

# THE OBSERVER

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## WILSON AND THE PHILIPPINES.

President Wilson in declining to set a definite date for the independence of the Philippines is taking the wise course. That the islands are far from ready for independence is an admitted fact. When they will be is a question that cannot be answered at present. Growth in powers of self government, self restraint and general education is necessary before the natives can be trusted with control of their own affairs.

As the situation has developed there is not a great deal of difference between the Republican and Democratic parties on this question. When Bryan ran for the presidency in 1900, imperialism was an issue. It is such no longer and the administration realizes that fact. The United States has entered into world affairs, definitely has become a factor in world politics. However we might like to turn back to the old isolation on this continent we can not. Ridding ourselves of the Philippines would mean only a partial lessening of the burden. We can not so easily get clear of Hawaii, Guam, and the other Pacific dependencies, to say nothing of our moral obligations in Cuba and Latin America.

The Democrats have found it easy to criticize the Republicans on the administration of the Philippines and other possessions, but now that they are in power it is hard to take any other attitude than has been taken. To give the islands independence now or in the immediate future would be to consign them to chaos and anarchy. It might mean abandoning them to the exploitation of a foreign power only too ready to grab and administer profitable colonies.

Yet to say that the Philippines shall be independent when they are "prepared for independence" is very indefinite. What standards determine fitness for self-government? Who is to determine when the proper standard has been reached? These and other questions suggest themselves. One can not help thinking that if any very rigid conditions were enforced many countries now nominally independent would be deemed unworthy of the privilege. Mexico, for instance, would be considered as unworthy of control of its own affairs. Many of the other "republics" of the opera bouffe revolution belt likewise would be disqualified.

The difference in the situations lies in the fact that in these cases we have no present control, whereas with the Philippines we have. In the end the natives will be better prepared to make good use of independence if they remain in Uncle Sam's school for a while longer.

## THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1913.

The nation which has solved the greatest engineering problem of the age, the Panama canal, apparently stands helpless before a flood situation within its own boundaries that already in our short history has cost thousands of lives and millions in property.

The Mississippi river, the largest in the world, and its tributaries for nearly a century has been the greatest interrogation point in this country. That the question it raises has not been answered has been due, not to lack of facilities, not to lack of knowledge, not to lack of warning, but simply to lack of common sense.

The crime of the pork barrel is responsible for the inundation that made 400,000 homeless last year, destroyed many lives and laid waste the area of many principalities.

This government already has spent more than \$200,000,000 in confining the Mississippi and its feeders which wisely expended, spent according to a systematic and comprehensive plan, would have made life and property safe forever in the myriad cities, towns and open country situated either on the main river or on one of its many branches or sub-branches. Because it has been foolishly, heedlessly expended we have year after year a flood situation that only China would tolerate.

For half a century the engineering department of the government has been recommending, almost imploring, a definite plan of flood protection for the great valley that lies between the Appalachians and the Rockies. If we have permitted the periodical raids on the treasury that has defeated this end we have done it against the advice of our own experts.

This is a big country, but it is not so big that it cannot meet this problem and conquer it. It can, if it will, absolutely prevent the policy that has permitted various communities to destroy any semblance of systematic waterway improvement by reckless grabbing for purely local betterments. The politicians who have feathered their own nests by absurdly extravagant appropriations for trifling improvements that only have postponed the adoption of a sane general scheme can be made to realize that they are gambling with human lives. Better than that, the selfish constituents that have measured the efficiency of a congressman by the amount of money he was able to graft for unnecessary local work can be made to feel that they were playing a game in which death sweeps in the stakes.

It was suggested last year that the government take its equipment of machinery made idle by the rapid completion of work on the Panama canal and use it for deepening and straightening the Mississippi and its tributaries. It is held by engineering experts that the opening and widening of the various streams, deepening them and in some places canalizing them would remove forever the annual menace offered by the spring rains and the melting of the snow on the watershed. B. F. Yoakum, chair-

man of the board of the St. Louis and San Francisco railroad, a line that traverses a district almost annually inundated, has taken an especial interest in this plan, and for a time it looked as though the government would consider it seriously. The last appropriation bill, however, broke the records for reckless rapacity, and did not provide any more than has previous bills for permanent and connected improvement.

In 1849 we had a flood that spread over 160 squares in New Orleans and submerged 1,600 buildings. In 1874 an overflow of rivers in western Pennsylvania caused the loss of 220 lives. In 1881 thousands of acres in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota and Missouri were inundated with great loss of life and property. In 1862 the valley of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers were flooded. In 1883, parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio and Kentucky were covered with water. The loss in Cincinnati alone mounted up into the hundreds of thousands. In 1884 the Ohio overflowed, drowning fifteen and making 1,500 homeless. On May 31, 1889, the rising of the Conemaugh river in Pennsylvania under incessant drain burst the dam eighteen miles above Johnstown. The official estimates give the dead as 2,142 and the damage as \$9,674,105. The disaster of last year is too recent to need emphasis.

How many more catastrophes will be needed before the pork barrel and the policy it signifies is abolished forever?

## MONEY FOR THE FARMER.

Currency and banking reform, in the opinion of many, should come before the tariff in the Democratic legislative program. It is held that our present loose system is a constant menace and that hence it is more important to dispose of this before taking up the tariff. The weak point of this contention is that it is made so late in the day. The tariff program already is under way.

The importance of new currency and banking laws, is indicated by the steps the conference on marketing and farm credits has taken in drawing the attention of the president and congress to the necessity for making our financial system fit in with the farmer's needs. It is a fact that in few civilized countries of the world is it so hard for the farmer to secure at a moderate rate of interest the capital needed for the conduct of his business. In the last presidential campaign the lack of facilities for rural credit was dwelt upon and various suggestions for reform made. Emphasis was placed especially on the methods in vogue in Europe, particularly in Germany.

When we finally do get around to detailed consideration of the banking problem it is highly important that with the relief which is extended to industry the absolute necessity of taking care of the farmers also be taken into account. A farm run by an efficient, energetic man certainly should be gilt-edged security for an advance of such money as is necessary to enable him to work it to the best advantage, and the terms of such a loan should be as liberal as those given to the factory owner or the head of a business establishment. In fact, agriculture should be recognized in our banking law as a business so important from a social point of view as to merit the greatest possible liberality.

The conference which closed recently has given us much to think about as to the peculiar position in which the farmer is placed as to credit, transportation and marketing.

Progress along these three lines progress toward a higher standard and a lower cost of living.

## ANOTHER COXEY ARMY.

What is the attraction in public office that causes thousands of able-bodied men in this country to make a wild onslaught on Washington whenever a new administration takes the reins of government. President Wilson, by declining to see jobhunters, has conserved his own time and energy for larger affairs, but he also has doubled the troubles of his cabinet. Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo, besieged by the hungry throng, has been forced to leave his office by stealth and take refuge in a small hotel.

The fact that we have such a Coxeys' army of place-seekers is

small compliment to the nation at large. Public office that is filled by appointment lacks the security which is the attractive feature of the places under the classified civil service. The salaries paid are not large. The work, however, in some cases, is easy.

Is an "easy" job the accepted ideal? It would be discreditable to the great body of self-supporting, independent Americans if this were true. But it isn't. Most live men like positions that call for initiative, daring, original thought, that have the stimulus of difficulty, of obstacles to be overcome, of knotty problems to be met.

The truth is that there are no worth while jobs, in or out of the government service, that are really easy. Uncle Sam, because he is not so careful about the details of his work as he should be, has numerous places where petty men can drone away their time doing petty work, but when it comes to the big tasks he is as strict as the average employer.

It would be well if the office seekers understood once and for all that the only way to a fat salary is by being able to do the work better than the other fellow can do it. Not only that, but he must be able to do it more decisively, more quickly and more easily, so that his energy is not frittered away in the minor details. If a man has these qualifications, however, the chances are that he sticks to private business and is not bothering government officials.

A Bohemian is a man who knows how to eat spaghetti without getting it on the floor or over into the next house.

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## REGARDING ROME.

Sent out her troops and spanked Rome once upon her seven hills the world,  
Put other lands between the thills,  
On ev'ry sea her flag unfurled,  
And I'm for Julius Caesar now,  
Although that gentleman is dead,  
Because of such a life he led,  
That copped the prize in ev'ry row.

J. Caesar put Rome on the map.  
He advertised it near and far;  
He mixed in ev'ry kind of scrap—  
At boosting Julius was a star.  
He talked about it when at home,  
He bragged about it when away,  
Until from Britain to Cathay,  
They heard about the town of Rome.

I wish we had some Romans here,  
The regular, stem-winder kind  
Who'd whoop it up through all the year  
And leave the other towns behind.  
I wish we had some Caesar, too,  
This gold, old town to advertise  
Until it grew to twice the size  
With brotherhood as thick as glue.

Let's get together, you and I;  
We've got a town that's worth the while;  
Let's open up, emit a cry  
That other folks can hear a mile.  
Let's talk about this burg so dear  
Until it gets so big a thing  
They'll run excursion trains to bring  
The folks who want to settle here.

Things are so quiet in Washington that the country would be awfully glad if Vice President Marshall would make another joke.

## FORMS OF SALUTATION.

Although the French have been trying for some time to find a form of salutation to take the place of the meaningless "How do you do," they appear unable to decide upon any other form.

While there are persons who think "How do you do" is meaningless, possibly they haven't stopped to think how lucid it is compared to what men of other nations say when they meet one another.

The Turk says: "God grant you His blessing."

The Persian says: "May your shadow never grow any less."

The Chinese says: "How are you digesting?"

"How are you passing it?" says the Spaniard.

"Are you in good vingar?" comes from the Swede.

The Egyptian, being a practical man, says, "How do you perspire?"

The Dutchman says, "How do you travel?"

Caucasians take off the hat, shake hands, embrace, bow and kiss, and pass on. (Fair substitute, that.)

The Japanese take off their shoes. Chileans rub their foreheads. Think what the poor politicians would do about election time drumming up support in a factory district.

The Russian says, "Be well."

"How do you do," may be a trifle meaningless, but unless a substitute is chosen from other than the prevailing styles in other lands, it will stand unquestioned for centuries.

Maybe Washington society is waiting to see the Wilson family wash on the line before making advances.

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