

# The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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*The democrats who, as the result of the congressional and senatorial elections, are entering official life should learn early that the secret of success in public life is to have no secrets from the public.*

## Good for Congress

The Webb bill, substituted for the Sheppard-Kenyon bill, and passed by both houses of congress, is as follows: "The shipment or transportation, in any manner or by any means whatsoever, of any spiritous, vinous, malted, fermented or other intoxicating liquor of any kind, from one state, territory or district of the United States or place noncontiguous to, but subject to the jurisdiction thereof, into any other state, territory or district of the United States or place noncontiguous to, but subject to the jurisdiction thereof, or from any foreign country into any state, territory or district of the United States, or place noncontiguous to, but subject to the jurisdiction thereof, which said spiritous, vinous, malted, fermented or other intoxicating liquor is intended, by any person interested therein, to be received, possessed, sold, or in any manner used, either in the original package or otherwise, in violation of any law of such state, territory or district of the United States or place noncontiguous to, but subject to jurisdiction thereof, is hereby prohibited."

The Commoner congratulates congress upon the passage of this measure. The Commoner has steadfastly urged the adoption of some such bill. Three years ago it printed this editorial: "Interstate commerce is used to override state laws. What democrat is willing to put himself on record against the proposition that the right of the people of a state to control the liquor traffic is more sacred than the right of liquor dealers to dispose of their product in dry territory and in violation of the law? Mr. Bryan believes that congress should pass a law recognizing the right of each state to prescribe the conditions upon which intoxicating liquors can be transported, sold and used within its borders. He also believes that the federal government should dissolve partnership with law breakers and no longer issue licenses for the sale of liquor in communities where local laws prohibit its sale. If it is thought unconstitutional to discriminate, in the issue of licenses between different communities, the same end can be reached by reducing the license to a nominal figure and requiring the applicant for a federal license to give written notice to the local authorities, and newspaper notice to the local public of his intention to apply for a license. Now let those who oppose these propositions meet them with arguments."

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RENEWALS NOW DUE

The close of the subscription year for the great bulk of Commoner subscribers ended with the last issue in January. Subscriptions ending at this time should be renewed with as little delay as possible in order to facilitate the work of changing and re-entering the addresses on our subscription books and obviate expense of sending out statements announcing that renewals are due.

THEN AND NOW

Colonel Nelson, of the Kansas City Star, who is struggling just now with the judge bent upon committing him for contempt, has received the following letter from Theodore Roosevelt:

"Dear Colonel Nelson: What an extraordinary series of events the courts are perpetrating at present. Apparently the reactionaries have made up their minds that you, and the other men like you, can be cowed. It seems to me like tying down the safety valve in order to prevent an explosion. What Lincoln said about the Dred Scott decision would undoubtedly render him liable to be jailed for contempt of court if alive and in Idaho today, and of course his offense was a thousand times greater than yours—besides having the further resemblance that it was a great public service instead of an offense."

That would be strange reading to those who were told that its author once undertook to suppress the New York World and the Indianapolis News. Indeed, he actually sought to establish the proposition that criticism of a public official was equivalent to treasonable utterances.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Democracy is indifferent to pedigree—it deals with the individual rather than with his ancestors. Democracy ignores differences in wealth—neither riches nor poverty can be invoked in behalf of or against any citizen. Democracy knows no creed—recognizing the right of each individual to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience; it welcomes all to a common brotherhood and guarantees equal treatment to all, no matter in what church or through what forms they commune with their Creator.

JUDICIAL

Writing in the Louisville Courier-Journal, Mr. Henry Watterson says: "The Courier-Journal has no animus one way or another toward either Mr. Bryan or Mr. Wilson." Of course not. The bitter things said of both Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan by the Courier-Journal have been the result of the great editor's calm, judicial attitude toward all men and all things.

SCOTT AND HIS MEN

Men, women and children everywhere are singing the praises of Captain Robert F. Scott and the members of his Antarctic expedition. They have given to men a high example of unselfishness as well as lofty courage.

ILLINOIS

The Illinois legislature has ratified the constitutional amendment providing for the direct election of United States senators. Good for Illinois. Next!

## The Postal Vote

Below will be found an account of the movement, now on foot, to secure legislation providing for the postal vote. It is used in New Zealand and ought to be provided for in every state. The Commoner has advocated this reform for several years. Why should traveling men, students and others, necessarily away from home on election day, be denied a vote? The secrecy of the ballot can be preserved and protection can be given against fraud, but provision should be made for those who find it impossible to go to the polls.

The following is taken from the New York World: Eighty thousand travelling men living in New York City lost their votes last November because the days of registration came when they were out on the road. Because of this virtual disfranchisement Assemblyman David C. Lewis of the Twenty-third district has introduced into the legislature a bill to enable travelling men to register at other times than the days set by law.

This bill of Lewis's is one manifestation of a movement that will soon be national in its scope. Similar legislation will be sought in every state in the union within the next two years, and it is possible that at the end of that time congress will be asked to carry the project still further. Evidently laws may be sought which will enable a man kept away from home by business to vote wherever he may chance to be.

J. Maxwell Gordon, chairman of the Commercial Travellers' Good Government association, is active head of this movement. He was born in New York, and for the past ten years has been entitled to vote here. Being a travelling salesman his first vote of any kind was not cast until last November. At no other time was he in New York either upon election day or registration day, and he might not have

NOT AFRAID OF FINES

The following is from the news columns of the New York Herald, dated February 12th: In a letter written by John E. Parsons, recently termed at a banquet as the "Dean of the American Bar," when he was general counsel for the American Sugar Refining company, which the government is trying to dissolve as a trust, he advised Charles R. Heike, then secretary of the corporation: "It is better to take the risk of the imposition of a fine rather than comply with the law." This was only one of many important facts which developed yesterday when James R. Knapp, assistant United States district attorney, introduced as evidence the letters obtained by the government which had passed between Mr. Parsons and the officers of the American Sugar Refining company. Counsel for the company protested to Wilson B. Brice, special examiner, against the introduction of these private letters, which was a surprise to the defense, but they were read and admitted into the record.