

best. If the president threw his strength to Senator LaFollette, who stands for aggressive reforms, it would be a pretty fight, but the president probably feels that very little reform can be hoped for from republican leaders, and he therefore selects Secretary Taft as the reformer who will excite the least opposition among the representatives of predatory wealth.

While the democrats will be glad to know of the president's fixed purpose not to be a candidate, their opposition to his candidacy was not on account of his popularity, for it is not at all certain that he could have polled more votes than any other republican, but President Roosevelt's candidacy would make it impossible for the democrats to secure the support of Roosevelt republicans. The natural fight is between the democratic party and the reactionary element of the republican party, for in such a fight the democrats can take advantage of the educational work that President Roosevelt has done, and the issue ought not to be in doubt. Senator LaFollette would poll the radical strength of the republican party but would lose even more than President Roosevelt would among the standpatters. Secretary Taft will, if nominated, straddle the issues and seek to hold the two wings of the republican party together. He can not hope to hold all the radicals that the president would hold or LaFollette would hold. Neither would he alienate as many of the standpatters. With him as a candidate the aim of the democrats would be to show that he does not stand for any reforms worth mentioning, and that his administration, if in line with his utterances thus far would be colorless.

It is fortunate that the third term issue is removed from politics, for it would have distracted attention and prevented a consideration of the economic reforms about which the country is now thinking. That the president has acted wisely no sincere friend of his will deny, for he has nothing to gain by another term and a defeat would be disastrous. Those who have insisted upon his nomination in spite of his declaration have thought more of the party than they have of the president, and it is not certain either that they accurately gauge public opinion, for the anti-third term sentiment is a real sentiment and one not to be lightly considered.



**SECRETARY TAFT'S MOTHER**

The readers of *The Commoner* will regret to learn of the death of the mother of Secretary Taft. Beneath all party differences there is a human nature that links us all together, and the questions that divide us in campaigns are forgotten when death enters the household. Mr. Taft hesitated about his departure because of his mother's sickness, and he has hurried as rapidly as he could in the hope of reaching her bedside before the last summons came. The news has been borne to him, and he will return carrying a burden of sorrow which all of his countrymen will share insofar as one can share such a burden with another. Mrs. Taft's death at this time will be regretted the more if her son reaches the coveted honor of a nomination, for what mother does not rejoice in her son's success? The whole country was glad that President McKinley's mother survived his election and was present at his inauguration; for Mr. McKinley life, too, was made radiant by the domestic virtues which are everywhere prized.

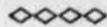


**THE KAISER'S POLICY**

Following will be found a very frank statement of the kaiser's policy. He says:  
 "Germany's future development imperatively requires a powerful navy. We must export the product of our industries and new and wider markets are constantly necessary to us. As much of our trade must be with semi-civilized countries—with people to whom a nation's physical strength is the test of its commercial greatness—we must show that we are strong. A mighty navy will add millions to the volume of our trade. We must develop our colonies. To do this we need a greater navy. Germany did not become a colonizing power until the best countries for such development had already been annexed by other nations. We had no choice but to be contented with the best of what was left. Yet our colonies may become, through German energy and perseverance, of incalculable worth. We must not be like children, however, who put a bean in the ground and return the next day to see if the plant has grown. Colonies are necessary to our ever increasing population. Without them we must lose millions of our people to countries which can better accommodate our overflow.

There are no countries in Europe we could conquer and add to our possessions without danger to ourselves. Denmark, Sweden and Norway are poor and undesirable. The Netherlands shows much of the old Germanic strength and tenacity, making political national assimilation difficult. This is true of Belgium to a still greater extent. Switzerland is the best buffer state we could wish. It is true the Baltic provinces were once German, but their Russification is making greater progress daily. We are mistaken if we think we would be received there with open arms. Even if we could conquer them, they would become a permanent difficulty to us. The extension of our eastern frontier would put us in a more unfavorable strategic position than at present, besides making of Russia an irreconcilable foe. We should never, indeed, think of such a conquest. We need Russia and Russia needs us. We do not want anything from England and England can not take or even wish to take anything from us. England and Germany have every reason for helping one another, so long as our vital interests do not conflict. We have, in fact, every reason for wishing England's strength to increase. We would ourselves feel any weakening in its power. All we could expect from England even in the event of war, in which we won, would be some small and undesirable colony. Any German statesman who would fight England on such a pretext would not deserve a place at the empire's helm. All Germany wants is peace, and again peace, development of our commerce and industries and a constantly widening national culture."

The kaiser justifies his demand for a large navy on the ground that Germany wants colonies. He is consistent; if he is going out to conquer and exploit the half civilized races he will need a large navy. But if we are not going to burglarize why must we supply ourselves with a kit of burglar's tools? That is the way one democrat has expressed it and it is an apt expression. We are not contemplating a raid and have not, therefore, the reason that Germany has for wanting a big navy. Our isolated position gives us a national protection which no navy could supply. Why join in the mad rush for naval supremacy?



**KNOX ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY**

Senator Knox has announced his candidacy for the republican nomination for the presidency. When analyzed his speech will be found to contain no statement of policy, no promise of remedy. It eulogizes the republican party, praises the president and expresses an infinite faith in republican leaders. Those who trust the republican party as implicitly as he does will like the speech, but what of those who want relief and demand something specific? They will have to look to the democratic party.



**A POOR SHOWING**

A school teacher informs *The Commoner* that in fifty-three cities which he has canvassed having a registration of thirty-two thousand high school pupils, only eight per cent are studying American history and only three per cent are studying American government. This is certainly a very poor showing, and if it is true throughout the country, it is high time that books on history and government be sufficiently simplified to insure the study of these subjects by all high school pupils; in fact, the study of both history and government ought to begin before the high school is reached, for a large percentage of the children never get beyond the graded schools.



**KENTUCKY**

The republicans who are trying to extract satisfaction out of the result in Kentucky should examine the vote. They will find that the democratic vote was thirty-two thousand less than it was in 1903 and that the republican vote was six thousand less than it was that year. In other words, about thirty-eight thousand voters staid at home—not to speak of the natural increase in the vote. The republican candidate for governor was elected, and the republicans, though not securing control of the legislature, made gains. This, however, was not due to an actual increase in the republican vote or even to the popularity of the republican candidate, for he actually received fewer votes than the republican candidate of four years ago. The trouble was that the liquor question hurt the democratic party in the cities while factional fights within the party hurt it in the country. Much as the result is to be deplored, there is

no reason to doubt that the democratic party will carry the state by a large majority in the presidential campaign of 1908, for all of the factions are united on national policies. Kentucky will be in the democratic column as sure as election day comes.



**OPENING THE CAMPAIGN**

The campaign of 1908 is already opening, although the convention is some six months off. The first banquet after the announcement of Mr. Bryan's willingness to be a candidate, if the democratic voters desired it, was held at LaFayette, Ind. Eight hundred men sat at the tables and some three thousand men and women occupied the galleries. Nearly all the leaders of the Indiana democracy were present, a number of them taking part in the program. The belief was everywhere expressed that Indiana would be found in the democratic column in 1908.

On November 26 the United Democracy of Washington held a banquet at the Raleigh hotel; where more than five hundred were seated at the tables and as many more were unable to obtain tickets owing to the limited capacity of the dining room. It was said to have been the most successful political banquet ever held in Washington, and there is no doubt about the hopeful spirit that pervaded the democracy there. Hon. John Sharp Williams, leader of the minority in the house of representatives, was one of the speakers at this banquet.

At the Iroquois club in Chicago a luncheon was given on the 6th of December, at which the various factions of the party were represented and harmony prevailed. On the evening of the 6th a banquet was held at Freeport, Ill., which was in many respects remarkable. The city has between twenty and twenty-five thousand inhabitants, and is one of the few cities in northern Illinois which has a democratic majority. Crowded meetings were held at the opera house and at the court house, and then six hundred and ninety persons sat down to a banquet at 11 o'clock. The speaking commenced a little after twelve and concluded at a quarter of five in the morning. When it is remembered that a considerable number of the banqueters were republicans, the interest shown certainly indicates a change in sentiment since 1896. Freeport is the home of Hon. Douglass Patterson, the brilliant young leader of the minority in the Illinois legislature, and Mr. Patterson acted as toastmaster at this banquet.

On the evening of the 7th a banquet was held in Omaha under the auspices of the Dahman Democracy, a club named after Hon. James C. Dahman, the present mayor of Omaha and the present Nebraska member of the national committee. Something over twelve hundred persons sat down to the banquet and several thousand heard the speeches from the gallery. This was the largest banquet ever held in Nebraska, and probably the largest in the west. Mr. Bryan spoke at each of these banquets and was gratified to find the democrats so enthusiastic and so ready to begin the campaign work for 1908.



**THE VIEWS OF A VETERAN**

Mr. O. O. Staley, the veteran Washington correspondent of the Louisville Courier-Journal, has published an exceedingly interesting volume entitled "Twenty Years in the Press Gallery." His intimate acquaintance with the public men who have marched in procession before him and whose public work has been dissected by him gives him eminent fitness for the judicial task which he has taken upon himself. Besides containing a review of important legislation and his estimate of men and measures, the book contains pen sketches by prominent newspaper men of the leading statesmen of the period. The versatile Watterson has written a characteristic introduction for the book, and Clifford K. Berryman has prepared the illustrations. The book is published by the author through the Publishers' Printing Company of New York, and ought to find a large sale.



**FOR THE NORTH, TOO**

The New York Tribune says that "Bryan is for the south" when he advocates a law withdrawing from the lower federal courts jurisdiction and authority to suspend the enforcement of state laws. If the Tribune kept up with the times it would know the attorneys general of the various states have endorsed the same proposition and most of these attorneys general are northern men and republicans.