

# The Commoner.

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### Wanted--More Democratic Weeklies

The weekly paper is the strength of the reform movement. It is in close touch with the people. Its editor is in daily contact with the rank and file and what he says has influence in proportion as he has character. We need more democratic weeklies—there ought to be one at every county seat. It does not require much time to prepare the necessary editorial matter and to select for reproduction such clippings as the editor desires to lay before his readers. Usually a well conducted weekly is more than self supporting and some democrat ought to be found in each county willing to risk in such an enterprise the small capital required. Where such a person can not be found the democrats ought to join together and guarantee the amount necessary to meet any possible deficit. There can be found in every county seat some young lawyer, not yet overwhelmed with work, or some old lawyer retiring from the practice, or some business man with ready pen who can furnish editorials in case the publisher can not attend to both the business and the editorial department of such a paper.

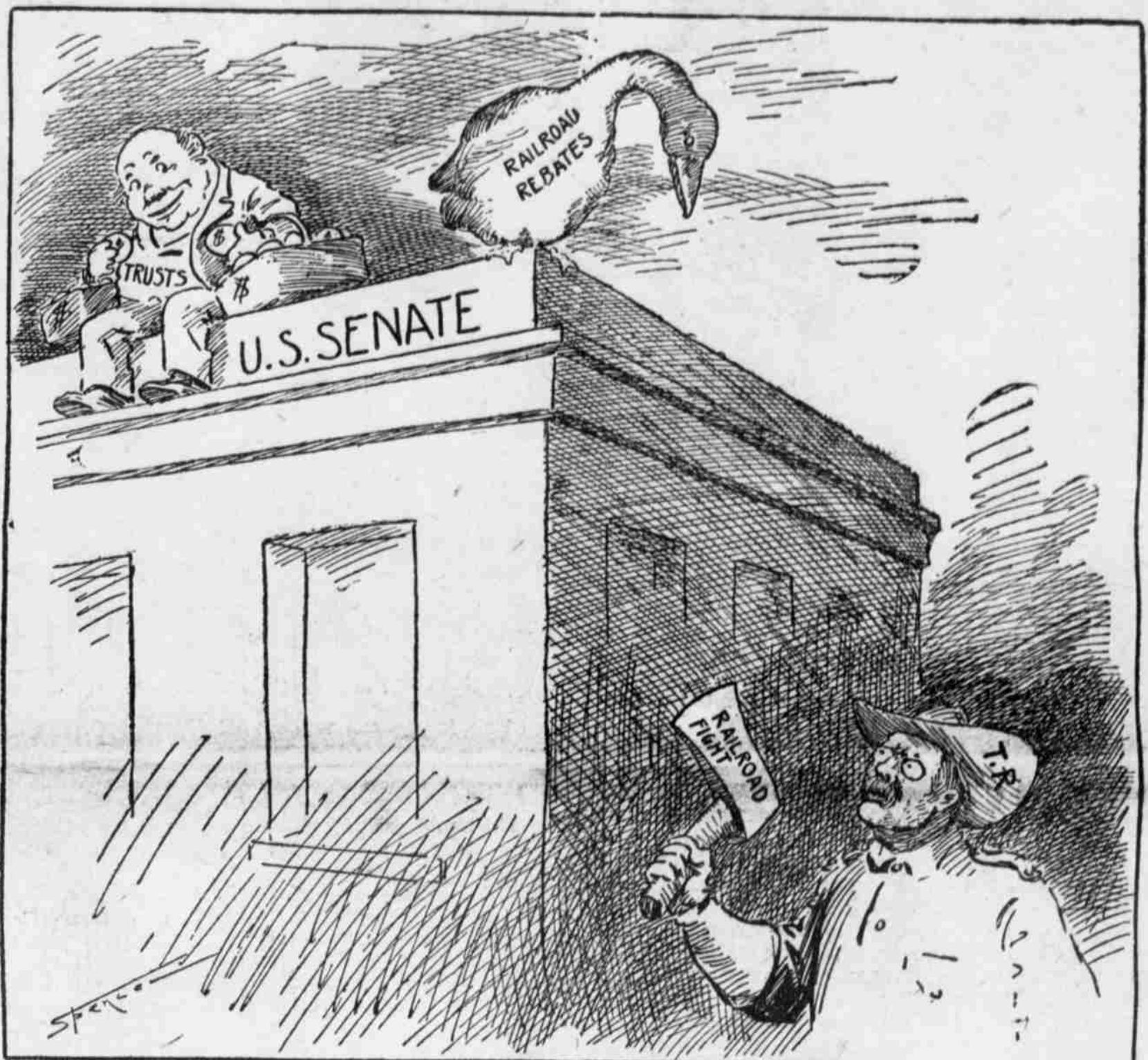
The democrats of the country ought to address themselves with earnestness to the establishment of these papers and The Commoner will not only be glad to exchange with all democratic papers but it will give space for the free insertion of advertisements calling attention to newspaper men who are looking for a location or to localities which desire a democratic newspaper.

### Be Careful

Speaking before the house committee on ways and means, Secretary of War Taft said that it would be as just to establish a tariff between the states of Ohio and Pennsylvania, as between the United States and the Philippines. He insisted that free trade would have to come between the islands and the United States if we continue to hold them.

That sounds very much like a “populistic” speech. If Mr. Taft is not careful he may be driven out of the republican party, along with other republicans who insist that the government should not be conducted for the benefit of the special interests.

## SAFE FOR THE PRESENT



The Goose that Laid the Golden Eggs Has Found Refuge

## Public Ownership Vindicated

The administration has not only endorsed the democratic policy on the question of railroad regulation and in regard to requiring an interstate commerce corporation to take out a federal license, but it has gone farther and endorsed a populist policy in acquiring a government railroad. If Mr. Bryan had not last summer announced himself in favor of the public ownership of railroads he would have suffered the mortification of seeing the republicans pass him on the reform highway, but he is in position to welcome them to this advanced ground. Of course the republicans say that the conditions are exceptional in the case of the Panama railroad, but that makes no difference. The right of the government to own and operate a railroad is established and the necessity or advisability of exercising the right is the only question left open to dispute. If the government has a right to own and operate a railroad in Panama, connecting the oceans, it has a right to own and operate a road in the United States, connecting the oceans, and it can proceed to build or buy such a road whenever the people are convinced that public interests can be promoted thereby. The precedent is established and a precedent is a potent thing in leg-

islation. The right of the people to protect themselves, like the right of self-defense in the individual, is a paramount right and can always be resorted to. In Kansas the people have resorted to a state oil refinery for self-protection; if necessary they can build a pipe line or a railroad to carry the oil to the refinery or from the refinery to market. If they can do this for oil they can do it for wheat, oats, corn or cattle. This reserve power enables the people to defend themselves against monopolies of every kind. For years the people of the various states have tried to regulate railroad rates, but they have found the railroad lobbyist ever present with his pocket full of passes and other “persuaders.” A few state railroad lines would have done more to regulate railroad rates than all the laws that have been passed. The United States judges have usually been prompt to suspend such laws but the United States courts can not suspend the right of a state to regulate rates by building a competing line. One of the purposes of the Isthmian canal is to regulate transcontinental rates—a thing that could be done more cheaply and more effectively by a transcontinental line. The canal can only reduce through rates on things that can stand