

# The Commoner.

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## The Job Session

The last session of congress has won the title of the "job" session because it is held after the election when many congressmen have been repudiated at the polls and when even those who have been re-elected feel less restraint because of the time that must elapse before another election. Every careful observer of congressional proceedings has noticed the tendency on the part of those in charge of questionable legislation to postpone action until the last session, and that tendency is even more marked when a party is going out of power. The democrats and progressive republicans must be on their guard during the present short session. The special interests, seeing that they will not be able to control the next congress, will do their utmost to do something in the present congress.

Every possible effort will be made to pass the Aldrich currency bill or something like it. Let democrats, and progressive republicans as well, be on their guard. Fortunately, we have the promise of democratic leaders that they will stand resolutely against Wall street's efforts to fasten the Aldrich currency system upon the people. Speaking at Kansas City recently, Senator Reed of Missouri said:

"I am against any currency scheme written by bankers for bankers. I do not mean to attack the banks or the financial centers of the country, but I protest against any plan that will lessen the control of the people over the finances of the country."

Speaking for democrats in the house, Speaker Champ Clark said: "Laying no claim whatever to the character of a financier, I am utterly opposed to the creation, chartering or authorization of any institute which will deliver into the hands of a few men, I care not who they may be or where they may live, the powers of life and death, not only over the bankers of the country, but over every business in the land. Even financiers of renown differ widely as the poles on the Aldrich plan. Many great financiers indorse it, some emphatically, some mildly and some doubtfully and hesitatingly. Such eminent and successful business men as James J. Hill and Leslie M. Shaw are openly against it on the ground that the Aldrich plan is essentially a monopoly. Mr. Shaw says it would be so profitable to a few men who would really run it that they could well afford to pay the entire national debt for a perpetual charter, asserting that it would make them absolute masters of the American business world. Now, if such eminent financial physicians as Doctors Aldrich, Vreeland and Laughlin on the one hand, and Doctors Hill and Shaw on the other hand, disagree so radically on this subject, would we not be acting the part of wise and patriotic men to wait long enough at least to hear both sides in this important and far-reaching matter before making up our minds. So far it has been largely in the nature of an ex parte proceeding. Only the advocates of the plan have had an inning. Why, then, rush pell mell into such an important matter? Why render a verdict prematurely? Why not take time—not too much, not too little, but ample time—thoroughly to investigate, to find out the sponsors, to discover the motive of this undertaking, to ascertain who are to be its beneficiaries, to learn with definiteness the powers to testify before committees of house and senate, vigorously to cross-examine, to discover jokers, if any, in this plan—in short, to inform ourselves as we ought to be informed touching a problem of such intense interest to 93,000,000 American people now living, and untold millions yet unborn? Individually, I am not enamoured of the Aldrich plan. Quite the contrary. I certainly will vote against it if an attempt is made to rush it through under whip and spur. It should be thoroughly ventilated and the light let in on it. The safe rule, which I adopted years ago, is to vote against any bill or resolution about which I have not had opportunity to inform myself, thereby giving myself and my constituents the benefit of the doubt."

## MR. BRYAN'S POSITION

First—Mr. Bryan does not advocate the retirement of outstanding national bank currency but he opposes any enlargement of the privileges now enjoyed by national banks and he believes that such emergency currency as may be necessary should be issued by the government and not by the banks.

Second—The conferring upon ex-presidents of the right to participate in debate in the senate and house need not be accompanied by compensation; in other words, the privilege may be conferred as an honor rather than as an office.

Third—The democrats in the senate are right in insisting that important appointments should be reserved for the president-elect. This is especially true when the appointees are to hold office for life.

Fourth—The democrats at Washington are justified in condemning the partisanship which leads the president to extend the civil service when that extension had no higher purpose than the retention of republican appointees.

## NOT A POLITICAL DINNER

Washington, Dec. 6.—Special dispatch to the Louisville Courier-Journal: Friends of Majority Leader Underwood, who at first were somewhat worried by the news that he had dined with Thomas F. Ryan, Nelson W. Aldrich, Senator Joseph W. Bailey, of Texas, and prominent New York bankers in New York night before last, tonight are laughing over their misgivings. They have learned that besides prominent democrats and republicans, Frank A. Munsey, one of the "angels" of the progressive party, was a guest. They are especially amused at the report that a programme of legislation for the new congress was outlined at this dinner.

Friends of Mr. Underwood said today that the house leader accepted the invitation without the slightest idea that politics or legislation would be discussed, and that these subjects were not mentioned at the dinner.

Mr. Underwood, it was learned today, did not know that Mr. Ryan had contributed a single cent to his pre-convention campaign fund, much less that he had given \$30,000, until Senator Bankhead, of Alabama, went on the stand before the Clapp committee and so testified. They explained that Mr. Underwood could not think of declining the invitation to the Ryan dinner, even if he had wanted to. They declared that Mr. Underwood must have known that he would be criticised for attending the dinner and expressed their admiration of him for disregarding this expected criticism.

In Washington it is believed to be inconceivable that a democratic legislative program should be considered, much less agreed upon, at a dinner attended by prominent republicans and Mr. Munsey. Within the last twenty-four hours suggestions have come from prominent progressives in congress that Mr. Underwood had "given himself away" by accepting Mr. Ryan's invitation. When these men learned that Mr. Munsey was one of the guests they ceased putting forth these suggestions.

The dinner, it was stated here, was purely a social affair. Mr. Ryan wanted to get together some of the men who were prominent in the recent presidential campaign and some personal friends and selected them without regard to party.

Mr. Underwood was invited to be "sown off," as one democrat expressed it.

## STILL AT IT

The reactionaries, after first trying to prevent Governor Wilson's nomination and then trying to defeat him at the polls, are now busy blacklisting every public man who enjoys public confidence or who would, in office, assist the president-elect to carry out the pledges of the Baltimore platform, but they forget that it was antagonism to Wall street that made Governor Wilson a progressive.

## Expensive Thoughtlessness

The newspaper men who give circulation to groundless rumors certainly do not realize the amount of trouble they cause. Word comes from Bermuda that Governor Wilson has had to pay six dollars "postage due" on letters warning him against persons "mentioned" for cabinet and other positions. But this is not the worst of it. Governor Wilson's time is taken up in answering letters that would not have been written but for the misinformation that is thoughtlessly spread broadcast. And Governor Wilson is not the only one annoyed. Every public man is weighted down with correspondence largely due to the same cause. Some of these rumors are stated with a positiveness that naturally misleads all who put any faith in the newspapers. At times a position has been "offered and accepted" or "offered and declined" and then the person named has to deny the statement and sometimes Governor Wilson is forced to add his denial. Is this an INDISPENSIBLE ADJUNCT of a wide-awake press?

## "WILSON IS TO BE PRESIDENT"

Under the headline "More Shivers" the New York World prints the following editorial: "Governor Wilson has said the fateful words himself. He is going to consult William J. Bryan as to his appointments and policies. It is a fearsome prospect, and we already hear in anticipation the shrieks of heroes and patriots certain to protest.

"Mr. Bryan is only a democrat who, in spite of his well-known failings, has three times polled more than 6,000,000 votes as a candidate for the presidency. He is only a democrat who, regardless of his notorious faults, was able in the Baltimore convention last summer to defeat as clever a scheme as ever was devised to put the democratic party once more on the familiar road to defeat. Undoubtedly he is a dangerous man from the Ryan-Belmont-Murphy standpoint, but we regard Woodrow Wilson so highly that we are willing to trust him for a season even in such suspicious company.

"It is true that the president-elect might have placed himself in touch with the best minds in the democratic party. He might have made a date with Ryan himself, or Belmont or Murphy or Taggart or Roger Sullivan or Jim Smith. He might easily have saved himself all this obloquy, but he is headstrong and perverse, and that is why he is to be president."

## THE PHILIPPINES

Democrats everywhere read with great interest and satisfaction the following Associated Press dispatch: "Despite President Taft's vigorous disapproval in his message to congress of the pending bill proposing immediate autonomy for the Philippines and absolute independence in eight years, several prominent democrats are preparing for its consideration in the house. Chairman Jones of the house insular affairs committee, framer of the bill, says Speaker Clark and Democratic Leader Underwood have assured him of their co-operation, and that Chairman Henry of the rules committee has promised a special rule for its early expeditious hearing. Some of the southern democrats suggest awaiting a conference with President-elect Wilson before taking action."

This is good news because it shows that democratic leaders are determined to redeem the pledges they made to the people and live up to their professions.

## THE PATH IS CLEAR

Why all this discussion as to what should be done on the tariff question? The path is clear—IMMEDIATE REDUCTION along the lines laid down in the platform would seem to be the only thing in order. From some of the advice now being given one might suppose a platform was merely a thing to get in on.