

The Commoner.

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THE COMMONER'S SEVENTH YEAR

In its initial number The Commoner said: "The Commoner will be satisfied if, by fidelity to the common people, it proves its right to the name which has been chosen." At the beginning of every year The Commoner has reproduced this statement, and in this, the first issue of The Commoner's seventh year, attention is again directed to it.

It is not for the editor to say whether The Commoner has proved its right to the name it bears. Those who have habitually read this publication are to be the judges. It is sufficient for the editor of The Commoner to know—and perhaps pardonable for him to say—that if The Commoner has made mistakes they have not been mistakes of the heart; that its purpose has ever been to stand for the public interests, and to make the great political party with which it affiliates of practical service to the people, to the end that a government erected, as our government was, in "liberty's unclouded blaze" shall be in truth what the fathers intended it should be—government of, by and for the people.

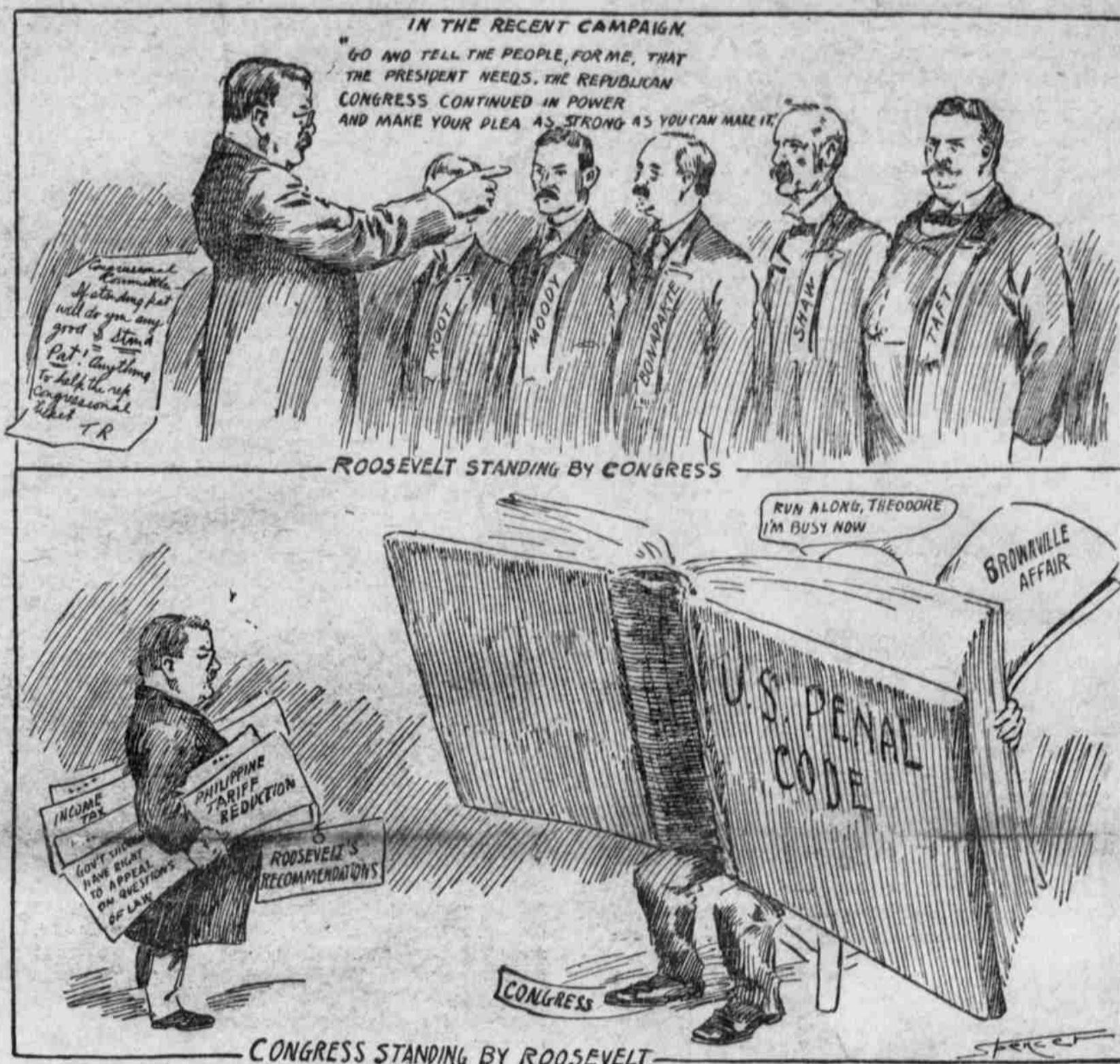
In the future as in the past The Commoner will stand faithfully for the right as its editor sees the right. It will plead for the popular election of United States senators. While supporting the government in the exercise of all its delegated powers, it will insist upon the reserved rights of the states being respected. In its view "private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable;" tariff reform: beginning with the destruction of the shelter the trusts obtain under the guise of "protection," and then extending to the schedules that press most heavily upon the necessities of life—will be urged; in connection with tariff reform the income tax and an inheritance tax will be favored; arbitration in labor disputes, an eight hour day law and abolition of government by injunction will be advocated.

The position taken by the democratic party in 1900 on the Philippine question is the position of The Commoner. The promise of independence should be given now and fulfilled as soon as a stable government can be established.

On the railroad-question The Commoner will maintain the position which it took two and a half years ago, namely, in favor of ultimate ownership under the dual plan; but until the people are ready for ownership it will urge regulation of the strictest kind under the most favorable conditions.

Besides maintaining the democratic position questions with which the public is familiar, will apply democratic principles to new questions and will oppose subsidies, the issue of asset agency and all other schemes that violate the personian maxim of equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

BEFORE AND AFTER



SACRIFICING THE CHILDREN

For thirty years the trades unions of the United States have been combatting child labor, but the general public gave little heed to the warfare reasoning from the assumption that the unions were antagonistic for reasons that were purely selfish. Labor leaders pointed out the results of this growing evil, but still the general public gave no heed. Finally thoughtful people began investigation—people who could not be charged with selfish interest in opposing the employment of children in industrial occupations—and then the awful truth so long proclaimed by the trades unions began dawning upon the public mind. For a time it was threatened that the anti-child labor crusade would degenerate into a "fad," a sort of diversion for the idle rich, but the crusade received such an impetus because of the investigations of sociologists that it is now well nigh universal.

A majority of the states have already enacted laws restricting the employment of children, but these laws have been loosely drawn, the primary purpose being to cater to the so-called "labor vote" without alienating the support of the employers who profit enormously by the employment of children. Even these loosely-drawn laws have not been enforced with any degree of earnestness, and as a result the employment of children has not only become a national curse, but is threatening the very foundations of the government. It has taken long and weary years for the crusade against child labor to gather momentum, but it now seems to be sweeping over the land, and there is a bright prospect that something tangible will be given the people. Senator Beveridge's bill, which has been printed in The Com-

moner, strikes at the very root of the evil and aims to provide a uniform law which will govern in interstate affairs. This will strengthen state laws and make it more nearly possible to enforce them as they should be enforced. Senator Beveridge's bill provides that

Six months from and after the passage of this act no carrier of interstate commerce shall transport or accept for transportation the products of any factory or mine in which children under fourteen years of age are employed or permitted to work, which products are offered to said interstate carrier by the firm, person or corporation owning or operating said factory or mine, or any officer or agent thereof, for transportation into any state or territory than the one in which said factory is located.

The bill provides for suitable affidavits and penalties. The need of such a law ought to be apparent to any man or woman who has given even a superficial study to the problem of child labor.

A few years ago the astounding assertion was made that from 60,000 to 70,000 children in the one city of New York "went breakfastless to school" every morning. This assertion was widely copied throughout the country, and attracted the attention of students of sociology. Among them was John Spargo, who immediately set to work to investigate the "child problem," with the result that he has given to the public a book, "The Bitter Cry of the Children," which should be read by every man and woman whose heart beats in sympathy with the children, and