

necessary is to have the laws judiciously and simply administered."—Harriman.

"Severe business depression will result unless legislation against the roads ceases."—George Gould.

"Railroad men are talking too much; we hope that the operation of the interstate law will help the roads."—J. J. Hill.

"I believe in ownership of the railroads by the people, coupled with a strict federal supervision of rates."—Benjamin Yoakum, chairman of the board of the Frisco and Rock Island system.

"I believe federal control of railroads is all right in principle, but do not believe in the way it has been put into practice."—President Mellen, N. Y., N. H. & Hartford.

"I favor federal control of roads, but will not discuss ownership."—Benjamin Winchell, president Rock Island railroad.

### ◆◆◆◆ NONSENSE

Some people will be discouraged when they read in the Wall Street Journal—unquestionably the fairest and frankest of financial publications—this jumble of tommyrot:

"The mistake that Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Harriman and Mr. Ryan have made is that they have delayed altogether too long in making friends with public opinion. Their delay has subjected them to suspicion, to a lack of confidence, so that now when they speak the country listens but not with that respect which would have been theirs if they had spoken freely years ago. Nevertheless it is better late than never. They are undoubtedly stronger for giving their views publicity. The public is discovering that after all the difference between their opinions and those of its own is not so wide as was supposed. A better mutual understanding exists and the points of agreement are discovered to be many. It is in the highest degree noteworthy that the note which is struck by most of the financiers and corporation managers who have recently spoken either through interview or article or address has been of a high ethical character. Enforcement of the law, publicity, reasonable government regulation and fair competition have in general been commanded. Truly much has been gained during the past few years."

The mistake that Messrs. Rockefeller, Harriman and Ryan made was in seeking to fasten upon the people monopolies in the conveniences the people must have. If the people have learned anything lately concerning the methods of these men it is not because they have suddenly taken to frankness in their public statements. It is because these men have been unable to longer conceal all of the truth; and it is absurd for the Wall Street Journal to say that these men are stronger with the people by reason of the revelations. Many who did not know the truth before know now that these "captains of industry" are distinctly opposed to genuine enforcement of law, to real publicity, to regulation that regulates and to any sort of serious competition. Whatever has been gained during the past few years is in the revelations which show the commercial pirate in some men who posed as "captains of industry" and the embezzler of trust funds in some men who were pointed to as "champions of the national honor."

## Letters From the People

J. W. Goodwin, Amy, N. D.—I saw in your issue January 11 the question propounded by Theodore Harris, "What article is that in common daily use by all men and women, which if all the other conveniences we have to account among the necessities of life had to be given up, we would by common consent retain?" Seeing Henry B. King's suggestion in regard to answer in your issue of February 1, impressed the subject upon my mind. If I understand Mr. Harris' explanations in regard to the question, my answer would be a "button-hole."

B. P. Wilson, Reddick, Fla.—It seems to me that both the democrat and republican parties are evading one of the most important questions of the needs of the people of our country. Why the republicans ignore it we can understand, dominated as the party is, by the national banks, but why the democratic party has had so little to say in regard to it and has never referred to it in its platform has long been a puzzle to me, unless as a greenbacker said to me once in speaking of another question, Yes, of course, what you say is true and all that but it would not be good policy to spring it now. I refer to postal savings banks.

Did you ever stop to consider, Mr. Editor, the vast sums of money that are kept out of circulation and hidden away in dark corners by people

who are afraid of banks and who cannot lend it on such security as would suit them? It has been said that if the extra session of congress called by Grover Cleveland to repeal the Sherman bill, had enacted a law establishing a system of postal savings banks, it would have put twice as many dollars in circulation as did the sale of the two hundred and sixty million dollars worth of bonds then issued. Our government, nor the national banks do not provide any security for the money placed in our banks as has been demonstrated by the millions of dollars lost in bank failures every year when thousands of our honest toilers, both men and women, see the slow accumulations of their hard earned dollars swept away through the rascality of one or two men.

For this reason people are afraid of banks, and the distrust is rapidly growing, and today while bankers are trying to solve the problem of an "emergency currency," more money than we actually need is lying idle hidden by its owners who know of no sure way of using without the great risk of losing it.

Then again consider what an inspiration such postal savings banks would be to millions among the laboring classes to save what they could of their earnings against a rainy day if it should come, or if not to build a modest home or secure them against want when disease or old age should come instead of becoming burdens to their children or the state. While it seems to me that those who are financially interested in national banks would see the necessity of providing some such security as would have been furnished by the bill offered by Mr. Bryan while a member of congress, and showing that they would be more than recompensed by the vastly increased deposits that would flow into their vaults if people who have money to deposit knew there was no danger in losing it through a bank failure. However, it appears as if this side of the question had never entered their minds. Even now, I believe this security alone, if they would furnish it to the people would solve their question with no other provision for an elastic currency. However the people need not hope for relief from that source. Then why should not The Commoner take up the fight and see that the next national democratic platform contains a demand for the establishment by the government of a system of postal savings banks, similar to and which have proved of such infinite benefit to the nations of Europe and New Zealand, etc.? No one other issue would bring us more votes from the great independent class at least.

J. W. Morgan, Starke, Fla.—May I make a suggestion regarding one of the policies of the G. O. P., recently agitated in the congress? I refer to the asset currency steal. Would it be possible for The Commoner, as fast as it can obtain the names of those senators and representatives who favor the scheme, to publish a list of such, so that the people may know them? At the same time, give space to a form of letter to be copied by Commoner subscribers and sent to such men (senators and representatives) condemning the measure, and asking that their support be withdrawn. Urge subscribers in every issue of The Commoner to not only send in their own protest, but to get their friends and neighbors to do the same. I would like to see some such universal protest made in regard to the other infamous proposition of a shipping subsidy. With best wishes for The Commoner and sincerest regards.

William Maxwell, Conway, N. D., writes as follows concerning the railroad question:

"Railroads being public utilities, and commercial necessities, it seems to me that if the public had running rights over the railroads it would settle the many vexed questions of the times, a few of which I will enumerate. It would squeeze all the water out of railroad stocks. It would eliminate the possibility of multi-millionaire railway presidents. It would prevent the congestion of freight traffic. It would bring freight and passenger rates to where they belong. It would give others than railway corporations a chance to bid for the carrying of the mails. It would also prevent the tying up of railroads by strikes. It would prevent rebating by railroads. It would give us an express service a hundred times better than we have. It would 'hurt' the lumber and many other trusts, grain trusts for instance. It would stimulate interstate commerce as it would enable the cattleman to ship his own stock direct to the purchaser. It would enable the farmers of Michigan to ship many thousands of barrels of apples to the northwest states that now have to go to waste for want of a buyer because of the excessive freight rates; also farmers of the Dakotas could go down to Minnesota and buy lumber for about one-half what they have to pay the lumber retailer now. There would be no fuel famine in the future. It would put the government ownership boggy to sleep indefinitely and elimi-

nate the necessity of the government shouldering the immense railway debt of the United States. If congress can pass a law compelling the railroads to give everyone who has his own cars and engines the right to run over their lines of railway on the payment of a charge determined by the interstate commerce commission, or the state railroad commission, as would pay a 6 per cent dividend per annum on the actual value of roadbed, water supply and depot facilities, and other minor expenses, there would be plenty of capital forthcoming to furnish the rolling stock and motive power to do the work."

Mrs. H. M. Prince, Pattison, Miss.—Now that there is so much being said about child labor, it is strange to me that there is nothing said about the necessity for children laboring. We must manage to get the country in a shape that a man can make a living for his family, or families will cease to be. No one has more sympathy for the children than I, and I want something done for their betterment; everything that we can do is none too much. But let's not make thieves and pickpockets out of them by not giving them honest work. Let them work; but see that they are paid all their work is worth. See that they are humanely treated. Don't let them be overworked and underpaid. If one does the work of a man, see that it gets a man's pay. Let's do some legislation along lines that will force capitalists to do the right thing by them and their parents; then there will be no necessity for them to work unhealthfully hard. I have so much faith in human nature I can't believe many, if any, will work their own children so close and hard, just for greed's sake; but they think the children had better work than starve. Things are all wrong in a country where a man can't make a living for a family. Let's have some tariff legislation and some emigration restriction.

Our "public servants" at Washington, instead of trying to make laws that will lower the price of living so that the laboring man can live on his wages, have just voted to increase their own pay fifty per cent, so they may be able to meet expenses; but what about the man who can't raise his wages at will? And further, they are trying to put more expense on the taxpayers by subsidizing ship lines belonging to trusts. O, it took our own Spight of Mississippi to tell what that means to Harriman & Co.

No. Nobody in talking about child labor has ever said anything, so far as I know, about how the children are to be fed and clothed. The Beveridge bill does not say anything on that part of the subject, although that is the best thing I have seen on the subject.

No; we must change their surroundings by proper legislation. Then the foreigner can bring his goods here and exchange them for our corn, meat, hides, steel and iron, wool and cotton goods, anything we have, and he, having a load both ways won't need to be subsidized by any government, either his own or ours.

No, we must stop so many emigrants coming here and crowding our own men out in the wage market.

Best wishes to The Commoner, and a sincere desire for the welfare of our country, and also an earnest hope that good may come out of the discussion of this subject.

### MY GENTLEMAN

I own a dog who is a gentleman.  
By birth most surely, since the creature can  
Boast of a pedigree the like of which  
Holds not a Howard or a Metternich.

By breeding. Since the walks of life he trod,  
He never wagged an unkind tail abroad,  
He never snubbed a nameless cur because  
Without a friend or credit card he was.

By pride. He looks you squarely in the face  
Unshrinking and without a single trace  
Of either diffidence or arrogant  
Assertion such as upstarts often flaunt.

By tenderness. The littlest girl may tear  
With absolute impunity his hair,  
And pinch his sicken, flowing ears the while  
He smiles upon her—yes, I've seen him smile.

By loyalty. No truer friend than he  
Has come to prove his friendship's worth to me  
He does not fear the master—knows no fear—  
But loves the man who is his master here.

By countenance. If there be nobler eyes,  
More full of honor and of honesties,  
In finer head, on broader shoulders found—  
Then have I never met the man or hound.  
Here is the motto on my lifeboat's log:  
"God grant I may be worthy of my dog!"

—New Orleans Times-Democrat.