

# Mr. Roosevelt Has Made Progress

In its issue of Wednesday, December 5, the New York World printed an editorial entitled "The Roosevelt-Bryan Merger." Commoner readers who have heard Mr. Bryan's views bitterly criticized by republicans may be interested in this World editorial:

"Mr. Bryan in his Madison Square Garden speech advocated a federal income tax. Mr. Roosevelt in his message to congress advocates both a federal income tax and a federal inheritance tax, 'when next our system of taxation is revised'—in the opinion of the World excellent and just measures.

"Mr. Bryan advocated publicity of campaign contributions and expenditures and a law forbidding corporation contributions to any political party. Mr. Roosevelt renews his former recommendation that congress enact such a law.

"Mr. Bryan urged the enforcement of the criminal clause of the Sherman law against trusts. Mr. Roosevelt asks for the right of appeal in such criminal cases on questions of law, holding that it is absurd to permit a single district judge to declare a law of congress unconstitutional against what might be the judgment of an immense majority of his colleagues on the bench, and then deny to the government the right to have the supreme court definitely decide the question. Mr. Roosevelt also favors a statute providing that no judgment shall be set aside or new trial granted on technical grounds unless it shall appear that the error complained of resulted in a miscarriage of justice.

"Mr. Bryan indorsed the licensing of corporations. Mr. Roosevelt is in favor of controlling corporations by a federal license law 'or in other fashion.' Mr. Roosevelt, however, draws a closer distinction than Mr. Bryan between good trusts and bad trusts, and considers some combinations beneficent. He would even legalize railway pooling, but would, of course, regulate it to prevent abuses.

"Mr. Bryan opposed government by injunction, especially in labor disputes. Mr. Roosevelt concedes that injunctions issue too freely in these causes, and would require judges to give due notice to the adverse parties before granting a writ.

"Mr. Bryan favored an eight-hour day. Mr. Roosevelt believes 'it should be our aim steadily to reduce the number of hours of labor, with, as a goal, the general introduction of an eight-hour day.' Mr. Roosevelt would begin by limiting the hours of railroad employes. The eight-hour law already on the statute books relating to federal contracts 'is being rigidly enforced,' but the president favors further legislation if it is needed.

"Mr. Bryan advocated compulsory arbitration of labor disputes, but not compulsory acceptance of the findings. Mr. Roosevelt urges the appointment of a federal commission of investigation and conciliation to deal with strikes.

"Mr. Bryan declared that the Philippines should be dealt with after the manner of Cuba. Since that time there has been a Cuban insurrection, and we are temporarily dealing with Cuba as we should deal with the Philippines. Mr. Roosevelt says that when the elections are held and a new government is inaugurated in a peaceful, orderly fashion the provisional government in Cuba will come to an end, but nobody knows when that will be. Mr. Bryan's wish has been fulfilled inversely. Both, however, favor free trade for the Philippines, or at least a greatly reduced tariff.

"Mr. Bryan insisted that the navy should not be employed in the collection of private debts. Mr. Roosevelt deprecates such use of the navy and is in moral sympathy with the resolution adopted at the Rio conference recommending that the question be submitted to a second peace conference at The Hague.

"Mr. Roosevelt makes important recommendations relating to many questions which Mr. Bryan did not discuss in the Madison Square Garden speech. He favors the withdrawal of the government coal lands. Ownership in such lands would remain in the United States, which would not attempt to mine coal, but would license mining and receive a royalty on the coal taken out. Mr. Bryan will undoubtedly indorse this recommendation.

"Mr. Roosevelt also proposes to extend employers' liability so that the entire 'trade risk' will be upon the employer. 'If the entire trade risk is placed upon the employer he will promptly and properly add it to the cost of production and assess it proportionately upon the consumers of his product.' In this way society as a whole would pay for the accidents resulting from occupations that are necessarily hazardous. It is to be assumed that Mr. Bryan will sympathize with

this extension of the socialistic principle. Whether he will also indorse the president's recommendation for a federal marriage and divorce law is more problematical, but there is nothing in the suggestion that conflicts with Mr. Bryan's theories of government.

"Mr. Roosevelt thinks the meat inspection law should be amended to provide that the labels be dated and the cost of inspection charged to the packers. Mr. Bryan strongly favors this.

"Mr. Roosevelt also argues at length to prove that the courts are entitled to no immunity from criticism, and that 'the best judges have ever been foremost to disclaim' such immunity. Mr. Bryan has consistently adhered to this position ever since the supreme court declared the income tax unconstitutional, and the Chicago platform hinted at a re-organization of the court.

"Mr. Bryan in turn recommended important measures which the president ignores. He favored tariff revision, and the president's silence on the subject is oppressive. It is hinted, however, that the president intends to call the Sixtieth congress in extra session to revise the tariff. Mr. Bryan also suggested government ownership of railroads as a possible solution of a perplexing problem. Afterward he insisted that he was really no more radical on this question than Mr. Roosevelt, and that he did not favor ownership unless regulation failed to accomplish its purpose. Mr. Roosevelt insists that regulation is already accomplishing its purpose, and that in the five months since the rate law was enacted there has been a previously unheard of number of reductions in freight rates.

"Comparing Mr. Bryan's Madison Square Garden speech with Mr. Roosevelt's message to congress the reader is forced to the conclusion that if Mr. Roosevelt would advocate tariff revision and Mr. Bryan would stop advocating government ownership of railroads they would be substantially in accord. Certainly two great political parties could not successfully divide on the issue of the 'peace with righteousness' which comes from a big navy, or even on the issue of a ship subsidy. Accepting Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Bryan as the leaders of their respective parties we defy anybody to say where the dividing line is beyond which a voter has ceased to be a Roosevelt republican and become a Bryan democrat. There has been no such obliteration of party lines in American politics for three-quarters of a century.

"The Roosevelt-Bryan merger is one of the most extraordinary events in American history, especially in view of the fact that Mr. Bryan claims to be 'more radical than ever,' while Mr. Roosevelt persists in regarding himself as a rational conservative battling manfully 'against the demagogue and the agitator.'"

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