

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

Vol. 5. No. 28

Lincoln, Nebraska, July 28, 1905

Whole Number 236

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LAWSON ON MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

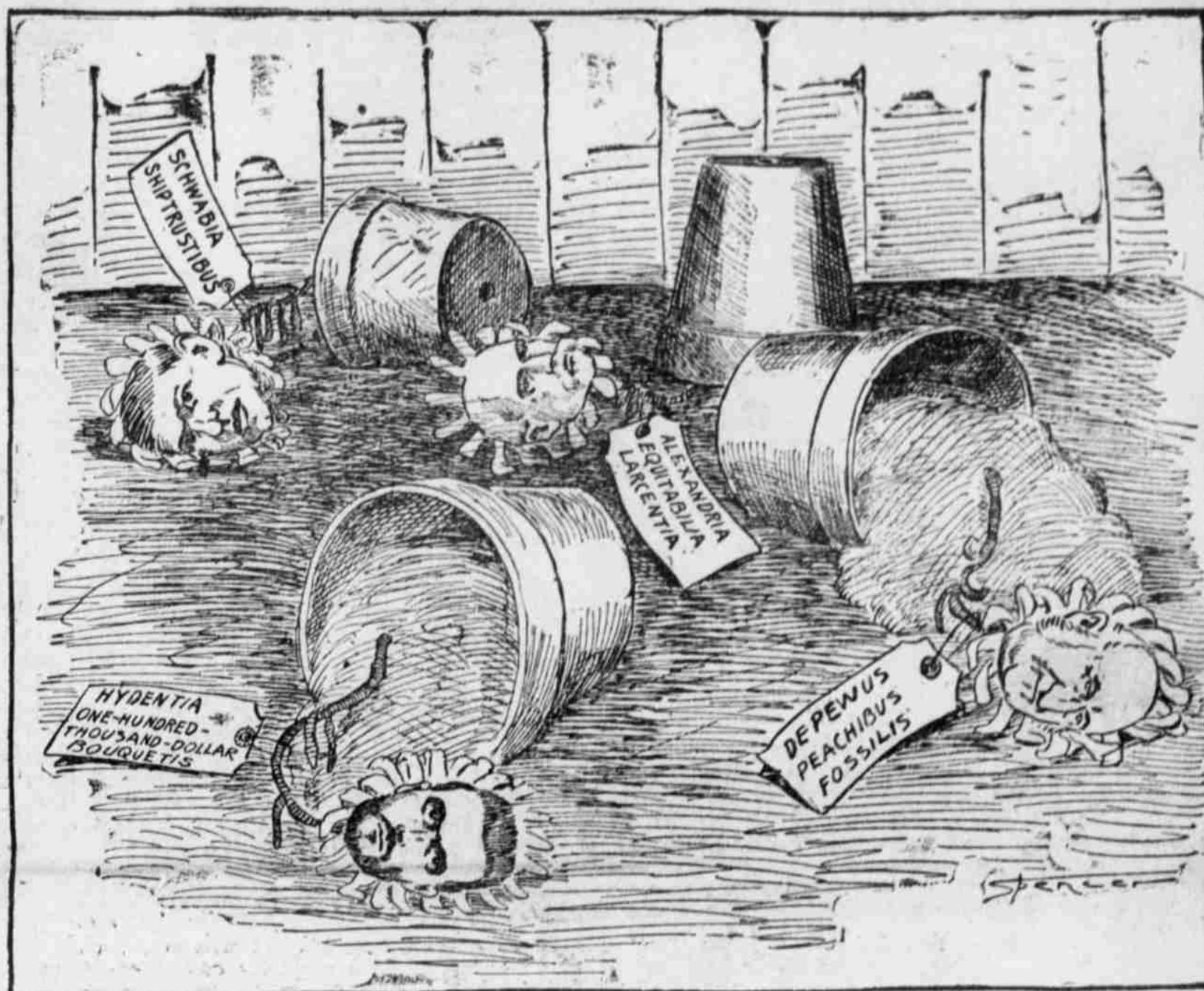
Mr. Lawson has made his trip west the occasion for hurling a few thunderbolts at municipal ownership. In Kansas he congratulated the people on the decision of the supreme court nullifying the state refinery law, and at Chicago he called municipal ownership a "will o' the Wisp" and declared that if tried the public ownership of public utilities "is bound to prove a disappointment and a failure."

The reason given both in Kansas and in Chicago was that "the system" could corrupt the lawmakers and public service employees. Mr. Lawson has shown himself familiar with the methods employed by "the system" in dealing with the public through private corporations, but he betrays both lack of knowledge and lack of faith in the people when he argues that the people can not administer a public monopoly in their own interest. He betrays lack of knowledge because the thing which he says can not be done is being done in increasing measure here and elsewhere. Nearly all the cities own their own water works and many of them own their lighting plants. Philadelphia is the only city of any size that has gone back to private ownership and the attempt to extend the lease there woke the sleepy old city up as nothing else had done. It is a great deal easier for a city government to avoid corruption when it owns and operates its public utilities than when it turns these utilities over to private corporations. Mr. Lawson lacks faith in the people. There is a growing conviction that "a private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable," and Mr. Lawson's disclosures have contributed to that conviction. The remedy is not to turn over public utilities to the Rockefellers and Rogerses, but to restore competition where competition is possible and to give the public the fruits of the monopoly where a monopoly is unavoidable.

The people will find ways of doing whatever it is necessary for them to do. The postoffice department is better run than the express companies, and at less expense to the public. The public utilities are conducted better and at less cost to the people where the public controls them than where they are controlled by private companies and the service will be still further improved as the cities enlarge the scope of their work.

Mr. Lawson is doing good when he attacks the Wall street speculators, but he does himself injustice when he attacks municipal ownership.

"LEAF BY LEAF THE ROSES FALL"



The Death of the Flowers

(With Proper Apologies to the Memory of William Cullen Bryant.)

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of them all,
Of frenzied finance, exposed graft, and schemes foredoomed to fall.
Heaped on the curbs of Wall and Broad, where once the lambs did play,
The forms of "captains of finance" lie in grand disarray.
The "suckers" from these haunts have flown, and gone the "easy jay."
And Trinity's deep, booming chimes sound through the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that once did here abide—
Schwab, Alexander and Depew and eke the sporty Hyde?
Alas! all wilted now they lie, a bunch of faded flowers
That have been plucked and thrown aside, the prey of vaster powers.
The slush is dirty where they lie, and gone their fragrant bloom,
And none is left to shed a tear above their slushy tomb.

The steel-flower and the peach's bloom, they perished long ago;
The cereus, night-blooming Hyde, has lost its waxen glow;
And on the curb the others lie, exposed to sneers and jeers,
While not a withered petal is refreshed by falling tears.
As fell the frost from the cold clear sky, so fell the wrath of man,
And they who were once great and strong are now the "also ran."

And when I gaze upon them now don't think I wail and screech
For Alexander, Schwab or Hyde, or eke for "Chance the Peach."
We'll lay them in the warm, moist earth for all of future time,
And o'er their mounds we'll thickly strew deodorizing lime.
'Tis not unmeet that they should fade—they never should have bloomed—
And not a tear will drop above the "flowers" thus entombed.

WILL M. MAUPIN.

ROOT'S SELECTION UNFORTUNATE

The Commoner has taken pleasure in commending the president wherever he has shown a disposition to take the people's side in any controversy, but it will be as free to point out his errors as to praise his good deeds.

President Roosevelt made a lamentable mistake when he took Paul Morton into his cabinet and he aggravated the mistake when he covered the secretary's retreat with a glowing eulogy. Now, he raises former Secretary of War Root to the position of premier in his cabinet and in so doing makes this distinguished corporation at-

torney eligible to the presidency in case of Mr. Roosevelt's death. Mr. Root is an exceedingly able man—one of the ablest in the country, but his brains have been for hire to any corporation that could offer to pay the price demanded.

When the president recently scored the lawyers who accepted employment from those who plot against the public he might with propriety have named Mr. Root as a conspicuous illustration. The new secretary was an attorney for the railroads in the Merger case and he was on the pay roll of the Equitable. He is about as far