

# The Commoner.

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### ANOTHER TRUST EXPOSED

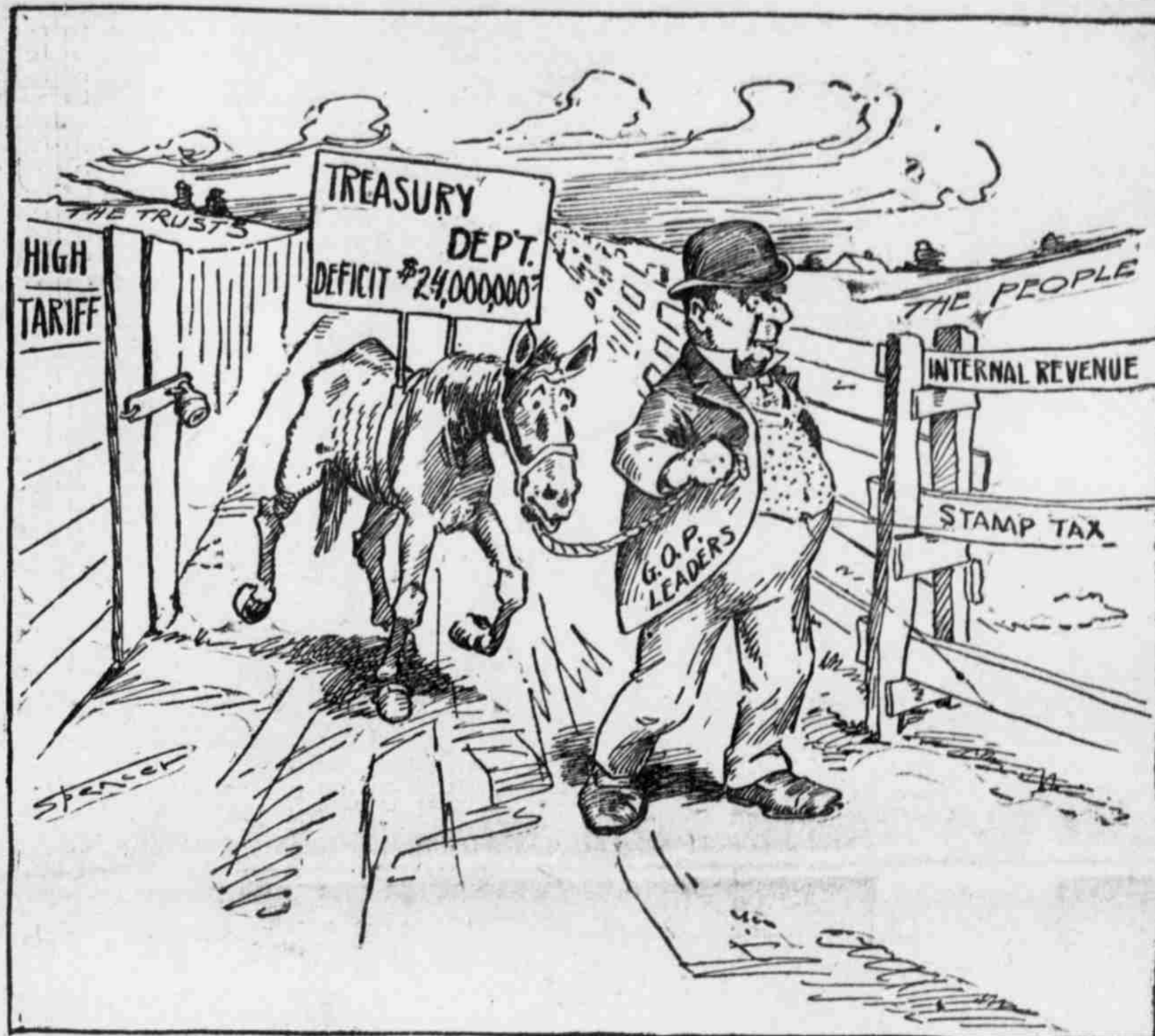
The International Harvester company sued Mr. Rodney B. Swift for an accounting, claiming that Mr. Swift had cheated the company. Mr. Swift replies by accusing the Harvester trust of collecting rebates from several railroads to the amount of \$5,000,000 and of conspiring to monopolize interstate commerce. Whether Mr. Swift is seeking to force the trust to a settlement or really intends to expose the lawlessness of the trust can not now be determined, but it is to be hoped that the suit will bring out the facts. The Harvester trust is a constant menace to agriculture and it will be a glad day when its inner workings are made known to the public. Why does the president not prosecute the Harvester trust?

### WHY NOT "LET WELL ENOUGH ALONE?"

Chauncey M. Depew has so long posed as a champion of "national honor" and an uncompromising defender of the rules of "common honesty" that some people were doubtless surprised when they learned that for years Mr. Depew has been carried upon the pay roll of the Equitable Life Assurance society at an annual salary of \$20,000. But now we are told by the New York World that in the inquiry made by the New York state insurance department Senator Depew admitted that the Depew Improvement company in which he was interested obtained a loan from the Equitable of \$250,000 on property which the state insurance department valued at only \$150,000. Mr. Depew admitted that neither loan nor interest had been paid and that the mortgage had been foreclosed. While claiming that as a member of the executive committee of the Equitable he did not advise the loan, he admitted that he voted for it. Mr. Depew further said that he had made a verbal guaranty to save the Equitable from loss on this loan, but he added that the promise was "not legally binding."

Inquiries of this kind should not be permitted. They amount to "an assault upon the business interests of the country," to an "attack upon national honor," to an arraignment of "the public faith" and to various other things the exact description of which is not just now recalled, but one may refresh his memory by referring to the speeches delivered by Mr. Depew in 1896 and 1900.

How are the Depews, the Mitchells, and the Burtons, the Rockefellers, the Rogers and the Hydes, the patient, plodding, persistent protectors of public good to succeed in the patriotic effort of "letting well enough alone" when their practices are inquired into in this ruthless way?



WHERE WILL HE FATTEN THE STEED?

## ARE THE PEOPLE POWERLESS

Thomas W. Lawson has done great work in arousing the people to the evils of the money power or as Mr. Lawson has called it, "the system." But Mr. Lawson is rather pessimistic so far as concerns the application of the logical remedy in a republic and the remedy which must be effective unless we are prepared to admit that popular government is a failure.

In his speeches delivered on his western tour, Mr. Lawson said that the way to attack "the system" is for the people to sell their stocks. But do we not know that the stockholding people—and they comprise a very small proportion of the population—will not be governed so much by a desire to attack "the system" as they will by an anxiety to derive profits from their stocks? Mayor Dunne of Chicago hit the nail on the head when he said that the cry, "Get rid of your stocks" is "the stock-gamblers' way of 'getting even.'" It is not, however, an available method for the people to hold in check those powerful influences through whose machinations public interests are made to suffer.

Mr. Lawson says "there is small hope from the ballot box." In his speech at Ottawa, Kan., he said that "the system" has unlimited dollars and ballots are impotent against dollars. He said that with \$5,000,000 he saw Rogers rob the democrats of the presidency in 1896 and he asked: "Do you imagine he would shrink from repeating the operation in 1908 if he feared that the man nominated would upset his control?"

Suppose the people should act on Mr. Lawson's advice to sell stock. Does Mr. Lawson think that Rogers and his associates would shrink from meeting, in an ingenious way, that move against them? Of course men who have bought elections in the past would not hesitate to undertake the

purchase in the future, but Mr. Lawson forgets that in 1896 thousands of honest people were deceived and were really led to believe that the men who were contributing millions for the republican campaign fund were patriots rather than individuals who were seeking to perpetuate "the system." And while Mr. Rogers would not shrink from repeating the operation in 1908 it is very probable that thousands of men who marched to the ballot box shoulder to shoulder with Rogers and his associates would shrink from that association.

Mr. Lawson seems to be wholly hopeless of relief outside of the stock market. Relief is not to be looked for from the courts, according to Mr. Lawson, because, as he explains, the great corporations "do not hesitate to suborn perjury, bribe juries and pay judges for favorable decisions." In the same speech in which this statement was made Mr. Lawson opposes government ownership in its various phases, referring to municipal ownership as "a will of the wisp." But when Mr. Lawson admits that the great corporations "do not hesitate to suborn perjury, bribe juries and pay judges for favorable decisions," and says that the people are powerless to protect themselves from this condition, he provides the very strongest argument in favor of government ownership. There are many people who are not yet convinced of the advisability of government ownership, but who are strongly in favor of government control and who desire to see an honest experiment along that line. But if there can be no such thing as government control, then these people will demand government ownership. Mr. Lawson's description means that the great corporations own the government, and if the people become convinced that no relief under pres-