

# The Commoner.

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Every Commoner reader is asked to send to this office as soon as possible the name of every republican—or member of any party other than democratic—who has expressed an intention of voting for Governor Wilson. Send also the name of every republican whom you have reason to believe is inclined to vote for Wilson. Send also the names of any democrats who are known to be opposed to Governor Wilson.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE TRUST QUESTION

The trust question is not only a part of the tariff question but its prominence as an issue has been increased by the position taken by Mr. Roosevelt and still further emphasized by the disclosures that have been made in regard to campaign contributions. It has been known for years to those acquainted with the inner workings of politics that the protected interests have long made a practice of furnishing the funds necessary to elect to the senate and house the champions of the protected interests. But the people have not until recently discovered the deep interest taken by trust magnates in presidential elections. When Mr. Sheldon testified that 73½ per cent of Mr. Roosevelt's campaign fund in 1904 came from corporations—a source now closed by criminal statute—and when the testimony further showed that four men, Mr. Frick, who was largely interested in the steel trust, Mr. Archbold, a leading official of the Standard Oil trust, J. Pierpont Morgan, the master mind of many trusts, and Mr. Gould, the railway magnate, had given \$100,000 apiece to the Roosevelt campaign fund, in addition to the \$50,000 afterwards added by Morgan and the \$250,000 raised by Harriman, the public stood aghast at the liberality displayed by these very "practical" men. No disclaimer that may be put forward by these men will weigh with the public; their chant about disinterested patriotism only adds insult to the injury they do the public in purchasing immunity for their conscienceless practices. We have the testimony of some of these men that they expected their contributions to be appreciated, and those who deny expectations do not raise their reputations for

candor. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Taft have been good to the trusts; Mr. Roosevelt in not prosecuting any considerable number of them, and Mr. Taft in converting prosecutions into a farce by the so-called dissolutions consented to.

The positions taken by the three parties are now, or ought to be, clearly understood, and it is difficult to see how any fair minded man can fail to indorse the democratic position. Mr. Taft considers that the present anti-trust law is sufficient, and declares himself ready to enforce it. If we can judge the future by the past the enforcement will be more like comic opera than like serious criminal procedure. Dissolution of the trusts in such a way as not to change the management of the new organizations is not dissolution at all, and to so dissolve them as to raise the price of the stock stamps the prosecution as a fraud. In addition to the immediate pecuniary advantage obtained from the administration's actions the trusts secured a bill of health. What would the public think of a sheriff who, instead of taking a stolen horse from a thief and putting the thief in jail, returned the horse, gave the thief a colt to go with the horse, and then sent him out to steal again, fortified by certificate of character?

Mr. Taft has also indorsed the action of the supreme court in legislating the word "unreasonable" into the anti-trust law, thus paralyzing it as a criminal statute. Mr. Taft does this, all the time insisting that he is trying to prevent monopoly. Surely no relief can be expected from him or his policy on the trust question!

Mr. Roosevelt does not even commend the criminal prosecution of trusts, but joins Mr. Taft in eulogizing the supreme court for amending the anti-trust law in the interest of the trusts. Mr. Roosevelt even goes further than Mr. Taft does in this respect, for he justifies "judicial legislation" and the "invasion" by the supreme court of the domain of congress. But the most striking feature of Mr. Roosevelt's position is that he is in favor of regarding the trust as an economic development and would permit it to exist. He even condemns the democrats for trying to prevent the creation of trusts; he says that the democrats are using worn out methods unsuited to present conditions. His policy contemplates not only the existence but the growth of trusts. They are to be allowed to grow and grow, combine and combine, merge and merge, until, following this course to its logical conclusion, a few trust magnates control our industrial system and the masses receive their daily bread from the hands of these few. He protests, of course, that the trusts must be regulated, but he does not want the states to regulate, nor does he desire regulation by congress or by the courts. He would put the regulation in the hands of a bureau to be appointed by the president, and then he offers himself as the only man who can be trusted to administer the system.

And he is so anxious that the system shall be administered wisely that he seems willing to occupy the White House indefinitely as a guarantee against an inferior occupant. No landlord system in the old world has been capable of exerting the harmful influence upon tenants that his trust system would exert upon the whole people. It would be a despotism without one palliating feature—not only an industrial despotism but one that would lend itself to political despotism. An ambitious man could desire nothing more to his purpose than such a trust system as Mr. Roosevelt desires to construct. A president in charge of a bureau which would, in turn, have charge of the trusts could by threats coerce every trust magnate into supporting him for renomination and election, and, through the trust magnates, the employees. We already know how employees can be robbed of their citizenship by the threat of starvation, but what we have seen would be small compared with what we might expect under Mr. Roosevelt's system.

Mr. Roosevelt's platform and his speeches ought to put the public on notice that the system proposed by the ex-president is not intended for the benefit of the people, but if anything were lacking to convince the people that the Roosevelt scheme is in the interest of the trust magnates, Mr. Perkins' support of Mr. Roosevelt ought to leave no doubt upon the subject. Mr. Roosevelt innocently informs the public that Mr. Perkins' support of him is due to his (Mr. Perkins') interest in his (Mr. Perkins') children. But does it not occur to the average man that Mr. Perkins' children, who will come into the possession of trust stock by inheritance, stand in a different class from the children of those who are the victims of the trusts? Is it not worth while for other parents to be interested in their children? Not one child in a thousand will inherit trust stock, but all need protection from the extortion practised by trusts and from the menace of trust domination.

Governor Wilson has in his speeches clearly outlined the democratic position. He is setting forth the democratic remedy and drawing the line between business on a large scale, which is entirely legitimate, and private monopoly, which is wholly wrong. The democratic platform has in four campaigns declared a private monopoly to be indefensible and intolerable, and Mr. Wilson has ably maintained the democratic position. He believes, as our party has repeatedly declared, that all existing monopolies should be dissolved—and that no new monopolies should be allowed to grow up. He lays the axe at the root of the tree and seeks the restoration of competition, the only alternative to government ownership. The government can regulate corporations engaged in legitimate business, but it can not regulate private monopolies—the monopolies regulate the govern-

### CONTENTS

IMPORTANCE OF THE TRUST QUESTION

PATRIOT NO. 1

THE BANKERS' CONFESSION  
USED ROOSEVELT TO BEAT LA FOLLETTE

RAILROAD MEN AND OTHER TOILERS,  
"STOP, LOOK, LISTEN."

DIFFERENCE IN COST OF PRODUCTION  
73½ PER CENT IMPURE

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS PROGRESSIVE

HOME DEPARTMENT

NEWS OF THE WEEK

WASHINGTON NEWS

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS