimate. One senator explained that his son had speculated some without his knowledge, while another senator admitted a purchase of sugar stock but insisted that the servant girl sent a dispatch which he had written, but afterwards decided not to send. One senator only, Mr. Quay, of Pennsylvania, acknowledged and defended such transactions.

"We now have a considerable number of men in official position who are directly and intimately connected with large corporations, and through these corporations are pecuniarily interested in the legislation which they have to pass upon. Is this fair to the public? The Express companies are interested in postal legislation because the postoffice department is a competitor with them in the carrying of small packages and newspapers. Senator Platt of New York is connected with one of the great express companies; is he in position to protect the interests of the people at large on such a subject? Congress deals with interstate railroad rates and discriminations, besides having supervision over the compensation paid to railroads for carrying mail. Senator Depew is so closely connected with the railroad interests of the country that he cannot be expected to represent the people's side of any question in which the railroads are interested. Senator Depew, however, is only one of the railroad attorneys in Congress; there are others.

How many senators and representatives have stock in the trusts which are denounced by republican platforms and protected by republican representatives?

The officials whose names have been mentioned are not worse than some others, but they are the most conspicuous representatives of their class. They are not so much to blame as the people who elect them. Just as long as the voters are indifferent to public affairs, just so long will the officers and agents of great corporate interests enter public life, not for the purpose of advancing the interests of the people generally but for the purpose of protecting or advancing their private interests. Just as long as voters are willing to forgive the offense, just so long will public officials sell their political influence to the syndicates and combinations which infest legislative halls and prey upon the public through special legisla-

tion. The public servant should be above suspicion, he should prize a clean record and a reputation for fidelity above dollars, but we cannot expect such public servants until the voters themselves are willing to punish betrayals of trust.



Prof. Shaler's Opinion.

According to the St. Louis Republic, Prof. Shaler, a geologist of Harvard College, predicts such an increase in the production of gold as to lessen its purchasing power and compel a return to silver. He says:

If the price of gold goes down, another metal must be looked for as a token of international value. I think this metal will be silver, because silver is not found in alluvial plains, and because, owing to the difficulty in mining, it will never change in value.

Within the past few years men have come to realize that a large portion of the earth's surface is charged with gold. Gold is indissoluble, and when gravel banks are cut away it is not easily carried off by streams to the sea, as is the case with other metals. Instead, it is carried along, broken up into finer and finer fragments and gradually deposited over alluvial plains.

The new systems of mining which have recently been discovered will have produced by the middle of the present century an almost intolerable supply of gold. I cannot say definitely what the increase will be, but I should think at the least that the present supply will be quadrupled.

When the supply of gold becomes "intolerable," it will be interesting to watch the financiers shift over to the silver side of the question. Between 1850 and 1860, when the gold supply was increasing, the money changers were firm advocates of silver and they will be again if conditions become such as to make silver the scarcer metal. Bimetallists, however, still believe that the world can use to advantage all the precious metal, both gold and silver, that is likely to be discovered.



Exploiters on the Ground.

During the debate on the Philippine amendment, Senator Tillman called attention to a communication addressed by Judge Taft, of the Benevolent Assimilation Commission, to the secretary of war. The Judge asked that the message, if approved by the secretary, be transmitted "to proper senators and representatives." There is nothing to show how the "proper" senators and representatives were to be distinguished from the others, but he seems to have had confidence that Secretary Root would exercise discretion in the matter. In this remarkable message he said; "Until its passage (the Spooner amendment) no purely central civil government can be established, no public franchise of any kind granted, and no substantial investment of private capital in internal improvements possible."

Here we have the reason for the Spooner amendment. The franchise-grabbers were on hand and the private capital was waiting for a chance to begin internal improvements. What an opportunity for street car lines, water plants and lighting systems! When we see how these franchises have been given away in this country, where the people have a right to vote, we can imagine the liberty that will be allowed where the rulers are not restrained by the victims.

Judge Taft's remark recalls an interview given out by an imperialist before the treaty was signed. He was a foreign consul stationed at Manila and

came to this country to help organize a syndicate for the development of the islands. He said that his syndicate would establish banks, lighting plants, water systems, street car lines, railroads, factories, etc. etc., and in his interview he explained that it was the "duty" of the United States to hold the Philippine Islands permanently. In other words, he was satisfied that the United States ought to hold the Filipinos while his syndicate developed them. The opponents of a colonial policy have pointed out that the people would pay the expenses while the corporations would reap the profits. In the very beginning the opponents of imperialism asked: If this question is to be settled on the basis of dollars and cents, who will insure the nation that the receipts will equal the expenditures? Who will guarantee that the income from the Philippines, be it great or small, will find its way back to the pockets of the people who, through taxation, will furnish the money?

But the Taft Commission goes on to say:

Sale of public lands and allowance of mining claims impossible until Spooner bill. Hundreds of American miners on ground awaiting law to perfect claims. More coming. Good element in pacification. Urgently recommend amendment Spooner bill so that its operation be not postponed until complete suppression of all insurrection, but only until in President's judgment civil government may be safely established.

So it seems that American miners are on hand ready to take charge of the minerals as soon as they can perfect their claims. Of course, as the President has frequently told us, our nation is not actuated by any sordid thought of gain in taking the Philippines; it is all a matter of "duty and destiny." But it is probably necessary to give away their franchises and their valuable mines in order to convince them that our interest in them is purely unselfish and benevolent.

The report of the Taft Commission shows that the islands contain about "seventy-three million acres of land, of which less than five millions are held in private ownership, leaving in public lands over sixty-eight million acres." The most hide-bound partisan can have no reason to doubt the purpose of the administration to turn over the land of the Filipinos to capitalists and adventurers after reading the following from the Taft report:

It is thought that a system of laws of public lands can be inaugurated without waiting until the survey is completed. The commission has received a sufficient number of applications for the purchase of public lands to know that large amounts of American capital are only awaiting the opportunity to invest in the rich agricultural field which may here be developed. In view of the decision that the military government has no power to part with the public land belonging to the United States, and that the power rests alone in Congress, it becomes very essential, to assist the development of these islands and their prosperity, that Congressional authority be vested in the government of the islands to adopt a proper public-land system, and to sell the land upon proper terms. There should, of course, be restrictions preventing the acquisition of too large quantities by any individual or corporation, but those restrictions should only be imposed after giving due weight to the circumstances that capital can not be secured for the development of the islands unless the investment may be sufficiently great to justify the expenditure of large amounts for expensive machinery and equipments. Especially is this true in the cultivation of sugar land.

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Restricted powers of a military government referred to in discussing the public lands are also pain-