

## The Commoner

ISSUED MONTHLY

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THE COMMONER, LINCOLN, NEB.

It has just dawned on us what it was that we have been missing from the daily papers in the last few weeks. There doesn't seem to be a federal grand jury anywhere that is investigating the packers.

The business of inventing Mexican crises seems to have been thoroughly systematized, and any time that the demand for intervention falls below normal it seems remarkably easy to market the stored output of Mexican outrages.

"Who killed the treaty?" may for a little while divert attention from the older inquiries like "Who killed cock-robin?", "Who struck Billy Patterson?", and "How old is Ann?", but it will not be long before the senate will be at it again—and let us hope for a compromise.

The fact that at a city election held in Buffalo a few weeks ago 300 votes out of a total of 54,000 were cast for the soviet ticket would seem to indicate that there is not nearly so grave a danger overhanging American labor as the men who have been manufacturing bolsheviks through their profiteering activities feared.

Those folks who like to brag about the prices they pay for shoes and wearing apparel are not now compelled to do very much shopping in order to afford a reasonable ground therefor. Incidentally they are the folks who make it easy for a profiteer to salve his conscience, or what he thinks is his conscience.

In his message to congress President Wilson bore down heavily upon the necessity of adopting a budget system. As this is about the twelfth or fifteenth time that a president has told congress that a budget system is a national necessity, we no longer toss our hat in joy over the near approach of its adoption, but we do still incline a hopeful ear in that direction.

## RENEWALS

The subscriptions of those who became subscribers with the first issue of The Commoner, and have renewed at the close of each year, expire with the January (1920) issue. In order to facilitate the work of changing and re-entering the addresses upon our subscription books and mailing lists and obviate the expense of sending out personal statements announcing that renewals are due, subscribers are urgently requested to renew with as little delay as possible. The work of correcting the stencils entails an enormous amount of labor and the publisher asks subscribers to assist as much as possible by making their renewals promptly.

## Machinery the World's Need

Machinery is the means by which the laws of nature are turned to the service of man. Nature has always been anxious to help man, but can only do so when he invents machinery through which nature can work.

From the beginning the wind has been blowing where it listeth, but it was a long time before man invented the sail boat and accepted the invitation to travel before the breeze. Afterwards man invented the wind-mill and now the tireless wind raises the water from the hidden streams within the earth. More recently, man has invented the airship and now rides through the air "like swallows on the wing."

The water has been tumbling down the mountain sides for ages, eager to serve, but how could it do so until the genius of man devised the water wheel? Now the energy that once wasted itself in fretting and in foaming furnishes power for the mill.

Steam has been rising from boiling water since man came upon the earth, but it strength was dissipated because he did not know how to harness and direct it. Now it draws the seemingly endless train across the prairies and makes the steamship plow the fathomless main.

The electricity that has always surcharged the air formerly found the lightning its only means of manifesting its presence, but man's arm has drawn it from the clouds and man's mind has imprisoned it in a slender wire so that, at his command, it lights our homes and supplies energy for myriads of machines.

It was the machine for which all these forces waited; it is the machine that enables us to multiply the strength of the human arm; it is the machine that makes man out "little lower than the angels" in his wonder working.

And, so, in government it is machinery that translates public sentiment into constitutional forms and needed legislative enactments. It is machinery that enables the public to promote the public welfare and to advance the public good. Patriotism, without machinery through which to express itself, is as impotent for good as the wind, the water, the steam or electricity. The great need of the country and of the world today is machinery. Our nation has taught the world how to build a machine that will put the people in control of their own government and how to make that machine responsive to the people's will. But much remains yet to be done. The American people desire peace in industry; they protest against a condition which leaves employer and employee impotent to protect their rights and interests except by resort to the lock-out or the strike. We need machinery for the settlement of industrial disputes before they reach the acute stage. Is it not strange that an intelligent people, even in the presence of a great emergency, are so slow to construct the machinery necessary for the prevention of war between capital and labor? A commission or board empowered to investigate at the request of either side, or on its own initiative, and to lay all the facts before the public is much easier to build than the machines that have made man the master of the forces of nature. "Give us a machine," cry the people, "through which the high purpose and the good intentions of the public may find expression; give us this machinery for the protection of employer and employee, as well as for our protection." Truth clamors for expression; give it the means by which it can express itself through lawful forms and by peaceful means and thus silence the turbulence that fills our days with anxiety and makes every lover of his country solicitous about the future.

And the world, too, needs machinery—machinery for peace. It is tired of wars and rumors of war. It is sick of blood and tears; give it machinery through which the spirit of love and of brotherhood can find expression—a tribunal in which reason instead of force will rule. Let international disputes be settled by a League of Nations and in accordance with justice and right rather than by the brutal methods of the battle field. As the machine has advanced civilization by putting the MIND of man in control of nature's forces, so civilization will be still further advanced when governmental machinery puts the HEART of the world in control of the destinies of mankind.

Our nation cries out for machinery that will give us industrial peace; the world pleads for machinery that will give us peace between nations—a peace universal and perpetual.

W. J. BRYAN.

## A SIMPLE PLAN

Senator Kenyon's committee has reported in favor of a Committee of Investigation for the settlement of industrial disputes.

The plan, so far as outlined, follows the plan of the thirty peace treaties and the League of Nations. It should be embodied in a bill and passed. It is a simple plan and should have unanimous support. Each state should have such a commission, as well as the nation, and the same plan can and should be adopted in every industrial community.

The permanent commission should be composed of three persons of high character, one in sympathy with the wage-earners, one in sympathy with the employing class, and the third as nearly impartial as possible. When the commission enters upon the investigation of any dispute (whether by request of one of the parties or on its own initiative) it should invite each side to select a representative to be temporarily a member of the commission, each to receive pro rata compensation with permanent commissioners. The five should have equal authority in all matters connected with the investigation.

The finding of the commission would not be binding on either side but would rest upon its merits. It would, however, be likely to lead to a settlement.

W. J. BRYAN.

## NO ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE

On another page will be found an editorial from the Chicago Tribune opposing the proposed alliance with France. Let us hope that the press will now break its silence and unite in opposing this attempt to transfer to the French government the right to declare war for us. We must retain that right.

## EGG MYTH EXPLODED

When the democrats passed the tariff act of 1913 and eggs were placed on the free list, the republican papers, big and little, predicted the downfall of the American hen by the flood of "9-cents-a-dozen" eggs that would be imported from China. With eggs at 89 cents a dozen in some cities, will the republicans kindly explain?

## "BREEDERS OF BOLSHEVISM"

It is not always necessary to go to the funny columns of the newspapers to find real humor; that often abounds in arguments seriously advanced to bolster up a bad cause. The mine owners have insisted that any increase in the cost of mining would have to be added to the price of coal, a position entirely without logic unless it can be shown that only reasonable profits are being made by the mine owners. When ex-Secretary McAdoo, a few days ago, called attention to the enormous profits made by the mine owners during the first year of the war they indignantly replied that his indictment "carried no weight and required no answer," and then, to completely humiliate the ex-Secretary, they added that such "misleading statements and insinuations are the kind of stuff which bolshevism breeds upon." There is no doubt that bolshevism has a breeding place, and that there are things which tend to create bolshevism. The mine owners, however, are mistaken as to the real cause of bolshevism; truth is not the egg out of which bolshevism is hatched. Bolshevism finds a breeding place in consciousness profits and in the unpatriotic plundering of a nation when war is straining its strength and calling for patriotism. Mothers were giving up their sons to the dangers of the battle field and wives were taking upon themselves a double duty while husbands went to the front. Anxiety weighed down upon the homes of the land and filled the nights with solicitude. It was no time for exorbitant profits wrung from people over-burdened by taxation. An investigation is needed; the country can then determine whether the mine owners are justified in resisting the demands made by the mine workers. To denounce exposure of their big returns and to attempt to silence protests with epithet and denunciation does not help the cause of the mine-owners. Such as these and not those who demand light are responsible for the nation's unrest.

W. J. BRYAN.