

POSTING CONGRESSMEN

New Organization to Help Congress Serve Has Been Formed.

THINKERS MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Organization Created Last December is Just Getting Down to Work—Belief is That it Will Prove Invaluable.

By Frederick J. Haskin.
Washington, D. C., May 16.—A new organization that is to help congress serve the interests of the general public has been formed. It is called the people's legislative service, and its national council is composed of 70 senators, representatives, judges, editors and other well known liberals.

This organization will attempt to give the general public—also designated as the ordinary citizen and the ultimate consumer—the same advantages before congress that business, labor, farmers and other groups have. These groups are organized and have lobbies to present their arguments forcefully before congressional committees. Almost any information needed by them can be obtained instantly from their headquarters.

But when it comes to the public's side of a case, there is no well-posted representative shouting in the ear of congress. Even when a congressman has reason to think a bill will work hardship on the people as a whole, he has trouble in collecting sufficient facts to support his position. Senator La Follette said that he has spent 24 hours a day for weeks at a time, trying to get at the facts on the other side of some bill that was being pushed by a corporation.

The new group of men and women that aim to serve the people's interests claim that they are not starting a lobby, like the various organizations that boost the affairs of tradesmen machinists cotton growers and the like. The institution they are founding is somewhat like a lobby in that it is a source of information for congress. But unlike a lobby it represents no limited part of the population, but the public as a whole. It is for the benefit of any congressmen who want information on the public's side of any case, and it is maintained by subscriptions of members, some of whom are congressmen.

To Support the Public Cause.

The new service organization explains that it cannot logically take a neutral position and furnish information on both sides of a question. There is really no need for this, anyway, because almost any big bill has its supporters speaking for some special interest. The legislative service feels, therefore, that in taking the public side it is only balancing the scale.

The national council of the people's legislative service is made up of men and women in all parts of the country who are interested in the public welfare, as well as in that of some particular group. Thus, there are in the council the president of the brotherhood of boiler-makers and iron ship builders, the president of the farmers' national council, the general secretary of the National Consumers' league, the president of the Alabama State Federation of Labor, the president of the Order of Railway Telegraphers, and many others representing important groups. These people are not in the council primarily as labor or farm representatives, however, but as members of the public.

The council has also in its membership such general social workers and thinkers as Jane Addams, Therstein Veblen, Herbert Croly, Frederic C. Howe.

The attitude of the organization on any particular bill will be decided after

conferences of the national council. Not all of the members of the congress who are interested in the organization will agree with the stand taken on a bill. But those who do can get information, statistics and help in collecting data, so that they will be able to maintain their ground effectively during floor debates and in committee meetings. No workers at the legislative service headquarters, either the chairman or his assistants, are to appear at the hearings to testify.

The organization to fight the public's battles was created in December, but it is only now starting on its real work. So far it has been busy planning ways and means. It is now deciding what measures it will support or attack during the present session of congress. On taxation and transportation, the two biggest problems, it will undoubtedly take a stand and offer some assistance.

Besides furnishing material to congress, the organization will make a point of watching pending legislation in order to issue warnings against bills that seem unfair to the people. An example of this class of legislation is the joker, an unobtrusive paragraph that changes the effect of an otherwise innocuous bill. Often a joker is so intricately worded that its full meaning is not grasped at all in a casual reading of the bill. Such a parliamentary stratagem would be a bill fixing a wage scale which raised the previous rates. If the bill declared that all previous legislation on the subject was to become altogether void when the new law went into effect, some persons receiving more money for a special reason would lose instead of gain by the new bill. Such injustices have been done through careless or unintentional arrangement of wording. Even a comma may alter the sense of a law.

Congressmen Need Help.

Many people have the idea that it is only the public that needs to be warned against dangerous legislation, that every congressman knows all the ins and outs of his calling. As a matter of fact, the new congressman, fresh from a lawyer's office or some other comparatively ingenuous environment, is at a big disadvantage in the maze of strategy and parliamentary quibbling so plausibly arranged by experts at the game. Not even the old-timer can be always alert to note danger signals. So a bureau looking for such things can be of definite value in pointing them out.

Service of this sort is rendered in England by a similar organization maintained by the British labor party. This, however, is a piece of party machinery, whereas the American prototype numbers Democratic, Republican and Independent senators and representatives in its organization. In this it is distinctive.

The real significant influence of the organization will be its tendency to draw together congressmen of the different parties who are sufficiently interested in public progress to oppose the reactionaries in congress. There are never very many of these congressmen independent enough to brave the displeasure of the party leaders, and when they fight singly they are at an overwhelming disadvantage.

In the words of Basil Manly, chairman of the people's legislative service, the organization is expected to bring together "a group of the best fighters in the house and senate who will form a Battalion of Death" and stand together unflinchingly and with thorough accord upon the great measures which affect the public interest. Since the breakdown of the group of insurgents in 1912, there has been no well organized teamwork on the progressive side in either house of congress except for temporary alliances on special measures.

"In attempting to form this group no account was taken of numbers, but every

effort was made to secure a militant minority who would stand together on fundamentals."

The battalion to which Mr. Manly referred is at present composed of Senators France, Ladd, Norris, Walsh, and LaFollette, and Representatives Beck, Brown, Burke, Fear, Keller, Mead, Nelson, Sinclair and Voight.

CONSPIRACY IN JAPAN.

Alleged That Secret Society Contemplates World Domination.

Tokio, May 12.—Revelations of the work carried on by the "Omotokyo" cult, which began when the police raided the headquarters of the organization at Ayabe, near here, continue to astound the people of the empire. Newspapers accuse leaders of the cult of aspiring to set up an "Omotokyo" dynasty, to which all Japanese would flock with the hope of attaining world dominion.

In the secret passage leading from the temple of the society, the police declare, they discovered a portrait of Wanisaburo Deguchi, leader of the society. The police declare they discovered a portrait of Deguchi wearing a costume resembling that usually seen on the image of Ama-Terasu, the sun goddess, the traditional grand ancestress of the Japanese imperial family. It is alleged that in the temple were found crypts in which were placed the bodies of those who were slain for betraying the secrets of the organization.

It is declared that "unspeakable crimes" were committed against women by members of the cult, who are said to have bordered on fanaticism in the zeal. Cart loads of alleged seditious literature has been seized, including a famous volume bearing the title

of "Fire." This volume is interpreted as embodying projects for a social upheaval of a "dreadful nature" and incompatible with the present government of Japan.

It is said that the followers of "Omotokyo" numbered 300,000. When the police seized the collection of pebbles representing the divinity of the organization a band of the faithful clinched their fists in fury, declaring the acts of the officers to be sacrilegious. Leaders made addresses urging forbearance and long suffering in the presence of the desecration of their deity by the heathen. An Osaka newspaper owned by Deguchi has issued an extra edition denying reports that bombs were discovered in the temple and explaining that swords found there had been given to the temple. The newspaper declares that "followers" of "Omotokyo" have committed no crime.

DOPE IN LEMONS

Pittsburgh Chinese Work a New Dodge.

Two city detectives, sent to investigate a run on the lemon market, in the Chinese section in Pittsburgh, Pa., last Thursday reported to headquarters that they had discovered opium secreted in the fruit being sold to the orientals. According to the officers, several lemon peddlers were disposing of their stocks at the rate of one to each customer and collecting high prices. The detectives said they seized one of the lemons and that an investigation disclosed that the inside of the fruit had been removed and raw opium substituted. Yee Zouck and Yee Wing were arrested in connection with the case and are being held for further investigation.

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