

suppose the officials of the plant are deeply interested in a protective tariff; of what avail is it to limit the amount that the candidate himself can expend if Mr. Perkins or some other equally patriotic and public spirited member of the harvester trust directorate puts up a hundred thousand dollars to carry the district for a man pledged to a continuation of protection? What chance would the representative of the opposition have in such a case? And yet the big contributions might be made with a distinct understanding that the man aided accepted them without any promise of return! Who would admit that he either gave or accepted contributions with guilty intent? Is it not strange that a man with Mr. Roosevelt's mind should present so flimsy an argument in favor of unlimited contributions? And, if there could be anything more nebulous and unsubstantial than the proposition itself, it is to be found in his suggestion that it would be no hardship to put a restriction on the contributions made to the reactionary cause owing to the large number of contributors, while it would be a hardship to put a limitation on the contribution made by the ABSOLUTELY PURE and WHOLLY DISINTERESTED "idealists" who are supporting him. His experience ought to teach him that a good cause can well afford to suffer whatever inconvenience the limitation of contributions may bring to it in order to prevent the supporters of a bad cause from purchasing an election through the large contributions of interested parties.

The position which Mr. Roosevelt takes on the subject of contributions makes it appropriate to examine the famous Harriman letter. It was written on the 14th day of October, 1904, and reads as follows:

"My Dear Mr. Harriman: A suggestion has come to me in a roundabout way that you do not think it wise to come to see me in these closing weeks of the campaign, but that you are reluctant to refuse inasmuch as I have asked you. Now, my dear sir, you and I are practical men and you are on the spot and know conditions better than I do. If you think there is any danger of your visit to me causing trouble, or if you think there is nothing special I should be informed about, or no matter in which I could give aid, why, of course, give up the visit for the time being, and then a few weeks hence before I write my message I shall get you to come down to discuss certain government matters not connected with the campaign. With great regard, sincerely yours,

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

To understand this letter it must be remembered that it was written by a president of the United States, then a candidate for re-election, to a man who was then one of the leading railway magnates of the country, and a power in Wall street. Mr. Harriman afterwards became "an undesirable citizen," as Mr. Roosevelt described him—a man worthy to be classed with men on trial on the charge of murder. We are not able to fix with exactness the time when Mr. Harriman ceased to be an idealist and became an "undesirable citizen," but it is evident that he was under suspicion when the above letter was written, for Mr. Roosevelt has learned "in a roundabout way" that Mr. Harriman thought it unwise to be seen in communication with the president during "these closing weeks of the campaign." Upon hearing that Mr. Harriman's worldly wisdom inclined him to keep away from the White House the president addresses him a letter to reassure him, basing the reassurance upon the fact that Mr. Harriman's reluctance to go to the White House was due to the fact that Mr. Roosevelt himself had asked him to come. "Inasmuch as I have asked you"—these are words which italicize themselves. They do not need to be underscored; they speak with frankness, directness and positiveness—they are automegaphonics. The interview is solicited by the president, not by Mr. Harriman, and when he finds that Mr. Harriman's judgment is against coming, but that he hesitates to follow his judgment owing to the fact that the invitation has been extended from the White House, Mr. Roosevelt writes to him and uses a phrase that has become quite familiar to the reading public, viz: "Now, my dear sir, you and I are practical men." What a tell-tale phrase! Mr. Roosevelt may have idealists among his large contributors, but he himself is very practical—like Harriman—and he is not in favor of unduly exciting the public by a conference that might arouse suspicion. As Mr. Harriman is "on the spot" and as he knows conditions better than Mr. Roosevelt does, the president is willing to allow him to decide as to the wisdom of the visit. "If you think there is any danger of your visit to me causing trouble"—trouble to whom? What

trouble? Why trouble? Where trouble? Why is there danger in a visit from Mr. Harriman to Mr. Roosevelt? If there is any danger of the visit causing trouble, "why, of course, give up the visit for the time being"—not entirely, but "for the time being." Why postpone it? Could there be a plainer suggestion of concealment? Who are said to like darkness rather than light? When, before, did a president ever enter into so frank a correspondence with a suspicious character and plan that the public should not know what was going on between them? Most of our presidents have not been so intensely "practical."

But the last part of the sentence contains even a more severe self-accusation of the president than the early part. The president says, "then, a few weeks hence, BEFORE I write my message I shall get you to come down to discuss certain government matters not connected with the campaign." If Mr. Harriman was afraid to come before the election he could wait until after the election, then the president will "get" him to come down. Here the president takes the initiative again. He wants to see Mr. Harriman, and this desire is so earnest that if there is any danger in his coming down BEFORE the election he can wait until AFTER the election, but he must come then. And what for? "To discuss certain government matters not connected with the campaign." What government matters was Mr. Harriman interested in? Upon what subject did the president need his advice? And why was it necessary to receive advice BEFORE the writing of the message? Was some recommendation to be included in the message? Had Mr. Harriman and the president discussed government matters before? Would it not be interesting to know just what government matters Mr. Harriman had in his mind, and whether they were both thinking about the same government matters and thinking alike? When it is remembered that Mr. Harriman DID raise a quarter of a million this letter becomes a very interesting document, and it is especially interesting at this time when Mr. Roosevelt is protesting against any limitation being placed upon individual contributions, and insisting that a specific waiver of promise or obligation can wipe away a taint that might otherwise attach to a contribution.

The Archbold-Penrose incident is to be further investigated, but Mr. Roosevelt has already said enough on the subject of contributions to show that he does not share the commonsense view taken by the average man. He is not in sympathy with the legislation which has come in response to public opinion for the purifying of politics. His friends are very devoted—but they must feel an extraordinary devotion if they are willing to follow him and indorse his position on the subject of campaign contributions.

ROOSEVELT, THE MAGICIAN

In North Dakota Roosevelt, the magician, waved his wand and divided the voters into two classes—those who are WITH the bull moose party and AGAINST Wall street, and those who are AGAINST the bull moose party and WITH Wall street. How easy it is: just a few words and all the "absolutely pure" assemble themselves under the Perkins-Roosevelt standard and the bad divide among the two old parties. And yet this is the same Roosevelt who, LESS THAN A YEAR AGO could not see enough difference between Taft and La Follette to justify him in taking sides against Mr. Taft, but as soon as he becomes a candidate himself the man who does not embrace the trusts and shout for a third term becomes an enemy of his country. Can he fool the public with his slight-of-hand performances?

THREE MOTTOES

"What's the use?" seems to be Mr. Taft's motto. He sees there is no chance and is not disposed to worry himself about the campaign.

"I can't make it any worse," appears to be the attitude of the ex-president; so he plunges into the campaign and lets loose some new misrepresentation with each speech.

"I'll work anyhow," is Governor Wilson's slogan. Although the people show themselves willing to offer him the presidency on a platter he is responding to the demand for speeches.

Both Mr. Taft and Mr. Roosevelt favor a tariff commission, notwithstanding the fact that they both know that the present tariff commission has been used to prevent tariff reduction. The republican leaders are not willing to go as far as the commission has gone in the way of reductions, but they use the commission as an excuse for delay.

MR. BRYAN'S CAMPAIGN ITINERARY IN THE WEST

The democratic national committee has given out the following statement: Mr. Bryan, who is now in the mountains of Colorado securing a few days' rest, will open his campaign speaking tour at Denver on the evening of September 14. During the following two weeks Mr. Bryan will make a campaign speaking tour through Colorado, Utah, Montana, Idaho, California, Nevada and Wyoming, in the order named. The days that he will devote to each state are as follows:

Colorado, September 14, 16, 17.
Utah, September 18.
Montana, September 19, 20.
Idaho, September 21.
California, September 23, 24, 25.
Nevada, September 26.
Utah, September 27.
Wyoming, September 28, 30.

The time allotted to each of the above named states will enable Mr. Bryan to speak at most of the larger cities in each. His speaking points in the various states are being arranged by the committees of the respective states having the campaigns in charge. Mr. Bryan's October itinerary will be announced later.

GOVERNOR WILSON IN NEBRASKA

A New York dispatch, carried by the United Press, says: The first meeting between Woodrow Wilson, democratic presidential candidate, and Colonel William J. Bryan, who made Wilson's success in Baltimore possible, will be at Lincoln, Neb., on October 5. The governor made that announcement and stated that he and Bryan will address a big meeting in the Nebraskan's home city on that date. The governor will go to Lincoln from Indianapolis, where he will address the national conservation congress on October 3, instead of October 4, as had been previously arranged. Other engagements are to be made for the trip and if possible speeches will be made by Wilson in both Omaha and Des Moines.

A LEADER WHO LEADS

On another page will be found Governor Wilson's letter to the voters of New Jersey, giving his reasons for opposing ex-Senator Smith for senator. It is a brave act—not one man in an hundred thousand would have had the courage to do it. Every member of the plunderbund will call him a "dictator"—every political boss will accuse him of "meddling," but we need just now the kind of moral leadership which Governor Wilson furnishes. He is living up to expectations. In the presence of instances like this Mr. Roosevelt's association with bosses and Wall street magnates looks smaller than ever. Governor Wilson is a leader who leads; he is growing all the time.

STRAUSS VS. STRAUSS

Oscar Strauss has been nominated for governor of New York by the Roosevelt party and everybody admits that no stronger nomination could have been made, but Oscar is not the biggest member of the Strauss family. Nathan Strauss is a democrat—a progressive democrat—and one of the leading business men of New York. He is also a philanthropist of world-wide reputation. Why not nominate the democratic Strauss against the bull moose Strauss. If the New York democrats desire to put their state to the front they will pick out some man of merit, like Strauss, and not let Wall street use the organization for selfish ends.

SPEAKERS IN THE CAMPAIGN

The Commoner invites its readers everywhere to write to this office at once giving the names of the men whom they think will be the most effective as campaign speakers in their neighborhood. The Commoner desires this information in order that it may be of service to the national committee in that committee's assignment of speakers for the campaign. In this connection The Commoner urges the people everywhere to open the schoolhouses for the purpose of political discussions.

A FAIR OFFER

The democrats are willing to help the Roosevelt men beat Taft, and they are willing to help the Taft men beat Roosevelt, what could be more fair?

Mr. Roosevelt talks against free trade. Why? Because no one is advocating free trade. Why does he not outline the reductions he favors? Because he does not know where he stands on the tariff question.