

Editorials by Commoner Readers

John T. Campbell, Rockville, Ind.— It may seem strange that a radical political partisan on being disappointed by the conservatism of his own party should go square over to the opposite party. Sometimes that is the best and only thing to do. To explain: I was an abolitionist before I was a voter. I was a republican when Fremont was nominated for president. I was a soldier in the Union army. I believed in the radical reconstruction measures—not at first, but I, like many others, grew up to it. I believed that those amendments to the constitution were proper under the circumstances. I believe now they should be enforced—that is, I believe the southern representation should be reduced, because of the disfranchisement of the negro vote. The republican party in the last presidential campaign declared for such reduction. They won with that plank in plain view. They have the requisite majority to enforce the reduction. They are not going to reduce it. Crumpacker of Indiana, and Keifer of Ohio, are the only men in Congress who are working in good earnest to accomplish that end, and their efforts will be smothered by republican congressmen. The republican party can not build up an available party in the south. The southern voters, what is left of them after disfranchisement, will accept nothing but an unconditional surrender of everything that was in issue with republicans in 1904. Since the party that made the fourteenth amendment declines to enforce it and deliberately makes it a dead letter, why should a radical continue to hurrah, work for and vote with a party that practically says such radical was wrong? That is the implication and there can be no other. If we were wrong why should one still encumber the field? If we were wrong the other party was right. If they were right why not put them to the front? Why pension the soldiers who fought on the side now abandoned as wrong? The republican platform of Indiana almost labels itself "stand pat." Don't move, lest something shall drop off. I would rather ride a horse going the wrong way than sit astride a dead horse in the road. If the democrats will declare for a repeal of the fourteenth amendment I shall work and vote with them. If the next republican candidate for president shall be defeated by the thirty electors based on a disfranchised vote I shall not grieve.

Samuel H. Lapp, St. Vincent, Minn.— I see in the Minneapolis Journal a Washington special to the Chicago Tribune which says that President Roosevelt has made a speech attacking magazine writers for exposing the rottenness of high public officials. (Note the high). I suppose if it were low public officials they would have to take their medicine like the rest of us low scoundrels. I am a low, very obscure, ignorant farmer and it seems to me that if those high public officials are attacked unjustly they have the courts to go to for redress. Upton Sinclair, the author of the book entitled "The Jungle," is especially singled out to be chastised. The publishers of that book are responsible men and the high public officials could

easily have those men arrested for libel. Why do they not do it?

According to this special to the Chicago Tribune the president says that this class of writers has done a great harm to the country (I, for one, fail to see where the harm comes in), and they are liable to prosecution for treason and ought to be compelled to stop their mud throwing and "make good." Certainly they should. But the high public officials do not seem to care to bring them into court. They seem to want to make them stop by scolding them. As for "making good," it is very hard for the common people to get evidence against high public officials. For instance, when men contemplate committing a crime they do not advertise in the daily papers for witnesses. The government, it seems, could not get evidence against the packers without promising immunity.

This special to the Chicago Tribune further says that the president says in his speech that, in his opinion, the throwing of mud at public officials without proper proof is degrading to the community and tends to lower the ideals of public men because if they think they are accused of dishonesty, no matter what they do, they will not have the same motive for living up to the best ideals. Strange reasoning, for honest men, is it not? God help the poor public officials! We did not do it. Oh, no; but if you keep on saying we did, we will. One would think, according to the scolding that is to come, that these officials are men who could not be turned from the straight path by all the powers of the universe.

May the Lord protect Upton Sinclair and his associates in this great crime of exposure from the wrath of the mighty, is my prayer. If it had not been for men like Upton Sinclair (call them kickers if you will); if it had not been for the kickers the barons would never have forced King John to sign the Great Charter. If it had not been for the kickers, the head would never have come off the tyrant—Charles the First. If it had not been for the kickers, our fathers (God bless them), this nation would never have been born and we poor common people would not be, basking in the light that shines from our poor wronged high public officials. Men do not seem to change very much as the centuries go by. Two thousand years ago the Son of Mary spoke his mind about the high public officials and money changers of the time and they crucified him; though the common people, we are told, heard him gladly. The common people of today read about Upton Sinclair's book, "The Jungle," gladly. This speech of President Roosevelt's will be read throughout the world, we are told by this Washington special. No doubt it will. We read of an affair which took place in the streets of Berlin a few years ago. A private citizen jostled a soldier in the street and the soldier drew his sword and ran the citizen through. The high officials of Germany said that it was the proper thing to do. No doubt they will read President Roosevelt's speech with much pleasure. God help the people of this republic if they must not criticise the high public officials.

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