

# The Commoner.

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## THERE IS NO TWILIGHT ZONE BETWEEN NATION AND STATE

"I am a strict constructionist, if that means to believe that federal government is one of delegated powers and that constitutional limitations should be carefully observed. I am jealous of any encroachment upon the rights of the state, believing that the states are as indestructible as the union is indissoluble. It is, however, entirely consistent with this theory to believe, as I do believe, that it is just as imperative that the general government shall discharge the duties delegated to it, as it is that the states shall exercise the powers reserved to them. There is no twilight zone between the nation and the state, in which exploiting interests can take refuge from both, and my observation is that most --- not all, but most --- of the contentions over the line between nation and state are traceable to predatory corporations which are trying to shield themselves from deserved punishment, or endeavoring to prevent needed restraining legislation."

## MR. BRYAN AT THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

At the White House conference Mr. Bryan spoke as follows:

I acknowledge my obligations to President Roosevelt for the opportunity which he has given me to participate in this meeting. The conference marks the beginning of a new era, during which increasing attention will be given to the far reaching problems involved in the conservation of the nation's resources. The epoch-making speech with which the chief executive opened the first session must exert a powerful influence upon the country at large, as it has upon those who were fortunate enough to hear him.

The assembling of the governors of nearly all the forty-six states is in itself an historic event of the first magnitude, for this meeting and the future meetings which this one assures, will facilitate co-operation between the states, make easier the doing of those things which should be done by the national government, and

stimulate the several states to act more speedily and with better information upon the things which should be done by the states independently. There has been some difference of opinion as to the relative spheres of the nation and the state, but such discussions as we have had here will help to define these spheres and to harmonize conflicting opinions.

I am a strict constructionist, if that means to believe that the federal government is one of delegated powers and that constitutional limitations should be carefully observed. I am jealous of any encroachment upon the rights of the state, believing that the states are as indestructible as the union is indissoluble. It is, however, entirely consistent with this theory to believe, as I do believe, that it is just as imperative that the general government shall discharge the duties delegated to it, as it is that the states shall exercise the powers reserved to them. There is no twilight zone between the nation and the state, in which exploiting interests can take refuge from both, and my observation is that most—not all, but most—of the contentions over the line between nation and state are traceable to predatory corporations which are trying to shield themselves from deserved punishment, or endeavoring to prevent needed restraining legislation. The first point which I desire to make is that earnest men, with an unselfish purpose and concerned only for the public good will be able to agree upon legislation which will not only preserve for the future the inheritance which we have received from a bountiful Providence, but preserve it in such a way as to avoid the dangers of centralization. Nothing that is necessary is impossible; and it would be a reflection upon the intelligence, as well as upon the patriotism of our people, to doubt the value of gatherings of this kind.

The time allotted to each speaker is so short that instead of attempting to discuss the various questions presented, I shall content myself with a few suggestions in line with the very able papers that have been presented by the specialists who have appeared before us. I begin with the proposition that it should be our purpose, not only to preserve the nation's

resources for future generations by reducing waste to a minimum, but that we should see to it that a few of the people do not monopolize that which is in equity the property of all the people. The earth belongs to each generation and it is as criminal to fetter future generations with perpetual franchises, making the multitude servants to a favored fraction of the population, as it would be to unnecessarily impair the common store. I am glad that Secretary Garfield emphasized this point. It is one that must always be kept in mind by the nation and by the several states.

The first national asset is to be found in the life of the people, and Mr. Mitchell very properly and with great force pointed out the importance of safe-guarding the life, the limbs and the health of those who are engaged in converting the nation's natural resources into material wealth. I would go a step farther and say that we could well afford to include in the appropriations made by congress a sum sufficient to carry on necessary investigations into the cause of diseases national in their scope, and to stimulate the search for remedies which would add to the life, health and usefulness of the whole population.

I was surprised at the statistics given in regard to our coal and our iron ore. While it is possible that new coal measures and new ore beds may be discovered, we can not afford to base our conduct upon speculations as to what may yet be discovered. We should begin an intelligent supervision and conservation of that which is known to exist, and I respectfully submit that it is worth while to ask ourselves whether we can afford to offer a bounty to those who are engaged in exhausting the supply of raw materials, which when gone can not be replaced. Surely if there is any importation which we can properly encourage by a free list, it is the importation of those raw materials of which our own supply is limited. And what I say in regard to coal and iron ore is equally applicable to timber. It is hardly consistent to discourage the importation of lumber, while we worry about the devastation of our forests.

Mr. Hill has rendered the conference a real service in presenting the facts and statis-

### CONTENTS

MR. BRYAN AT THE WHITE HOUSE
NO PERPETUAL FRANCHISES
PENNSYLVANIA'S OBJECT LESSON
GUARANTEED DEPOSIT PLAN DEMONSTRATED
DEMOCRATIC CONVENTIONS
"THE OLD SHIP IS LEAKING" IN IOWA
THE BLUE AND THE GRAY
WASHINGTON LETTER
COMMENT ON CURRENT TOPICS
HOME DEPARTMENT
WHETHER COMMON OR NOT
NEWS OF THE WEEK