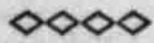


the conditions of the present and cast anchor again in the deep water upon the safe anchorage of democratic ideas.

"Let the democratic party do this and then let them name a democrat, a man whose record is not all honeycombed with the taint of modern radicalism, and let them rally the people of the country as best they can to the support of the democratic party thus reorganized. And then you say, what will be the effect of that? The answer is easy. Defeat in 1908. What of it? It will be defeat with honor. A defeat with honor is curable; a defeat with dishonor is hard to rally from. It will be no worse than the party has been enacting for the past twelve years and it will not be any worse than the party is absolutely facing, if it continues its present absurd career."

The democratic party will not take advice from its enemies. The president has shown how popular democratic doctrines are when sporadically adopted and spasmodically applied. The democratic party will show how much more popular those ideas are when consistently presented and persistently adhered to. If there ever was a time when the democrats can afford to be democratic, it is now; if there ever was a time when it was foolish to let the republican leaders control democratic policies and plan a democratic campaign, it is now.

Democracy must mean something; it must go forward; it must protect the rights of the people; it must improve the present opportunity to emphasize the doctrine of equal rights to all and special privileges to none—a doctrine which the republican party has violated until such great fortunes have been accumulated under favoritism and special privilege that a republican president is compelled to sound a note of warning.



#### TAFT THE STORM CENTER

The Chicago Tribune, republican, says: "We earnestly wish that President Roosevelt would attend more strictly than he does to the duties which he was elected to perform. The chief duty intrusted to him was the execution of the laws, not the making of the laws, and still less the nomination of his successor. The republican party would like to have something to say about the nomination of Roosevelt's successor. It does not like to see him put up by a combination of officeholders, most of whom owe their places to the president, and all of whom look to him for patronage to promote their political ambitions. The worst and best that may be said of Mr. Taft as a presidential candidate at present is that he is being 'shoved' upon the republican party, that he is being 'boosted' into prominence as a candidate and is being 'cramped down the throats' of republicans before they know what kind of an appetite they have for presidential candidates."

This is strong language from so prominent a republican paper. The Tribune is not only against the president for a third term but it is opposed to a dictatorship. From the tone of some of the influential journals it looks as if the next republican convention might present a spirited contest between the reformers and the standpatters. There would be a sure enough fight if the president would back a real reformer like LaFollette. Judge Taft's strength seems to lie in the fact that the president is supposed to want him. He is not enough of a reformer to enthuse the radicals and not conservative enough to suit the standpatters, but his candidacy may give the Roosevelt and anti-Roosevelt forces a chance to fight out their differences.

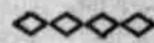


#### THE INDEPENDENCE LEAGUE

The New York American, answering a recent editorial in *The Commoner*, charges the democratic party with being unable to rid itself of leaders who are "fortified in their control of the party by the money of the corporations that own them." While *The Commoner* will not admit the truth of every indictment made by the American it concedes that there are some corporation agents who are prominent in the democratic councils, but it asserts that the democratic party is sound at heart and that a large majority of the members of the party are incorruptible. The reactionary influences obtained control of the St. Louis convention and ran the campaign on conservative lines, but if he conservative sinned "grievously" "grievously" did they "answer for it." The experience taught its lesson and that lesson will not be soon forgotten. It is in the power of the rank and file to retire unfaithful leaders and those leaders will be retired. Out of the six and a half millions who voted the democratic

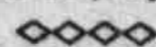
ticket in 1896 and 1900 but a few are under the domination of predatory wealth—shall the rank and file then desert the party and found a new organization? If parties could be organized easily it might be advisable for the masses to form themselves into a new party and leave the leaders with no followers, but the organization of a new party is not an easy matter. It takes a great crisis to bring a great party into existence. The republican party grew out of a struggle gigantic enough to produce a civil war and it would not have been possible to form the republican party then if any existing party had been willing to undertake the work that the people wanted done.

Today the democratic party is prepared to meet the encroachments of plutocracy, and the president has revealed a reform element in the republican party which is daily becoming more and more persistent, and this reform element will act with the democrats if the republican leaders dare to take a backward step in 1908. Because people want results these reform republicans will act with the democrats if the democrats do their duty, and the chances are that the members of the Independence League will, too, for the sincerity of men is judged by their acts and sincere reformers will not wait indefinitely for their own organization to bring reforms that another organization is in position to bring at once. The populists endorsed the democratic ticket in 1896 and 1900. Why? Because they could not refuse to do so without putting their party organization above their principles. And so in 1908 if the democratic party does what it ought to do—and what *The Commoner* believes it will do—the members of the Independence League will have no excuse for voting a separate ticket. The democratic party is on trial now, but the Independence League will be on trial if it fights the democratic party when that party is fighting on the people's side. When that test comes Mr. Hearst and his papers and the Independence League will be allies of the democratic party—their past and their principles compel it.



#### IS THIS REFORM?

The press dispatches announce in big black headlines that George B. Cox, the Cincinnati boss, has brought harmony out of chaos and restored peace in Ohio by proposing that the Ohio republicans endorse Taft for president and return Foraker to the senate. Whether this settlement of the controversy between the reform republicans and the corporation republicans will be accepted by the president and his friends, remains to be seen. If the president is willing to assist in returning Foraker to the senate on condition that Ohio supports Mr. Taft for the presidency, he will disappoint even more admirers than he disappointed when he made public the Harriman letter in which he described himself and the manipulator as both practical men. It will be remembered that Senator Foraker led the fight against any railroad regulation and went to Ohio to wage war against an endorsement of Mr. Taft. Secretary Taft's brother accepted the challenge and threatened that the secretary would run for senator as well as president if Mr. Foraker attempted to interfere with the presidential situation. In a little while it was announced that Senator Foraker did not desire a presidential endorsement and that Secretary Taft did not aspire to the senate. Now one of the most odious bosses in the country devises a plan whereby the once warlike secretary and senator will become boon companions, each supporting the other in return for reciprocal support. Secretary Taft has always looked a little out of place in the garb of a reformer, for, so far, he has not done much in the way of reforms; but no one expected so complete an abandonment of all their pretenses at reform as would be involved in an offensive and defensive alliance with Senator Foraker, one of the most conspicuous champions of predatory wealth. "Is this reform, my Lord?"



#### SEEKING CENTRALIZATION

The press dispatches are carrying a letter addressed to the president by Judge L. H. Farrar, of New Orleans. The letter discusses the question of railroad regulation from the standpoint of those who want to see the state deprived of all power over railroad matters. The dispatches say that the letter so impressed the president that he recommended that the writer of it give it to the public "for information and discussion."

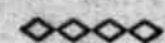
Judge Farrar takes the position that under the congressional power "to establish postoffice

and post roads the federal government can create railway corporations and give them such power as congress may think best, and in so doing, protect the railroads from all state, county and municipal taxation, except such as congress authorizes," protect the railroads from "the prejudice of the local jury and the fifty per cent damage lawyer by giving them the right to sue and be sued in the United States courts alone, and provide for exclusive regulation of freight and passenger service, etc."

Whether congress has the power to create railroad corporations and then deny to the states through which these railroads run the power to regulate the railroads is a question upon which people will differ according to their views of constitutional construction, but whether congress should usurp the regulative power now exercised by the state, is a question upon which all democrats and a very large element of the republican party will have positive opinions. After waiting twenty years for effective railroad regulation at the hands of congress; after watching the railroads control the senate and the house for two decades, the people, republicans as well as democrats, will not care to surrender to the national government the authority which the states now exercise. This demand for centralization comes, too, at an inopportune time, because the clamor for centralization is due to the fact that the states have commenced to act on the railroad question. A number of republican states, as well as several democratic states, have reduced passenger rates, and some of them have reduced freight rates. The people of these states will not relish the idea of surrendering the control of their local affairs just at the time when they have decided to use the authority for their own protection.

By all means let Judge Farrar's article be published. It will give information "as to the purpose of centralization." Those who relish the prospect of having to run off to a federal court with every little damage suit against a railroad will side with Judge Farrar, but those who prefer to try their cases at home where the expenses of a trial are not sufficient to amount to a denial of justice will enter an emphatic protest. The various local communities which have had such a struggle to compel the railroads to pay their share of the taxes will not take kindly to the proposition that turns everything over to the federal government and leaves each community to collect such taxes as congress by permission of the railroad magnates will permit. The more Judge Farrar's proposition is discussed the stronger will the democratic position become, for when the democratic position is understood, it appeals to a democratic sentiment which is far broader than any party.

Secretary Root may have had the railroads in mind when he suggested that the powers of the federal government might be enjoyed by construction. If the states are ever deprived of the power which they now have to regulate the railroads within their respective borders, it will be by construction, not by any affirmative act on the part of the people themselves.



#### SERVING TWO MASTERS

Can a man serve two masters? Can he represent, and do it fairly and honestly, the stockholders of two companies which deal with each other? Is it wise to allow the directors of insurance companies to become the directors of a bank which keeps on deposit the surplus money of the insurance company? Will the directors, acting for the policyholders, secure the highest possible rate of interest upon deposits, or will they, as directors of the bank, secure the deposits at as low a rate as possible? Will these directors, acting for the policyholders, keep the surplus at a minimum or, acting for the bank, keep the surplus at a maximum?

This duplication of directorates is not a new evil, although it is a growing one. Our railroads have given many illustrations of the viciousness of this system. Construction companies, formed from the directors of the railroad companies, have looted the treasuries that they were supposed to guard, and equipment companies, formed from railroad directors, have grown rich at the expense of the railroad.

The remedy for this form of the trust is to prohibit the election of any person as a director or other official of two or more corporations which are either competitive or engaged in transacting business with each other. If it were not lawful for one corporation to have business dealings with any other corporation in which any of its directors were also directors the inducement to form these interlocking combinations would be removed. Such