

Speakers and democratic newspapers have vigorously and consistently advocated it.

The democratic national platform adopted at Chicago in 1896 said:

"The absorption of wealth by the few, the consolidation of our leading railroad systems and the formation of trusts and pools require a stricter control by the federal government of those arteries of commerce. We demand the enlargement of the powers of the interstate commerce commission and such restriction and guarantees in the control of railroads as will protect the people from robbery and oppression."

The democratic national platform adopted at Kansas City in 1900 said:

"We favor such an enlargement of the scope of the interstate commerce law as will enable the commission to protect individuals and communities from discriminations and the public from unjust and unfair transportation rates."

The democratic national platform adopted at St. Louis in 1904 said:

"We demand an enlargement of the powers of the interstate commerce commission, to the end that the traveling public and shippers of this government may have prompt and adequate relief from the abuses to which they are subjected in the matter of transportation. We demand a strict enforcement of existing civil and criminal statutes against all such trusts, combinations and monopolies; and we demand the enactment of such further legislation as may be necessary to effectually suppress them."

In his letter accepting the presidential nomination in 1896, Mr. Bryan said:

"The democratic party is opposed to trusts. It would be recreant to its duty to the people of the country if it recognized either the moral or the legal right of these great aggregations of wealth to stifle competition, bankrupt rivals and then prey upon society. Corporations are the creatures of law and they must not be permitted to pass from under the control of the power which created them; they are permitted to exist upon the theory that they advance the public weal and they must not be allowed to use their powers for the public injury. The right of the United States government to regulate interstate commerce cannot be questioned and the necessity for the vigorous exercise of the right is becoming more and more imperative. The interests of the whole people require such an enlargement of the powers of the interstate commerce commission as will enable it to prevent discrimination between persons and places, and protect patrons from unreasonable charges."

In his letter accepting the presidential nomination in 1900, Mr. Bryan said:

"The republican party has persistently refused to comply with the urgent request of the interstate commerce commission, for such an enlargement of the scope of the interstate commerce law as will enable the commission to realize the hopes aroused by its creation. The democratic party is pledged to legislation which will empower the commission to protect individuals and communities from discrimination, and the public at large from unjust and unfair transportation rates."

If anyone will take the trouble to examine the democratic campaign book for 1900 he will find that several pages are devoted to the "railroad question—discrimination in favor of the trusts." Extracts from that campaign book will be printed in a subsequent issue of The Commoner. It is sufficient for present purposes to say that the fact was therein emphasized that it would be necessary to enlarge the powers of the interstate commerce commission in order to provide the people with relief from "an elaborate system of secret rates, rebates, drawbacks, and concessions," all made "to foster monopoly, to enrich favored shippers and to prevent free competition in many lines of trade in which the item of transportation is an important factor."

Judging by the record, it is clear that the democrats have not "become republicans." Mr. Roosevelt and some other distinguished republicans are, however, showing democratic symptoms. The nearer Mr. Roosevelt comes to the position taken by the democratic party with respect to the questions of trusts and corporations, the greater promise

will Mr. Roosevelt's administration give of being of practical and material service to the people.

### Protecting Depositors

On another page will be found a copy of the bill for the protection of depositors introduced in the fifty-third congress by Mr. Bryan. Its provisions can be so changed as to make it apply to state banks, if any legislator desires to introduce a similar measure. Provision should be made for allowing national banks to take advantage of this law if they desire to do so. The protection of depositors is so important a thing that the banks themselves should aid in the passage of such a measure.

### Now for the Senate

The house of representatives on Feb. 9 passed the Esch-Townsend bill, providing for the regulation of freight rates. The vote stood 326 to 17. Eleven republicans and six democrats voted against the bill. The following republicans voted against the bill: Adams (Pa.), Caster (Pa.), Dwight (N. Y.), Gardner (N. J.), Hill (Conn.), Huff (Pa.), McCall (Mass.), Porter (Pa.), Sibley (Pa.), Southwick (N. Y.), and Vreeland (N. Y.).

The following democrats voted no: Harrison (N. Y.), McDermott (N. J.), Rider (N. Y.), Scudder (N. Y.), Goulden (N. Y.), and Shull (Pa.).

The vote was first taken on the minority substitute, known as the Davey bill. The substitute was defeated by a vote of 151 to 186. The roll was then called on the Esch-Townsend bill, and it was adopted.

In the debate, Mr. Pierce of Tennessee referred to Mr. Roosevelt as the greatest leader that has lived in the republican ranks since the civil war. He said he would support the Esch-Townsend bill, however, upon the fact that W. J. Bryan and the democratic party had declared for just such legislation.

Mr. DeArmond of Missouri said that the Esch-Townsend bill was inadequate, singularly lacking in its compliance with the recommendations of the president. He criticised the measure because it did not reach private car lines and he did not take it for granted that the courts would be eager in the effort to find in it something on private car lines which its authors themselves could not find.

Mr. Williams of Mississippi closed the debate for the minority. He said that President Roosevelt was beginning to assume "a distinctly democratic attitude" and declared that he had begun to hope that the president would yet recommend tariff revision and a decrease in the standing army.

Referring to Mr. Grosevenor's statement that "the democrats camped now where the republicans camped last night," Mr. Williams, addressing the republican side, said: "It is you who are camping this year where the democrats camped last year."

Mr. Hepburn of Iowa closed for the majority and took occasion to say that the railroad rate bill which he had introduced and which was so severely criticised was, with the exception of two words, the product of the brain of Mr. Roosevelt's attorney general.

The Esch-Townsend bill will go to the senate and Washington dispatches say that an effort will be made to provide for an investigation by a senate committee, said committee to sit after the adjournment of the present session and inquire as to the desirability of legislation on the subject treated by the house measure. The adoption of a resolution of inquiry would, of course, prevent the passage of the bill through the senate at this session. It has all along been claimed that Mr. Roosevelt's railroad policy would meet with strong opposition in the senate and the proposition for a committee of investigation is evidently an ingenious method of making that opposition effective. It is not at all likely that the senate, as now constituted, will pass a bill which will require justice for the people at the hands of the great corporations.

It is to be hoped, however, that no democratic senator will be found giving any encouragement to the efforts at delay. Democratic senators owe it to their party and to the people to exert their efforts in behalf of the measure that has passed the house.

### The Senate's Prerogative

In amending the treaties by substituting the word "treaty" for the word "agreement" the senate has taken issue with the president on an important constitutional question. Without reflecting on the president's motives or good intentions,

The Commoner feels constrained to endorse the position taken by the senate. The constitutional provision, which requires the senate's concurrence in the making of treaties is founded in wisdom and the power asked by the president could not safely be delegated to the executive.

In the multitude of counsellors there is safety. And we can better delay action than risk a mistake in our dealings with foreign nations. The senate is not only guarding a senatorial prerogative, but it is emphasizing a democratic principle, when it refuses to surrender the senate's right to a voice in the negotiations proposed by the arbitration treaties. The president need not feel humiliated because he is not permitted to act with as free a hand as a king. He is the head of a government which rests upon the consent of the governed, and recognizes the value of advice from the people's representatives. The fact that the senate is just now under a cloud because of the dominating influence which corporations exert on it ought not to blind the public to the principle involved in the present issue.

Arbitration will not be retarded by the preservation of the senate's right to participate in international negotiations. It is to be hoped that the president will on reflection, conclude to urge the acceptance by foreign nations of the amended treaties. He will err if he fails to recognize the strength of the senate's position.

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Every day The Commoner is in receipt of letters from busy men, showing the great interest they feel in the work The Commoner is doing. Everywhere men who believe in the doctrines preached by The Commoner are taking advantage of the special subscription offer, in order to widen The Commoner's sphere of influence by increasing its circulation.

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