

WHAT TRUSTS ARE ACTUALLY DOING

E. E. Lewis of Sioux City, Iowa, has written to the editor of the Tribune the following letter:

Some days ago a number of gentlemen at the Mondamin were discussing the Standard Oil octopus, when one spoke up designating as "scare heads" the Tribune's New York correspondence of February 9, giving 72,740 miles of railroad as owned by that corporation, and asking whether it was going to own all the railroads.

A stranger sitting by said: "You call notices of what the corporations are doing in this country 'scare heads,' do you? Let me tell you, sir, that you are either lulling yourself into a fatal sleep or you are wholly uninformed as to what the trusts are doing.

"I was in business in Illinois until six months ago. A combine got control of pretty much all the plants in the same line. I had been doing well, but foreseeing that I should be forced to sell or crowded out of the trade, I sold—made a good sale and was happy for a few days—I began to look about for some business into which I could put my time and my bit of money. Then my troubles began. For six months I have followed one will-o'-the-wisp after another only to be met everywhere by the same conditions, and I have just put the money into a bank which will pay me about one-fourth as much as I was making out of it in the business. Everywhere I came up against the steel fingers of some trust. Individual industries are no more. Men of small capital are crowded out, and there is nothing left but to become a cog in some great wheel—put your money into its 'stock' with an almost certain prospect that sooner or later the big stockholders will freeze out the little ones and leave them dependent upon the wages which our owners choose to give, and those wages subject to continual nice calculations as to how small a ration will sustain a man in working order.

"Not only the oil and gas you burn, but the flour you bake, the hats, shoes and clothing you wear, everything you touch taste or handle, the chair you sit on by day, the bed you sleep in by night, are controlled by trusts, and while there may be great margins in their manufacture, yet an individual embarking therein would soon learn to his cost that the profits are not for him.

"Go into your stores and see how they are selling this, that and the other—you will find the retailer usually held with hooks of steel under a hard and fast contract by which he can only sell such and such goods and at such and such prices, and the penalty of a breach is that the trust will deprive him of its line of goods.

"How long will your retailers be allowed even the poor privilege of handling goods at the meager margin permitted?

"How long before right here in your own city the trust controlling lines of canned goods, for instance, will put up a great warehouse and do their own distributing, and the retailer be sent whistling down the wind?"

But turning our friend found that the objector to "scare heads" had himself gone whistling down the wind, and none seeming disposed to dispute with one who had learned with much sorrow the lesson he was trying to teach, the company separated.

But how strangely in line this man's experience seems to have been with what Judge Grosscup says in McClure's for February:

"Deposits in the banks in the United States in 1880 were about \$2,225,000,000, and in 1904, \$11,000,000,000. The effect of the corporation under the prevailing policy is to drive the bulk of our people out of business, and once out they keep out! They put their money in some bank or bond—"

It has been continually heralded over the country as an unanswerable proof of increasing prosperity that the banks are overflowing with money. It never was such proof, and today less so than ever. The body of Americans seek active investments. They do not under normal conditions put money into banks at 3 or 4 per cent when twice or four times as much could be made with it in business.

Money piling up in the banks is always evidence of unrest, hesitation, suspicion, fear, danger.

We are rapidly approaching a time when there will be but two alternatives: First—Conversion of corpora-

tions to the golden rule—as corporations have no souls that door seems closed. Second—Government control for the benefit of the people.

A FLIMFLAM

Senator Depew was explaining to a clergyman the slang term, to "flimflam."

"To flimflam," he said, "is to confuse a man's mind to such a degree that he actually consents to and concurs in his own cheating.

"Now permit me to give you an illustration of flimflam.

"A boy goes to a grocer and asks for a pint of molasses.

"Put the molasses, sir' he says, 'in this pitcher.'

"The grocer draws the molasses in a pint measure, pours it into the pitcher, and hands it to the boy.

"But the boy, looking at the measure, exclaims:

"See here, you haven't given me all my molasses. There's some still sticking to the bottom of the measure.'

"Oh, that's all right, sonny,' says the grocer easily. 'There was some in the measure before.'

"Thereupon the flimflammed boy goes off content." — New Orleans States.

The Primary Pledge==Organize Now

From The Commoner, Lincoln, Nebraska, March 17, 1905

Newspapers favoring the plan outlined are requested to reproduce this editorial together with the primary pledge as it appears below. They may request their readers to sign this pledge and forward the same either to The Commoner or to the office of their local democratic paper. In the latter event these pledges may be then forwarded in bulk to The Commoner office where they will be duly recorded.

The Pledge Outlined

The following editorial appeared in The Commoner of March 17:

"Mr. Bryan has been in receipt of a multitude of letters since the election urging organization for the campaign of 1908. The rank and file of the party are ready to begin the fight; they only await a plan of co-operation. This plan has been under consideration for some weeks and is herewith submitted.

"Let each democrat pledge himself to attend all of the primaries of his party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to use his influence to secure a clear, honest and straightforward declaration of

the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak.

"This plan does not involve the writing of a platform in advance of the primaries; it does not rest upon the paramount importance of any one issue. It recognizes the right of the democratic voters to control the policy of the democratic party, and to determine its position upon public questions. It also recognizes the importance of honesty and sincerity in politics.

"This proposition will appeal to all who believe in the rule of the people—to all who are willing that the majority shall govern in party management and in the nation. It does not mean that those who exert themselves to secure a good platform will be bound to support a bad platform—that is a question which each must determine for himself—but it does mean that the democratic platform shall give voice to the prevailing sentiment of the democratic party, and that the party shall take the country into its confidence. The pledge proposed is a primary pledge—because the people speak at the primaries. The national convention is attended by delegates and each delegate represents tens of thousands of democrats. The state convention is also attended by delegates, and these represent thousands of democrats. The county conventions are, as a rule, attended by delegates, and these in turn represent hundreds of democrats. At the primary the voters speak for themselves; there democracy has its citadel.

"When the work of organization is

sufficiently advanced, a time can be set for the meeting of the members in their various localities. The members of this organization, while pledged to but one thing—namely, attendance upon the primaries—are urged to co-operate among themselves for the support of every effort put forth to eliminate corruption in politics. No cause can prosper permanently that does not appeal to the moral sense of the country, and the moral sense of the country is now being awakened to the importance of purifying politics.

"The Commoner will do its part in aiding every movement that has for its object the ascertainment of the will of the people and the scrupulous enforcement of that will.

"The Commoner will also furnish all the information that it can upon the questions which are before the public to the end that its readers may be prepared to render the maximum of assistance to every worthy cause.

"Who will be the first to make this pledge? A record will be kept in The Commoner office of the name and address of each person who enters into this movement. Those who desire to be enrolled can either write approving the object of the organization, and asking to have their names entered on the roll, or they can fill out and mail the blank which is printed below.

"The Commoner will be pleased to publish a limited number of brief letters on this subject. Mr. Bryan is encouraged by his correspondence to believe that there will be a prompt and hearty response to the above proposition."

THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

I promise to attend all the primaries of my party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to use my influence to secure a clear, honest and straightforward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak.

Signed.....

Street..... Postoffice..... State.....

County..... Voting precinct or ward.....

Fill out blanks and mail to Commoner Office, Lincoln, Neb.