

# The Commoner.

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## Mr. Justice Hughes

The Chicago Record-Herald says that "Bryan's attack on Hughes was mean and contemptible." It commends President Taft for taking notice of Mr. Bryan's comment and credits him with deprecating such criticism as Mr. Bryan made.

Mr. Bryan did not expect to escape criticism when he called attention to Governor Hughes' record. When anyone exposes the attempt which the predatory corporations are making to control the government, the judicial branch as well as the executive and legislative, he must expect to be denounced not only by the corporations but by those who have been fooled by the corporations. The Commoner is charitable enough to assume that the Record-Herald is among the number of the fooled and not among the number of those who intentionally defend representatives of corporate greed. Neither the Record-Herald nor Mr. Taft will answer the criticism that Mr. Bryan made, for the facts upon which the criticism was based are admitted. Did not Governor Hughes veto the two cent rate bill? Does the Record-Herald approve of that or condemn it? Did not Governor Hughes lead the fight against the income tax amendment and did he not succeed in defeating it in his own state? No other governor has undertaken this, and even Governor Hughes with all of his influence, succeeded in defeating it by a very small majority. Does the Record-Herald deny that the representatives of the great corporations contributed to Governor Hughes' campaign fund, and does it deny that these contributions indicate a friendliness toward Governor Hughes? Is the Record-Herald so innocent as to suppose that the contributions made by the representatives of great corporations are patriotic and imply no return? Why the agitation in favor of publicity as to campaign funds if not to inform the people as to the influences which are at work in behalf of different candidates? The publicity bill passed by the house provides for publication before election while the bill reported by the senate provides for publication after the election, but the object of publication, whether before or after the election is, first—to discourage improper contributions, and second—to inform the public as to the contributions actually made. The Record-Herald is presuming too much upon the ignorance of its readers if it asserts that contributions from the interested corporations do not justify a suspicion as to the existence of friendship between the candidate and the corporations.

But that the Record-Herald may be no longer innocent in its defense of Hughes appointment and no longer ignorant of the influences back of the appointment, let it read the following extract from a letter written by W. E. Hutton & Co., and published in the Cincinnati Enquirer on the first of May:

"The new week opened rather better than the old week closed. The nomination by President Taft of Governor Hughes to succeed Mr. Justice Brewer in the supreme court gave general satisfaction in financial circles because of the con-

servatism that Governor Hughes has shown in his official acts when the interests of capital have been concerned. He has vetoed, for instance, the two cent per mile maximum passenger rate for New York state; he appointed a committee to investigate speculative methods in the state whose report did much to restrain popular and unwise legislation based on lack of knowledge; and in other ways he has shown himself a man with a proper appreciation of the protection guaranteed to property under the constitution. It was felt that with such an addition to the highest tribunal, that decisions in such cases as the Standard Oil and American Tobacco would be in safe hands."

This is a trade letter from New York City and tells of what is going on in Wall Street. The writer of that letter commends the appointment of Governor Hughes and in a very friendly spirit justifies the president's act, but the praise of this friend is more damaging than Mr. Bryan's criticism. It will be noticed that the Enquirer letter calls attention to the veto of the two cent rate, just as Mr. Bryan did, but gives Governor Hughes praise for the veto whereas Mr. Bryan criticizes him. The Enquirer letter does not mention the governor's attitude on the income tax. This is probably an oversight but it makes up for the oversight by mentioning something that Mr. Bryan overlooked, namely, the appointment of the committee which whitewashed the Wall Street gamblers. Does the Record-Herald regard it as complimentary to Governor Hughes that he should by implication be charged with appointing a committee, not for the purpose of exposing Wall Street methods, but for the purpose of quieting clamor against it? And what does the Record-Herald think of the suggestion that the sugar trust case and the tobacco trust case are safe in Governor Hughes' hands? That is worse than anything Mr. Bryan said, and yet, this charge against Governor Hughes made in the form of a eulogy and by a friend, ought to convince any unprejudiced person that Governor Hughes is expected to take the side of the trust magnates in cases that come before the supreme court. He may not do so but he will disappoint those who are most delighted with his appointment if he is not a thick and thin advocate of the so-called business methods which are deemed legitimate by Wall Street, but which are denounced by nine-tenths of the people.

### GOVERNOR CROTHERS ON PLATFORMS

Governor Crothers, of Maryland, has given emphatic expression to a few plain truths on the subject of platforms. He says: "A man who refuses to abide by the party mandates as contained in the party platform has no right to call himself a democrat. To oppose the party platform is, in my estimation, a far more serious offense against the party than to oppose the party candidates." Governor Crothers is trying to compel the carrying out of the party platform, and as in nearly all other cases where men refuse to be bound by platforms, there is a favor-seeking corporation on the other side. The governor of Maryland is endeavoring to secure the creation of a public service commission, and of course the public service corporations do not want it, and the governor is hearing from those who do not regard the platform as binding—the same argument advanced by democratic senators and members of congress who did not want to be bound by a platform. The governor is right. Opposing a platform is a more serious offense than opposing candidates, because a candidate may be opposed for personal reasons while one opposed to the principles of his party as set forth in the platform is opposed to the party's collective judgment. Let the discussion go on. In the end it will become settled democratic doctrine which no office-holder can dispute that a platform is a sacred pledge and can not be violated with impunity.

Representative Barclay of Pennsylvania announces that the state of his "health" will not allow him to continue as a candidate for re-election. Mr. Barclay is an ardent Cannonite and he sees the handwriting upon the wall.

## Republican Division

Senator Cummins of Iowa declares that the division in the ranks of the republican party is not ephemeral, and that the sooner the people appreciate that fact the sooner will they "become conscious of a great and everlasting truth." Senator Cummins is right. The standpatters will insist, of course, that the insurgents are actuated simply by personal ambition, and the circumstances may give some color to the charge, because the insurgents, if they represent their people, will probably profit in a political way by their protest against the standpatters. It is not fair, however, to charge a man with political ambition merely because the people reward him for serving them. The standpatters are just as open to the charge of political ambition for they are trying to please the people who furnish their campaign funds, and keep them in public life. The difference is that the insurgents appeal to the masses while the standpatters rely upon the support of special interests.

But the public is not concerned particularly over men's ambitions; it is concerned rather in accomplishing something, and the insurgents are the only people in the republican party who are trying to accomplish something. The standpatters want to "let well enough alone." They are afraid that "harmony will be disturbed" if the wealth producers resist the encroachment of the predatory interests or cry out against favoritism and special privilege. The progressive element of a party is the salt of the party—its saving force. Society moves forward, and the standpatter must necessarily be left behind in time. He can make a big fuss, but he is in much the position of the boy who is stealing a ride on a wagon; he may swear at the driver when the driver discovers him, but he gets off.

The republican party is passing through the same crisis that the democratic party went through in 1896. At that time the predatory interests charge the progressive democrats with all kinds of bad intent, from the disruption of the party to the dishonoring of the country, and they succeeded in defeating the party. But the control of the democratic party, be it remembered, passed out of the hands of Wall Street. The republicans welcomed those who deserted the democratic party at that time, and they secured a temporary advantage from this increase in their ranks. Now they find that their party was weakened for real, effective work by the recruits which it then secured. It was corporation ridden before, and it had to carry a still heavier burden when it welcomed those who were driven out of the democratic party by the Chicago platform.

Yes, the division in the republican party is a permanent one, and the rift runs from top to bottom. The fight will be fiercer—fiercer than it was in the democratic party because the predatory element in the republican party is larger and more powerful than it was in the democratic party, but the insurgents will win—not this year nor probably in 1912—but sometime. They can not fall to win; they have already forced their opponents to accept some reforms, and they will force them to accept more. If the standpatters retain control of the republican organization they will be compelled to surrender to the ideas of the insurrectionists even if they do not surrender the offices to the insurrectionists.

The fight in the republican party began in 1904. Senator LaFollette was thrown out of the republican convention, and yet President Roosevelt, who permitted the humiliation of LaFollette, at once began to adopt Mr. LaFollette's ideas. Wisconsin sent LaFollette to the senate after he had been rejected by the national organization, and the republican senators tried to suppress him but he continued his fight. Now he has eight or nine insurgents with him, and the republican leaders admit that he is a power to be reckoned with. Insurgency has broken out in the house; the insurgents joined with democrats and dethroned Cannon, and they have amended the railroad bill in several

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