

purging the stock exchange and the board of trade of their gambling features. Aside from the ruin that they bring to those who are led to speculate they affect in an illegitimate way the honest dealers in securities. Object lessons are required to awaken the public to any evil, but surely we have had object lessons enough to show the evils of the stock exchange and the board of trade as at present conducted.

THE WORLD'S SCARECROW

On another page will be found a New York World editorial which is reproduced that the readers of The Commoner may know the tactics employed by the defenders of private monopoly and therefore be the better prepared to meet them. Socialism is to be used as a scarecrow to frighten those who, while desiring to have competition preserved where competition is possible, are in favor of securing for the whole people the benefits of monopoly where monopoly is unavoidable. This is not, as the World calls it, a new "fad." It is a well settled policy and is being increasingly adopted in this and other countries. The Commoner has for several years advocated municipal ownership of municipal franchises, although it did not advocate the public ownership of the railroads until last July.

The World's argument is as shallow as its fears are groundless. It opposes the municipal ownership of a telephone system because it thinks it may develop first into a state system and then into a national system. Is it any more likely to do this under public ownership than under private ownership? The chances are much greater that the system will become a great national monopoly under private ownership than that the federal government will swallow up the local systems under public ownership. Greed, the great controlling influence in private monopolies, is absent from public enterprises and the popular love for local self government would constantly work against the absorption of the local systems.

The city can operate lines within the city, the country can operate lines outside of the city and within the county, while the state takes care of the comparatively few lines necessary for inter-county communication. Adjoining states would have no difficulty in making connections. The telephone companies are already consolidating and the telephone lobbyist has joined the railroad lobbyist at the state capitals. Unless the people take hold of the telephone business they will soon be engaged in a struggle with a telephone monopoly national in extent. The same answer can be made to the World's argument against the municipal ownership of street car lines. The World is afraid that street car systems will extend to inter-urban systems and inter-state systems. The more reason then why they should be owned by the public. It is bad enough to have street cars owned by a local corporation, but it would be infinitely worse to have a national company monopolizing the streets of all the cities. The World knows to what extent the inter-state railway lines are consolidated; it knows to what extent these railroads now influence politics; can it view without alarm the absorption of inter-urban lines and street car lines by one or a few great railroad systems? If the people of a city own their own street car lines these lines are in no danger of being surrendered to state or national authority.

Local pride and local interest will offer a successful barrier to absorption if the people are in control. The World's argument is really an argument in favor of municipal ownership rather than against it.

Just now we are dealing with municipal ownership and the World, unable to answer the arguments in favor of the public ownership of public utilities, is trying to convert it into a national question. Is it afraid that all the gas plants and water plants will be located at Washington, too?

Just now the issue is railroad regulation—not the government ownership of railroads. The editor of The Commoner believes that public ownership is the ultimate solution, but he is anxious to have regulation tried under the most favorable circumstances.

He believes that state ownership of local lines is not only preferable to national ownership of these lines, but entirely feasible. A few trunk lines owned by the federal government would be sufficient to regulate inter-state commerce. Not every inter-state line need be owned by the federal government. If each state had an outlet over one federal line that fact would enable the various states to agree upon inter-state rates and exchange of cars where two state lines formed part of one through line, just as separate and distinct systems now make traffic arrangements.

Jefferson was opposed to centralization, and not without good reason. He said, as the World suggests: "When all government, domestic and foreign, in little as in great things, is drawn to Washington as the center of all power, it will render powerless the checks of one government on another, and will become as venal and oppressive as the government from which we separated."

The editor of The Commoner is in hearty accord with Jefferson on the subject covered by the above quotation, and it is to prevent centralization that he has proposed state ownership of local lines.

The World, while professing great reverence for Jefferson, is defending the very system which will, if anything can, drive the people to national ownership. The extortion and discrimination that have accompanied private ownership have made many democrats willing to risk the danger of centralization rather than present evils, but state ownership of the local lines offers the benefits of national ownership without its dangers.

The World has strengthened The Commoner's position. Its warning against centralization will do good, and the absurdity of its arguments against municipal ownership will encourage those who are opposed to the present system with the exploitation, graft and corruption which have accompanied it.

The World can quote Jefferson with telling effect against centralization, but it can not successfully throw the mantle of Jeffersonianism over the financial magnates who, through the instrumentality of private monopolies, are despoiling the people of their heritage.

SPECIAL OFFER

Taking advantage of the subscription offer, an Omaha reader writes: "We are pleased to hand you list of twelve subscribers for your valuable paper. It required about two hours' time to get these subscriptions."

F. M. Allison, Orange, Ind., sends ten subscribers and \$6.00 to pay for the same at the lot of five rate.

John B. Waddill, Springfield, Mo., writes: "Herewith I hand you club of five subscribers at your clubbing rate of 60 cents a year in lots of five or more."

Geo. S. Bird, Wellford, W. Va., writes:

Good Work at the Primaries Best Assurance of Success at the Polls

Representative Champ Clark, writing under date of Bowling Green, Mo., April 24, says: "I have carefully read the editorial in The Commoner, 'The Pledge Outlined,' and heartily endorse the plan therein suggested. I have for years advocated primary elections. My experience and observation teach me that the closer we get to the great body of the people on questions of public policy, the better it will be. I enclose a signed pledge."

Extracts from other letters follow:

A. M. English, Yankton, S. D.—Enclosed find my primary pledge, which I am very glad to sign. I have always attended the caucuses. I have been on the firing line many years, and although an old man, I hope to see a democrat in the White House before my work is done.

Thomas A. Barr, Malaga, Calif.—I have read your plan of organization and approve of it. I am a democrat of the old school—never voted a republican ticket in my life, and I will give my pledge that I never will as long as I live.

D. H. Chamberlain, Harriston, Miss.—I have heretofore considered it entirely unnecessary for one who has never missed a primary to sign a pledge to attend all the primaries in the future, but since what you have to say in the last issue of The Commoner, I am free to admit that I was wrong. I therefore send you herein the pledge, duly signed, and will see to it that every democrat in my county shall have his attention called to the necessity of this method of procedure.

J. W. Pope, Orlando, Fla.—Please find two pledges, my own and that of J. F. Estes, my son-in-law. We are with The Commoner in all its plans. Let everything go forward.

B. W. Brown, Manager News-Journal, Ramsey, Ill.—The plan of organization suggested by your valuable paper should meet with the approval of every democrat who believes in the right of the majority of the party to rule in the party councils. I most heartily endorse your plan, as

"Please find enclosed eight subscribers for The Commoner at your lot of five rate, 60 cents a year."

T. G. Sutton, Arglye, Minn., writes: "Please find herewith twenty subscribers for The Commoner according to your lot of five rates."

N. R. Tucker, Fremont, O., sends seven subscribers to The Commoner, and money order to pay for the same.

P. C. Schlytter, Wittenberg, Wis., writes: "Enclosed please find list of twelve subscribers for The Commoner."

According to the terms of the special subscription offer, cards, each good for one year's subscription to The Commoner, will be furnished in lots of five, at the rate of \$3 per lot. This places the yearly subscription rate at 60 cents.

Anyone ordering these cards may sell them for \$1 each, thus earning a commission of \$2 on each lot sold, or he may sell them at the cost price and find compensation in the fact that he has contributed to the educational campaign.

These cards may be paid for when ordered, or they may be ordered and remittance made after they have been sold. A coupon is printed below for the convenience of those who desire to participate in this effort to increase The Commoner's circulation.

THE COMMONER'S SPECIAL OFFER

Application for Subscription Cards

5	Publisher Commoner; I am interested in increasing The Commoner's circulation, and desire you to send me a supply of subscription cards. I agree to use my utmost endeavor to sell the cards, and will remit for them at the rate of 60 cents each, when sold. Name _____ Box, or Street No. _____ P. O. _____ State _____ Indicate the number of cards wanted by marking X opposite one of the numbers printed on end of this blank.
10	
15	
20	
25	
50	
75	
100	

If you believe the paper is doing a work that merits encouragement, fill out the above coupon and mail it to The Commoner, Lincoln, Neb.

It certainly is the plan to get an honest expression from the people. Please enroll my name as one in the midst of an organized fight for the success of true democracy.

Daniel A. Langhorne, Lynchburg, Va.—Enclosed find my pledge and those of some friends who think it all important that the great democratic party should continue its struggle against organized wealth, which is threatening to overthrow everything sacred in our inheritance from the Fathers. Father in Heaven! grant that there may be still enough patriotism and righteousness in the land to save it.

P. W. Gorman, Gilbert, Ia.—I wish a part in this good work, so I enclose my pledge. I join hands with the great common people through the columns of The Commoner, hoping the laboring men of our nation may all get in the democratic fold.

A. J. Donald, Assistant Principal Public Schools, Gilman, Iowa.—I send you my pledge. It is just what Iowa democrats need, for the rank and file of the party have lost confidence. The plan will bring unity, and unity means success.

J. A. Teeple, Hancock, Mo.—Herewith find the primary pledge, signed. I think the primary pledge a grand step for pure Democracy, and I shall try hard to get many more to sign the pledge.

Henry Stangler, Indianapolis.—Enclosed you will find primary pledge, signed. I would like to see every true American citizen sign such a pledge.

Emmet N. White, El Paso, Texas.—The work being done by The Commoner in securing the primary pledge, will bring great good to democracy and to the country at large. I rejoice that the old party all along the line presents itself a party of usefulness, and is bringing a message of promise to the people.

S. P. Young, Dixon, Ill.—I have been a sub-

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