

roads are the teachers. The railroad magnates are showing more and more clearly every day that they regard the railroads as a private asset to be used unscrupulously for the building up of immense private fortunes. They limit competition by combination. After combining the railroads they proceed to reach out for the water traffic. The larger these combinations become, the more difficult it is for the government to control them. Some imagine that the railroad question is settled when rebates are stopped and discrimination is prevented, but this is a very superficial view of the subject. The railroads are guilty of extortion in rates; they water their stock, inflate their capital and then proceed to prey upon the public through rates unnecessarily high.

Mexico, in order to protect herself from the grasping railroad magnates of the United States, has taken control of her railroads, but in the United States the molders of public opinion proceed upon the theory that there is no limit to the patience and forbearance of the masses. When the rate bill was before the senate Senator LaFollette endeavored to secure an amendment authorizing the commission to ascertain the value of the railroads, but this amendment was defeated by a strict party vote, Senator LaFollette alone voting with the democrats for the amendment. Since that time the railroads have gone on issuing large blocks of new stock and enlarging their capital. Each year their grip is becoming tighter. How long will the people stand it? How long will it be before they recognize that those whose patronage gives business to the railroads are entitled to consideration?

**BUSINESS HONOR**

Professor Jenks, in calling attention to business honor as now defined, said in a recent speech: "The frequency of great fortunes, gathered perhaps legally but in ways felt to be unjust, through the power of monopoly, have tended strongly to obscure the moral vision of many well meaning men, who have been thereby led to confound morality with social righteousness; and their acts have formed the excuse for many others to break laws, which seem to them unjust. The profit from an unjust, though legal stock watering may well prove more demoralizing in business circles than the illegal freight rebate which saves from ruin a grain shipper caught at a disadvantage."

A large volume could be written on this subject and many interesting instances could be given to illustrate modern business honor. Professor Jenks calls attention to the monopoly. Men who would blush to be called highwaymen, will rob through monopoly and defend it although their crime is grand larceny as compared with the petty stealings of the highwaymen. Men who break laws with impunity when those laws stand in the way of their grasping methods, will pose as friends of law and order when some small crime is committed. We have recently seen a man prominent in the financial world escape from the charge of embezzlement on the ground that he had no personal interest in diverting insurance funds from the pockets of the policyholders to the treasury of the republican campaign committee, and now we see that same financier, Mr. Perkins, indicted along with an ex-secretary of the treasury, Mr. Fairchild, for forgery, and their excuse is that they derived no pecuniary profit from their violation of the law. They simply did it to deceive the authorities of a foreign nation in which their company did business. Is it not time for our preachers, our publicists and our moralists to so define crime as to take away from these business men the excuse that they sin ignorantly? Is it not time that the public conscience was turned upon these questions? The business men themselves ought to see to it that their class is relieved from the odium that attaches to these constant violations of statute and moral law. The old story of the man who, upon seeing on a tombstone the inscription: "Here lies a lawyer and an honest man," expressed surprise that so narrow a grave could hold two persons, will soon be applied to the business man if a reform is not instituted.

**CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS**

In the discussion of laws respecting campaign contributions, one point is often overlooked, namely, that the publication of receipts and expenditures should precede, not follow the election. The efforts thus far made to secure publicity have been largely nullified by the fact that the publication comes too late. The facts brought out after the election, not being connected with the next

campaign, are of little service in that campaign. The fear of a post-election publication will, of course, deter some from corrupt contributions, but a publication before election would still more powerfully deter. Take the late New York election for instance. During the campaign republican papers asserted that Mr. Hearst was using a large sum of money to advance his personal ambition. His expenditures were magnified, and he was accused of attempting to buy the governorship. When the election was over and the statements filed by the committees, it was found that the republican committee spent more than Mr. Hearst's committee, and it was also found that several of the trust magnates in New York were down on the republican list for large amounts. J. Pierpont Morgan & Co., contributed \$20,000; Levi P. Morton & Co., \$20,000; Andrew Carnegie gave \$5,000; the younger Rockefeller gave \$5,000; Charles Schwab gave \$5,000; Mr. Mackey of the Postal telegraph gave \$2,000; Mr. Depew of the New York Central gave \$2,500; Mr. Gates of the Steel trust gave \$2,500; Kuhn, Loeb & Co., \$2,000; Jacob Schiff, \$2,000; Wells of the Adams Express company, \$5,000. The Copper Trust and the Coal Trust also contributed through their representatives. If these contributions had been known before the election, the public could have seen more clearly on which side predatory wealth had arrayed itself.

The democrats in congress and in the various states ought to see to it that the laws passed upon this subject require the publication of contributions several days prior to the election. Three publications might be made, one a month before the election, one fifteen days before the election, and one five days before the election, and no contribution should be accepted after the last publication. The public has a right to know not only who contributes and how much but the information ought to be given before the people vote. Nothing will so tend to prevent the employment of a large corruption fund as the publication of the fund before the election, for the party that relies upon the trusts to finance its campaign will find that the support of the trust magnates will do the party more harm than the contributions will do it good. Let the facts be known before the election.

**DESTINY**

Whenever a statesman is unable to defend a thing which he wants to have done, he usually hides behind the plea that it is destiny. That the readers of The Commoner may be able to answer this destiny argument the following quotation is given from the "Last of the Barons" by Bulwer. William of Hastings is described as laying his sins at the door of destiny, and the author makes this comment: "It is destiny!—phrase of the weak human heart! It is destiny! Dark apology for every error! The strong and virtuous admit no destiny! On earth guides conscience—in heaven, watches God. And destiny is but the phantom: we invoke to silence the one, to dethrone the other!"

Each man's destiny is in his own hands so far as his moral progress is concerned. If a man is going to be a thief, circumstances may determine whether it is his destiny to escape punishment or to be caught, but the man decides for himself the all important question whether he will be a thief. And so circumstances may determine how much profit or how little profit a country can find in a policy of imperialism, but the country itself must decide—the people or those whom the people permit to speak for them—what the policy of the country will be. Destiny is indeed the dark apology for many national errors.

**CONNECTICUT WHEELS INTO LINE**

The purification of politics was once described by Senator Ingalls as an iridescent dream, but during the last few years several successful efforts have been put forth for the purification of politics. It is doubtful whether in any state the corruption of the individual voter has been carried farther than in Connecticut, and yet, even in this state the light is beginning to break. A commission appointed last July by special act of the legislature "to take into consideration the existing laws relating to primaries and the laws prohibiting corrupt practices at elections, both in this state and elsewhere, and to report to the general assembly of 1907, such bill or bills, or such proposed legislation as in their opinion are required and are best calculated to secure fair nominations and elections, and to prevent corrupt practices at primaries and elections," is reported to have agreed unanimously upon ten

changes in the present corrupt practices law. Among the more important changes proposed are those prohibiting corporations from contributing to campaign funds and prohibiting all judges except probate judges from making contributions to campaign funds; limiting the number of paid workers at the polls—each political organization is limited to five workers for a voting district and one additional for each two hundred registered voters—requiring returns and sworn statements for nominations as well as for elections; requiring delegates to nominating conventions to state whether anyone paid their traveling or other expenses in advance of the convention or reimbursed them afterwards; prohibiting the employment of conveyances on election day except those necessary for bringing the sick and the infirm, and then only when the conveyances are volunteered; limiting the amount of money which a candidate can expend to fifteen dollars for each one thousand voters; making the offering as well as the receiving of a bribe a criminal offense.

The wave of reform is sweeping on, and those who hope for honest elections have reason to feel encouraged. With honest elections will come representatives who will support the reforms necessary for the remedying of every evil.

**IGNORANCE**

President Ripley of the Santa Fe Railroad company testified before the interstate commerce commission: "I did not know, until I read it in the newspapers, that Mr. Harriman owned stock in the Santa Fe." Yet it developed that Mr. Harriman controls \$10,000,000 in Santa Fe stock.

Is it necessary that the president of a railroad be informed on the affairs entrusted to him? Or are we to have railroad presidents who don't preside—like bank and other corporation directors who don't direct? The result of such negligence is, in the case of railroads, wrecked trains and jobbing in railroad stocks; in the case of banks, misappropriated funds; and in the case of other corporations manipulation of the company affairs not only to the detriment of public interests, but to the detriment of many of those directly interested in the company itself.

**STRANGE?**

A Washington dispatch to a New York paper says. "It is to be noted that Senator Aldrich went to New York tonight. He will have an opportunity of hearing for himself just what those representing the great financial interests, especially the Standard Oil, in which he is vitally concerned, think of Mr. Cortelyou's abilities as a secretary of the treasury."

Is it strange that a United States senator should take advice on public questions from: "the great financial interests, especially the Standard Oil, in which he is vitally concerned?" Certainly not. But it is strange that the people would permit such men to misrepresent them in the United States senate.

**SOME RAILROAD COMPARISONS**

Ridgway's claims that the entire government owned railroad systems of Europe has been conducted twelve consecutive months without the loss of a single passenger's life. On the government owned railroads of Switzerland only three people were killed during 1906, and of these three two were trespassers willfully violating the law, and the other one was drunk. In the same year 10,000 people were killed on the privately owned railroads of the United States. In 1906 American railroads killed more people than were killed on either side in any one battle of the civil war. There is food for thought in the above simple statement of facts.

**WOULDN'T IT?**

The Chicago Inter-Ocean says that George B. Cortelyou is opposed by the Rockefeller-Harriman interests because Mr. Cortelyou is "credited with being a Morgan-Hill man." Wouldn't it be gratifying if the alleged opposition by the Rockefeller-Harriman interests was based on the ground that Mr. Cortelyou is "credited with being the American people's man."

The army regulations now require that all officers and enlisted men stand at "attention" when a band plays "Star Spangled Banner." This is as it should be. The star spangled banner has compelled a lot of people to pay attention.

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