

It is almost three times the annual appropriation for the state university, more than the entire state appropriations for high schools, fifty per cent more than the state expended on roads in 1905, and is more than the interest on the public debt of Maine.

It will be seen that the state of Maine is relieving these railroad companies of ninety-five per cent of their state taxes in consideration of the promise that the said railroads will transport over their lines "troops and munitions of war, in times of war, insurrection or civil commotion, free of charge other than as herein and in said act provided." Of course this grant is a mere subsidy to the railroads, but it is amusing to find the subsidy predicated upon a promise to carry troops in a war that is not only not in sight but which may never come. Many absurd reasons have been given for subsidies, and many excuses have been soberly set forth as a basis for appropriations, but it is doubtful whether the official records of any state present such a mirth-provoking contract. The railroads had to state some consideration in order to prevent a subsequent administration or legislature from repudiating the contract, and so this visionary consideration was solemnly inserted in the document.

The democrats of Maine have been having a good deal of fun with the republican party which is responsible for this agreement. They are suggesting that since the railroads are relieved of their taxes by a promise to carry troops in time of war, the plain citizens of Maine should be relieved from taxation on condition that they promise to enlist when this imaginary war breaks out. The rank and file of the republican party of Maine must be dull, indeed, if they can not see the joke that has been perpetrated upon them, and they must be as indifferent as the people of Philadelphia to the misconduct of their representatives if they do not rise in indignation and protest against such corporation domination.

The democratic editors who spend so much time in pointing out the dangers of government ownership and so little time in informing the public of the abuses that have grown up under private ownership might give a little editorial space to the contract above set forth.

In the meantime those who enjoy humor need not go to the expense of buying funny books and papers—they can find much that is humorous in the serious arguments advanced by republican leaders and in the actual transactions between the various governments and the powerful corporations. The difference between the graft that has been developed in the building of Pennsylvania's state house and the graft of these Maine railroads is small—it is only a question of time and degree.



#### SELECTING A CANDIDATE

These are busy times for the king-makers. The national conventions are only a little more than a year off, and the state conventions will be meeting and instructing in less than a year. In both parties favorite sons are being brought out and the availability of eligible candidates is being discussed. In the republican party the main question seems to be whether the president will be allowed to pick out the republican candidate or whether the republican voters will have opinions of their own. Secretary Taft seems to be the president's choice, but Vice President Fairbanks is busy with his conferences and Speaker Cannon is conducting himself like one who would not prosecute the nomination for assault and battery if it took him by force.

The democratic party is not without its excitements. In the news columns of *The Commoner* mention has been made of a number of men whose friends have vouched for their willingness to run and for their popularity.

Now comes the veteran journalist, Henry Watterson, and volunteers to give Mr. Bryan the name of a democrat who, "without entangling alliances with any of the money powers, yet without any antecedents which could drive away conservative democrats, fills the specifications made in Mr. Stealey's Washington letter exactly; 'a good organization democrat who supported the ticket in 1896;' who, in our judgment, could still the discords and restore the harmonies, yea, fill the loose sails of the Old Ship of Zion with hopeful gales, and perhaps prove an Abraham Lincoln to the lost sheep of the house of Jefferson and Jackson and Tilden."

Who is this man whose name is concealed but whose personal fitness and political pre-eminence are thus vouched for? Mr. Bryan does not pose as a Warwick. He has no desire to assume the role of candidate-maker. He mildly protests against the misrepresentations of his position by those who prefer some one

else, but he is not eager to have a hand in the making of a candidate.

The would-be Warwicks should not forget that, after all, the question of candidacy can not be settled by a few leaders. Leaders propose but the voters dispose. Mr. Watterson may object to the initiative and referendum when applied to government—although to do so he must discredit the intelligence of the people to whom his eloquent appeals are made—but he will not deny that we have the initiative and referendum in the matter of nominations. The friends of the various candidates employ the initiative; they bring the names of the candidates before the public but the people, through the referendum, sit in judgment upon the claims of candidates. Who are more interested than the people themselves in the selection of a candidate? And yet, from the manner of some one would suppose that the only thing necessary to the selection of a candidate was agreement among the leaders. And who is a leader? Is it not one who is going in the same direction with the people and, as someone has said, a little bit ahead?

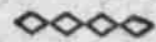
Mr. Watterson owes it to his party and to his country to bring out his candidate—one if he has but one, several if he has several. Every member of the party owes it to the party to contribute his part toward the party's success. The party is entitled to the most available man, and availability depends upon two things. First, no one is available who does not stand for democratic principles and policies as they are presented in the democratic platform, and that platform must represent the wishes of the voters. Second, among those who represent the principles and policies of the party as stated in the platform, the choice should fall upon the one who, all things considered, gives the best promise of strengthening those principles and policies before the public. No person is infallible in judgment—even a majority may make a mistake, but the responsibility of selecting a candidate is too great for a few leaders to bear; it rests with the voters.



#### THE VALUATION OF RAILROADS

Messrs. B. E. Sundberg, O. O. Canestorp, T. E. Cashman, S. A. Nelson, Ole O. Sageng, members of the senate committee of the state of Minnesota, with the aid of an able and conscientious attorney, Mr. James Manahan, have prepared a most interesting report on the value of the railroads doing business in Minnesota. They find that the capital stock and bonded debt of the Chicago, Great Western is \$143,668 per mile while in actual value it is about \$28,000 per mile. The Wisconsin, Minnesota & Pacific railway is stocked and bonded at \$43,134 per mile while it can be reproduced in its present condition for \$16,000 per mile.

The committee finds that the capitalization of the railroads in that state, including stock and bonds, is about \$50,000 per mile taking all the railroads together, and that the actual value of the railroads is about \$27,000 per mile. From this it appears that the railroads are expecting to collect interest and dividends on almost twice the value of the roads, measured by the cost of reproducing them. Is it not high time for an official valuation of the railroads of the United States so that the people may know to what extent they are compelled to pay extensive and extortionate rates? Who can oppose a law for the ascertaining of the value of the railroads? No one unless he is more interested in the railroads than in the public in general. Their representative in the United States senate, in the house of representatives, and in the state legislatures should make it his business to urge both state and federal legislation which will obtain for the public information concerning the value of the railroads.



#### FAKE NEWS FROM LINCOLN

There seems to be an epidemic of fake news from the city of Lincoln, and it all comes from Mr. Bryan's "friends"—names not given. Several dispatches have been sent out lately purporting to state what Mr. Bryan thinks or what Mr. Bryan is going to do, and the information thus given out is usually collected from "Mr. Bryan's friends." One dispatch has "Mr. Bryan's friends" reporting that Mr. Bryan will not be a candidate in case President Roosevelt is nominated. This dispatch brought inquiries from different parts of the country. It would seem unnecessary to deny reports sent out to which no name was attached, and yet it has been necessary to send a number of telegrams to notify other papers that the report was unauthorized and that Mr. Bryan's real friends do not attempt to speak for him on important questions.

As Mr. Bryan has a paper—*The Commoner*

—through which he speaks every week, and as he is speaking often and giving out interviews frequently, a newspaper ought to view with suspicion any report sent out from Lincoln or anywhere else purporting to state what Mr. Bryan thinks or intends to do.

Every reader of *The Commoner* knows that Mr. Bryan has endorsed the good things done by President Roosevelt and has done so with satisfaction, but he has also pointed out the undemocratic things that the president has said and done. Mr. Bryan has never said anything or done anything that indicated a desire to have Mr. Roosevelt elected for a third term. In fact, the third term idea has been discussed in *The Commoner* with the same frankness that characterizes the discussion of other questions. Mr. Bryan is opposed to a second term, having attempted while in congress to secure an amendment to the constitution making the president ineligible to a second term. During both of the campaigns in which he was a candidate he announced that he would not under any circumstances be a candidate for a second term. It is hardly to be expected that he would advocate the election of the president to a third term. When the president retires, in March, 1909, he will have served about seven years and a half, and that is so near two full terms that no possible juggling with words can convert it into one term.

The third term issue would of itself rule the president out, and while he has endorsed several democratic measures, he has not carried these as far as the democrats would have carried them, and has endorsed only a portion of the democratic platform, and the popularity which the president has won by carrying a few democratic measures for a little way shows how popular a real democrat would be who carried out all democratic principles.



#### SOME ROOSEVELTIAN COMPARISONS

President Roosevelt's recent correspondence with members of trades unions, in which he takes occasion to declare his friendship for the workingmen, naturally recalls to mind some other writings of Theodore Roosevelt. Before becoming a politician Mr. Roosevelt was an author, and it is interesting to compare the utterances of President Roosevelt in regard to workingmen and mechanics with the utterances of Author Roosevelt on the same subject. Among other books written by Author Roosevelt is one entitled "Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail." On page 10 of that book Author Roosevelt says, speaking of the cowboys:

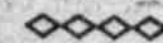
"When drunk on the villainous whisky of the frontier towns they cut mad antics, riding their horses into saloons, firing their pistols right and left from boisterous lightheartedness. \* \* \* They are much better fellows and pleasanter companions than small farmers or agricultural laborers; nor are the mechanics and workmen of a great city to be mentioned in the same breath."

Workmen and mechanics of the great cities who feel that they are not worthy of being mentioned in the same breath with drunken cowboys "riding their horses into saloons, firing their pistols right and left from boisterous lightheartedness" will doubtless agree with President Roosevelt in his measure of "undesirable citizens."



#### YOU'LL "SEE IT IN THE SUN"

Notice! Any democratic paper which is willing to assist the republican party by advocating a Wall Street democracy will find it to its interest to send a marked copy of its editorials to the *New York Sun*. It will be sure to receive favorable comment, and such editorials may attract attention in other republican papers. Democratic papers which prefer to be democratic will have to content themselves with the approval of the democratic voters.



#### MR. BROWN, THE PARTISAN

Chairman Brown, of the Ohio republican committee, has not helped the cause of Secretary Taft by his recent proclamation. He announces that Mr. Taft's friends are not attempting to eliminate Senator Foraker from politics, that they are simply attempting to eliminate the democratic party. This assurance that Mr. Taft's friends are more interested in Mr. Taft's personal success than they are in reforms will not strengthen the secretary as a reform candidate. In all reforms that the president has advocated the democrats have been with him, and Senator Foraker has been against him. If See-