

SOCIALISM AND THE REPUBLIC

In an interview printed in the Sunday World Mr. Bryan said:

"It is impossible to have real competition between corporations operated under a municipal franchise—that is, street railways, water or light companies or telephone lines. Believing that a private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable, as declared in the Kansas City platform, I hold that all these public utilities should be owned and operated by the city government."

If Mr. Bryan had power to carry his newest fads into effect he would find it much easier to start the ball of socialism than to stop it. He thinks now that he could respect historical political divisions and conserve local self-government by restricting municipal socialism to municipal monopolies, state socialism to state monopolies and national socialism to national monopolies—assuming that there is a clean line of cleavage. Unfortunately these utilities do not follow the lines of political geography except on paper and in the fertile brains of politicians who are trying to reconcile socialism with Jeffersonian democracy.

Mr. Bryan seems to think that telephone service stops at the city limits. Yet these lines radiate from city to state and into adjoining states. The telephone will soon be as much a state utility as a local utility, and eventually as much of a national utility as a state utility. Who is to own it then? Mr. Bryan seems to think that street-railway lines stop at the city limits also, forgetting that city railway systems are now only parts of interurban systems, and sometimes of interstate systems. Who is to own them—the city, the state or the nation?

Mr. Bryan talks glibly of state ownership of local railway lines and national ownership of trunk lines; but what is a local line and what is a trunk line? Few railroad systems are now wholly within a single state. Would Mr. Bryan have the Pennsylvania railroad owned by Pennsylvania or New York or New Jersey or Maryland or Ohio or Indiana or Illinois? Would he have the New Haven owned by New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island or Massachusetts?

If the American people ever adopted the Bryan program it would soon be found that the municipal utilities were not municipal alone, and the state would have to take them over in the interests of a larger body of citizenship to protect them from petty local restrictions. Then it would be found that the state utilities were not state alone, but interstate, and the federal government would have to take them over in the interests of a still larger body of citizenship to protect them from petty state restrictions.

Then, as Jefferson said—the Jefferson whom Mr. Bryan still professes to hold in high esteem—

"When all government, domestic and foreign, in little as in great things, is drawn to Washington as the center of all power, it will render powerless the checks of one government on another, and will become as venal and oppressive as the government from which we separated."—New York World.

SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

It is a dangerous thing to wait for opportunities until it becomes a habit. Energy and inclination for hard work ooze out in the waiting. Opportunity becomes invisible to those who are doing nothing or looking somewhere else for it. It is the great worker, the man who is alert for chances that sees them.

Some people become so opportunity-blind that they can not see chances anywhere—they would pass through a gold mine without noticing anything precious—while others find opportu-

nities in the most barren and out-of-the-way places. Bunyan found opportunity in Bedford jail to write the greatest allegory in the world on the untwisted paper that had been used to cork his bottles of milk. A Theodore Parker or a Lucy Stone sees an opportunity to go to college in a chance to pick berries. One boy sees an opening to his ambition in a chance to chop wood, wait on table or run errands, where another sees no chance at all. One sees an opportunity to get an education in the odds and ends of time, evenings and half-holidays, which another throws away.—Success.

FLABBY MORAL MUSCLES

Governor Cummins made an address at the annual dinner of the Young Men's Christian association in Des Moines. He said the need of clean, pure, vigorous, right-minded and right-thinking young men is greater than ever before. He admitted that wonderful things had been achieved in a material way; "yet," he added, "the moral muscles of these days are the flabbiest that ever moved humanity."—Sioux City Journal.

CHEER UP, CHAUNCEY!

Chauncey Depew may have to pay

back to the Equitable Life Assurance society \$1,000,000 which he is alleged to have received from it illegally in fees. It was Senator Depew who recently declared that he could not understand why anybody should ever be pessimistic. We hope he continues to be cheerful.—Chicago Record-Herald.

The sheriff of Knox county, Ohio, rescued a negro, charged with killing a white woman, from a mob of angry men, placed him in an automobile and rode with him twelve miles, where he placed him on a train bound for another city.

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.