

# The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

VOL. 7. No. 5.

Lincoln, Nebraska, February 15, 1907.

Whole Number 317.

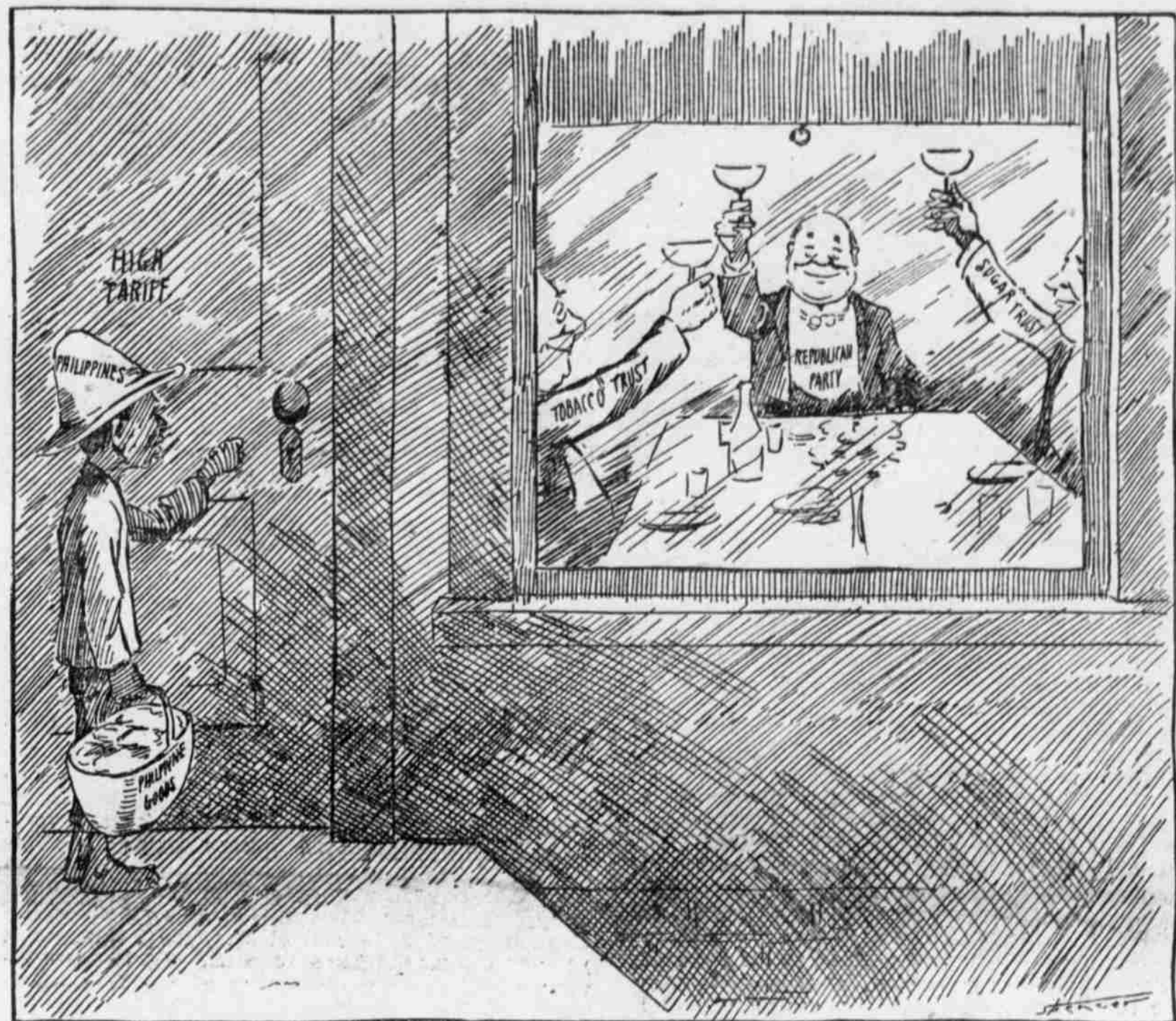
## CONTENTS

MR. BRYAN'S WESTERN TRIP  
CHILD LABOR  
RATE LEGISLATION NECESSARY  
INTERLOCKING CORPORATIONS  
GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE  
RAILWAYS AND POSTAL SERVICE  
ASSET CURRENCY  
"THE MAKING OF THE SOUL"  
WASHINGTON LETTER  
COMMENT ON CURRENT TOPICS  
HOME DEPARTMENT  
WHETHER COMMON OR NOT  
NEWS OF THE WEEK

### CHILD LABOR

The discussion of the Beveridge Child Labor bill has shown how easily a sound constitutional principle can be stretched to cover a national crime. Child labor is a horrible fact; no one will attempt to defend it or to excuse it. The states have tried to deal with the subject but the manufacturers of one state use the child labor in another state as an argument against any law drawn for the protection of the children, and the argument is usually successful. Senator Beveridge's bill invokes the aid of congress which is supreme in matters of interstate commerce. His bill recognizes the right of the state to permit the employment of babies, if it will, so long as the product is sold within the state, but it recognizes the right of the whole people, acting through congress, to fix the terms on which such products can enter interstate commerce. Is this not a dangerous power? it is asked. Certainly, but all power is dangerous when misused. May it not be used to prohibit commerce? Yes, just as the power to tax may be used to destroy, but we must deposit power somewhere and trust the people not to abuse it. But take the other side of the proposition. Has congress no power over interstate commerce? Is congress powerless to prevent the shipment of prison-made goods outside of the state in which they are made? Must the free labor of one state meet competition from the prison labor of another state? Suppose a state refuses to enact any laws for the protection of its children, are the other states powerless to protect themselves? If the right of congress is admitted, the only question is whether the age fixed in the bill is reasonable. Will any one say that fourteen is too high an age limit for employes in mine and factory? If so, let him stand forth in the light and say so—let him not hide behind the constitution. The democratic platform of 1900 suggested the exercise of this very power for the annihilation of the trusts. If the power can be exercised to protect independent industries from the conspiracies of the trust magnates can it not be used to protect the children from being dwarfed and stunted by early toil? The constitution was made for the people, but the predatory corporations have converted it into a bulwark for the protection of all their schemes. However, each new attempt to misuse and misconstrue it, has its educational value and hastens the day of reform. The children must be saved and the Beveridge bill offers a safe and effective remedy for the cruel and barbarous system of child slavery which has grown up in this country.

## THE UNHEEDED KNOCKING



The way the "Party of God and Morality" is taking care of the "helpless islanders in the interests of humanity," developing their "industrial and commercial life and teaching them how to govern themselves."

## ALONG THE PACIFIC COAST

Mr. Bryan's Recent Western Trip

The readers of The Commoner may be interested in a few notes on a lecture trip which I recently took to the Pacific coast. Mrs. Bryan accompanied me, and we were away from home just a month. We went northwest through Montana and northern Idaho to Washington; thence south along the coast to Los Angeles and back through Utah and Wyoming.

The cities of Billings, Livingston, Butte, Great Falls, Helena and Missoula (all in Montana) are growing and prospering. Billings is one of the greatest wool-shipping points in the country and has doubled its population in the last few years. Livingston, being the point at which tourists leave the main line for the Yellowstone Park, is a busy place in the summer and an attractive little city at all times. Butte is in the center of the great copper producing section—some sixty million dollars worth of ore being taken out of the ground in the immediate neighborhood. It is one of the busiest places in the west.

Helena, Montana's capital, was entertaining the legislature when we were there and was therefore quite lively. The city has a beautiful location and is further favored by having near it some celebrated hot springs. Great Falls is situated

near the falls of the Missouri and can boast of a water power of something like one hundred thousand horse power when fully developed. Use is now made of about 10,000 horse power, and the saving of coal is estimated at \$450,000 per year. One of the greatest springs in the world—the fountains of the Missouri—is only about four miles from the city.

Missoula has the state university and is the distributing center of the Bitter Root Valley and a large mining country. Moscow was the only Idaho city visited. It is situated in the edge of the Palouse country—one of the greatest wheat producing sections of the world. The state university of Idaho is at Moscow, and it was this that led us to visit it, for in lecturing I give the preference to college towns. Spokane is the principal commercial city of eastern Washington and is growing rapidly. It has splendid water power within the city limits and is the distributing point for a large farming and mining territory.

Pullman and Cheney, which we visited are college towns not far from Spokane, the former having the State Agricultural College and College of Mechanical Arts and the latter a Normal College. Wenatchee and North Yakima are in the