

## TALK, BUT NO ACTION

### ANTI-TRUST PROCEEDINGS CONTINUE TO LAG.

Department of Justice Officials Give Out Vague Hints of Something Which May Happen in the Future, But the Public Is Skeptical.

The anti-trust measures adopted by the late Congress to which some of our spellbinders have been pointing with pride have thus far borne no fruit of which anyone can be proud.

One of the measures appropriated \$500,000 as a special fund to be used in the prosecution of trusts which the administration may regard as objectionable. Of this sum only \$20,000 has been expended, and half of that went in one fee to a Pittsburg attorney in the Northern Securities case, which originated, it will be remembered, before the late Congress did anything about the trusts.

The Department of Justice would have us believe, nevertheless, that it is not idle and that the new legislation is really of some value. It gives out information that a number of anti-trust cases are in course of preparation and that there will be a great commotion one of these days. Like the revision of the tariff, however, it must be postponed until after the fall elections, and the people must be entertained meantime by mysterious outpourings as to the extremely cautious activity of the department in getting good and ready to make things happen when the time comes. Among these encouraging outpourings is one to the effect that officials of the department "are almost unanimous in the opinion that a good case" against the anthracite trust "can be made under the new anti-trust legislation."

Before going into ecstasies over this almost unanimous official opinion we may as well recall the fact that long ago the industrial commission was almost unanimously of the opinion that a good case could be made against that most audacious of trusts under the anti-trust law of 1890. Also that the interstate commerce commission long ago was almost or quite unanimously of the opinion that a good case could be made against that impudent trust under the interstate commerce law.

As not a thing has been done by the officials under the laws which have been so long on the statute book, only very sanguine people will be confident that they will make out a good case under the new legislation or that they will seriously attempt to make out a good case. The anthracite trust is merely a good one to which to administer stuffed club punishment before election.

### The Trusts, the Administration and the People.

The National Glass Budget of August 15 says that the Flint Bottle Manufacturers' Protective Association, at its regular monthly meeting in Indianapolis, advanced prices on a majority of its wares from 5 to 15 per cent. It also agreed not to make any contracts for delivery after Jan. 1, 1904, and decided not to start any of the factories before Sept. 14. This same Glass Budget contains a circular letter issued by the Federation Window Glass Company predicting higher prices for window glass.

Here are two trusts boldly flying their illegal business under the nose of President Roosevelt and his Attorney-General as well as in front of the new Department of Commerce which was to kill all bad trusts by publishing the facts about them. Is it not high time for these functionaries to get busy and to wipe some of these thousands of illegal combinations off the map of this once free country?

When can we expect results? The trusts are sleeping even if the officials are. They are making a haul while the Republican sun is shining for them. They are "standing pat" under the Republican tariff umbrella and are playing their game of hold-up without losing a trick. The people are the victims. Will these victims of trust robbery again vote for the party of trusts and for officials who habitually violate their oath of office and who apparently can neither see, smell, hear, nor see trusts, although they are as thick as mosquitoes in New Jersey, and a hundred times more harmful to the people? They will not unless Lincoln was mistaken when he said that "you can't fool all of the people all of the time."

### Climate and Morals.

Not very long ago an American newspaper published in Manila declared, in extenuation of numerous official irregularities and pecuniations then brought to light, that the climate of the Philippines has the effect of weakening the moral fiber of men from the temperate zone. It asserted that no man could live in the archipelago for any considerable time without danger of developing certain fallings and weaknesses likely to get him into trouble.

There is, unfortunately, reason to believe that the theory is well founded. The history of our occupation of the islands is not agreeable. Aside from the "water cure" and kindred manifestations of un-American savagery there have been too many charges of financial irregularities on the part of officials, military and civil. The whole atmosphere of the islands seems to be impregnated with cruelty and dishonesty and there is small reason to hope that, if we should hold the Philippines for two or three centuries, our record would be any better than that of the Spaniards.

As affecting the moral sense of men hitherto right-minded it is only necessary to cite the case of Governor General Taft. That gentleman was in this country a jurist of excellent repute, a man whose ideas of right and wrong were beyond criticism.

Since he has been in the Philippines his moral vision has become so obtuse that he can see nothing wrong in a government monopoly of the opium traffic, making the United States government the purveyor of a drug which is destructive of soul and body alike. He even resents the suggestion of the secretary of war in vetoing the proposition and points out the terms which must be made.

Comment upon such a moral boulevercement as is here indicated is not necessary. It is, perhaps, permissible to remark that if a man of Judge Taft's standing and reputation thus succumbs to the moral poison of the Philippine atmosphere, it is hardly strange that a poor devil of a second lieutenant should now and then divulge his pay accounts or a civilian functionary occasionally disappear over night taking the assets of his office along with him.

The malign influence of the climate is quite evident.

### Strikers Accept Lower Wages.

The trade journals of late contain many news items indicative of the kind of prosperity now afflicting this country. The Wool and Cotton Reporter of August 13 contains one very important item which is not being widely published and circulated by the Protective Tariff League or the Philadelphia Strike Ends. It is headed "Philadelphia Strike Ends." It tells us that all but 40,000 of the 125,000 textile operators who went on strike June 1st for higher wages and for a reduction of hours from 60 to 55 a week have gone back to work, and that the most of the remaining 40,000 will be back at work within a week. It says that "in some of the mills, it is said, the employers, in addition to refusing any concessions, reduced the wages of employees 10 to 15 per cent."

After being without work for over two months these deluded strikers who foolishly believed in the Republican cry of prosperity are glad to return to work at greatly reduced wages. They will now live as best they can with wages 85 or 90 per cent of those of a few years ago, and cost of living 135 per cent of what it was six years ago. As a day's wages of one of these unfortunate textile workers will now only buy 56 per cent of what it would buy in 1897 his or her actual wages have been reduced 34 per cent. It is in order for these operatives to strike for lower cost of living and see what will happen. They can do this most effectively by voting against the party that protects the trusts by stringently enforced high tariff laws and unenforced anti-trust laws.

### Pension Them All.

It is reported from Mindanao via Manila that the Bacolidian Moros are again throwing up fortifications, and demanding tribute before submitting to the United States.

There must be some mistake about this. Did we not read some brief weeks ago that our colonial forces under the leadership of Capt. Pershing had cleaned up the island of Mindanao and brought into loyal submission all those Moros who were not plugged full of nickel-jacketed bullets?

Is it not, moreover, the island of Mindanao to which Brigadier General Wood has been assigned, and can it be possible that any Moro, no matter how fierce, and bloodthirsty, would dare inaugurate hostilities against that medico-martial phenomenon?

The story sounds incredible. Yet, if it be true, why not make the best of a bad job and pay the tribute demanded by the Bacolidians?

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We already pay one greasy, murderous, licentious, slave-trading scoundrel a liberal salary to keep the peace. Why not put the others on the national pay roll?

### Sugar and Protection in Austria.

The duties of protection are well illustrated by the sugar industry in continental Europe. The advance sheets of consular reports of Aug. 21, 1902, discussed the "sugar industry of Austria-Hungary." The best sugar industry has been so stimulated there by import duties and export bounties that more than two-thirds of the sugar output has to be exported every year. The import duty amounts to three and a half cents per pound, while the export bounty is two and one-fifth cents per pound. The "cartel," or sugar trust, of course, exists to make the people pay the full tariff tax. As a result sugar is exported to England at two cents and sold in Austria at eight cents per pound. The English eat Austrian sugar at three cents per pound, after collecting an import duty of nearly one cent a pound on it, while the Austrians eat their own sugar at eight cents per pound. As a result the average Austrian consumes fifteen pounds of sugar a year, while the Englishman consumes ninety pounds.

This demonstrates that protection is a most benevolent system—for countries which do not have it.

### Expensive Amusement.

Last year Newport was the beneficiary of the navy's endeavors to furnish additional attractions to watering places. This season it is Bar Harbor, and, while the guests at these places have doubtless been much amused and entertained by the ships and the officers, the question before the people is, Can the nation afford for the sake of booming summer resorts to have one of its best ships run upon the rocky New England coast each year? We do not believe the people will reply to that question in the affirmative. They are interested in the summer resorts, but they are not interested in them to the extent of helping make them popular by sacrificing a ship a season and going into their pockets to pay the cost to the tune of half a million or more.

### Set New Record for Boasting.

From the present outlook Secretary Hitchcock is going to make Postmaster General Payne look pretty cheap. That is to say, while Mr. Payne's subordinates got away with only a few hundred thousand dollars Mr. Hitchcock's talented assistants have apparently been stealing government land a county at a time.

### Latest From Our Liege Lord.

His strenuousness is probably the only sovereign who ever made a naval review the occasion for a continuous performance of speech-making. In this connection other matters our liege lord has said are singularly unique.

## SIGNS OF TROUBLE

### EVIDENCES THAT BUSINESS DEPRESSION IS AT HAND.

Strong Probability That the Republicans Will Have to Reap Their Own Whirlwind This Time—Some Significant Facts.

It now begins to look as if "Republican luck" was going to desert the G. O. P. Shrewd political observers of both parties recognize the fact that the Republican party has been as fortunate in its defeats as in its victories. All well-informed and fair-minded men know that the panic of 1893 and the succeeding years of depression would have occurred no matter who had been elected president in 1892. The Harrison administration was put to its wits' ends to conceal treasury deficits and stave off a bond issue until Cleveland was inaugurated. In fact the plates for a new issue of bonds were ready before Harrison left the white house. The 1893 panic was partly due to the Republican spendthrifts who, before 1893, had "blown in" all of the big surplus left by Cleveland in 1888. It would have been fortunate for the Democrats had they lost in 1892.

But the Republicans have overstayed their time and are almost certain to have to take their own medicine next year. They are doing their best to prevent a business collapse before next year and are whistling hard to keep up their courage. But many recognize that the jig is up with them. This idea is beginning to find expression in Republican papers. One of the oldest and staunchest of them, the Chicago Journal, said a few days ago, "The belief is strong that the tide of prosperity is turning, or is about to turn."

The government bulletins, and reports, and of course the Republican newspapers, tell us at length all about the prosperity items but say little about the gloomy items which are getting more numerous from day to day. Thus the Bureau of Statistics-Bulletin of Aug. 8 show up the favorable features of our internal commerce, saying that "the current year compares favorably with the corresponding period in 1902 and 1901," and then hastens to say that "there is no evidence of a general recession in commercial activities, corresponding to the extraordinary shrinkage in speculative values."

The American Economist, the organ of the Protective Tariff League, is working harder than ever to demonstrate on a paper that prosperity is still here. Some of our headlines in its issue of August 21 are: "Prosperity Rampant," "General Prosperity Untouched," "The Facts of Prosperity," "Significant Figures—Our Commercial Expansion Under Protective Tariffs," "Labor's Prosperity."

When the Republican papers are asserting that "prosperity is still here" and are trying to prove it by publishing statistics showing that Pennsylvania's iron and steel industry paid twice as much in wages in 1902 as in 1896; that our imports were greater last year than ever before; that our postoffice receipts were higher than ever last year; and other favorable statistics which they tell us are reliable barometers of trade; while we are being assured that our crop prospects are again good and that the railroads are threatened with another "car famine"; and while the Secretary of Agriculture is telling us that everything is lovely with the farmers who are simply worrying about how and where to invest their rapidly accumulating profits, it may be well to mention some of the signs that point in the opposite direction. Here are a few of them:

1. Great depression in Wall street. Stocks have shrunk from 20 to 100 points during the last year, the average shrinkage being about 3 per cent. Financial experts do not agree with Republican politicians that there is no connection between Wall street and the rest of the country. They know that business is done mainly upon a credit basis and that Wall street is the heart of the credit system. When the heart is disordered and diseased the whole system is deranged and debilitated. Thus, Mr. Cuthbert Mills, for many years the financial expert of the New York Tribune, the leading Republican paper in the country, said in its issue of August 9:

"The country is beginning to wake up to what is liable to happen in mercantile and industrial affairs. There is less boasting than was recently heard about the country not being concerned with the gambling operations of Wall street. These operations, when they are on such a scale as we see them now, are the sign and forerunner of a business contraction, in production and prices, which will put the country through much the same experience that Wall street has had. Good crops will mitigate the coming year, but will not prevent it. And it may be repeated what was said last week, that the merchant manufacturer who is much spread out at this time, is in the same dangerous position as was the spread out Wall street man six months ago."

2. Hamilton and Company and other financial authorities have recently written in the same vein.

This is a year of numerous and great strikes. History shows that the sequels to such years are years of depression and panic. The strike years of 1872, 1883 and 1892 are examples. In the middle of 1892 there were between 500 and 600 strikes on and the number increased later. The year 1893 saw a collapse in business and a financial crisis not equaled since 1837. Undoubtedly the 1893 panic owed much of its severity to the flotation of numerous protected trusts with watered stocks and to the high trust prices and stock-kiting which followed the passage of the McKinley bill in 1890. The 1904 depression is likely to be as much more severe than the 1893 one as the number, size and power of trusts and the watering and kiting of stocks were greater following the passage of the McKinley bill than following the McKinley bill. Remember the name, Swamp, Kilmer's Swamp-Road, and on every one, Binghamton, N. Y., on every

efforts of the great and small steel trusts to regulate production and prices. southern Foundry No. 2 pig iron has declined from \$18 to \$12 per ton. Bessemer pig, which sold at Pittsburgh, Aug. 20, 1902, at \$21.50, sold at \$17.85 Aug. 19, 1903. Within a year steel billets have declined from \$31 to \$27; steel beams, at tidewater, from \$2.25 to \$1.73½, and steel bars from \$2 to \$1.70. Much of this decline has occurred within a few weeks.

4. The country's clearings or bank exchanges are declining. From \$3,680,967,392, May 9, 1901, they fell to \$2,452,239,721, Jan. 3, 1902; to \$2,277,061,129 Jan. 3, 1903, and to \$1,969,306,927 Aug. 15, 1903.

5. Fewer buildings are being erected. The monthly record kept by the Constructing News shows that building operations in nineteen of the principal cities fell off 17 per cent for July, 1903, as compared with July, 1902. The decline is attributed to a stringency in the money market and the apprehension of what the future has in store.

6. Great land speculation, especially in the Northwest. Political economists agree that the climax of what is called prosperity is marked by a great rise in land values. This rise, for reasons which need not be explained here, marks the beginning of industrial depression.

7. Some of the minor signs of trouble ahead are:

Closed cotton mills throwing 500,000 out of work.

Closed iron woolen and other mills "to make repairs" and because of low prices.

Reduction of 50 cents per ton in price of buckwheat (steam) coal in Philadelphia, because of the shutting down of many industrial plants.

Recent heavy withdrawals from New York savings banks.

Blowing out of over 600 coke ovens in Connellsville region, because of over-supply.

Reduction of 10 to 15 per cent in wages of many of the textile strikers in Philadelphia, who three months ago struck for higher wages and shorter hours—and got neither.

Decreased demand for high-grade wooleens and increased demand for cheap and shoddy and cotton goods, showing exhausted buying power of the people.

Unparalleled immigration, greatly increasing the number looking for jobs and thus prolonging strikes and insuring defeat and lower wages for workers.

In view of these facts, or portents of hard times, it is improbable that the Republicans, with all of their advantages from being in control of government and industry, can stave off the inevitable collapse until the election of 1904. The two great factors in their favor and that have prevented a collapse before now are a succession of good crops and a decrease in the value of money caused by greatly increased output of gold. The stimulus to business from cheapening money which manifests itself in advancing prices, artificial and deceptive though it is, is likely to continue. It can postpone but cannot prevent a depression in business. If our crops turn out much below the ordinary hard times may begin this fall. If they are above the ordinary break, though it will be soon, will not be severely felt until next year.

BYRON W. HOLT.



Aiding Political Renegades.

### A Simple Act of Justice.

It is well known that Senator Aldrich represents Mr. Rockefeller, the great financial magnate and Standard Oil baron, and it is tolerably certain that any currency legislation that the Republicans in Congress may pass will be only such as is approved by Mr. Rockefeller. For some reason, so far unexplained, this element is opposed to asset currency, but very much in favor of the legislation that was proposed in the Aldrich bill of the last session. Senator Aldrich now announces that the Senate sub-committee which is trying to prepare a financial bill to introduce in the coming Congress, has decided to frame some "simple measure" upon which all may unite. That must mean that Senator Aldrich has persuaded the committee to revert to the Aldrich bill of last year, which in some of its features is quite as objectionable as asset currency. The Rockefeller idea is to continue the high protection taxes and divide the surplus not used by the government between the favored banks of which Rockefeller owns or controls some with the largest capital. This would entail a constant drain from the taxpayer to the coffers of the Wall street magnates.

It is without a doubt a very "simple measure," but will hardly be indorsed by those representatives of the people that are not controlled by the money power. A more simple measure would be to reduce taxation by taking from the trusts the protection they now enjoy and which allows them to charge exorbitant prices for their commodities. The surplus would then have to be paid out, and taxation being reduced to the needs of the government, it would kill two birds with one stone. The trusts would be unable to charge exorbitant profits and the surplus now in the hands of the Wall street banks would be used as fast as necessary to meet excess of expenditures which would be "simple" justice. If such deficiency should be met, it would be "simple" justice, a long term of trust oppression.

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The pretender to the throne of Morocco is dead again—for about the ninth time. He is still a few laps behind the money question, however.

Can it be possible that the persistent Wall street booming of Cleveland is actuated by a knowledge that republican management is to again end in a forced bond issue?

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## VERY ELASTIC.



The Sword of Justice as the "Elastic Laws" Advocates Would Have It.

—Used by courtesy of The Commoner.

## Commoner Comment.

### NEBRASKA CONVENTION.

The democratic state convention held at Columbus, Neb., August 25, was an enthusiastic gathering. The Kansas City platform was reaffirmed and state issues were met and dealt with in true democratic spirit. Judge John J. Sullivan, now chief justice of the Nebraska supreme court was renominated. Judge Sullivan has made a good record and has adhered to the rule which in his speech of acceptance he laid down for the guidance of all judges that the one thing above all others that should characterize the conduct of a judge is "independence—absolute judicial independence."

The nominees for regents of the state university, William O. Jones of Adams county and Dr. E. O. Weber of Saunders county, are good men. Professor Jones is well known as an educator, although he is not now actively engaged in educational work. He is a man of large experience and an energetic student. Dr. Weber is a young man who stands high among his neighbors, and should these gentlemen be elected, it may be depended upon they will contribute materially to the welfare of Nebraska's great university.

Fusion between the two parties was accomplished without difficulty. Indeed, the populist convention had nominated Judge Sullivan before the democratic convention at Columbus had reached that order in the proceedings. So far as the public welfare is concerned, the fusion is to be commended. The ticket chosen at Grand Island and at Columbus and the ticket chosen by the republican party. Several weeks before the republican convention nominated Mr. Barnes, for judge of the supreme court, it was generally understood that Mr. Barnes was the choice of the railroad lobby. Judge Sullivan did not ask, indeed, did not desire a renomination; but he could not avoid the honor and it came to him because the democrats and populists of Nebraska recognize that it is important to the people of this state that Judge Sullivan be re-elected. He owes his renomination to the good record he has made during six years of faithful service on the supreme bench of the state, and if the people of Nebraska fail to indorse that record at the polls, the people will in the end be the losers.

### THE CRIME OF SPECULATION.

The bank embezzlements which have come to light since the slump in stocks emphasize the necessity for a law that will make it a penal offense for a bank officer to speculate on the market. The gambling mania is so strong when one once yields to it that trust funds are always in danger if the holder of such funds is speculating. A law to prevent such speculating by a bank officer would not only protect the public, but would be a protection to the official as well.

### The Nebraska republican convention.

The Nebraska republican convention cheered the name of McKinley, but the committee on resolutions killed a resolution declaring in favor of reciprocity, the declaration being in almost the exact words of McKinley.

If the administration is so worried about getting the money back into circulation among the people it might begin by adopting measures calculated to stop taking it away from them by excessive taxation.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Pulitzer's new school of journalism will have a chance devoted to teaching aspiring genius the virtue of always giving proper credit.

It seems that the president was saving up all the good things to say to Mr. Root. Mr. Root may deserve them less, but he needs them more.

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### THE OHIO CONVENTION.

The Ohio democratic state convention met last week. The platform adopted will be found elsewhere in this issue.

The platform contains inherent evidence of the handwork of Hon. Tom L. Johnson, the nominee of the convention for governor. It not only puts the party in that state squarely on record in favor of the Kansas City platform, but commits the party to the taxation reform measures which Mr. Johnson has been urging.

The convention nominated Mr. John H. Clark of Cleveland for the United States senate. Running on the platform adopted, he is pledged to the principles and policies indorsed at the last national convention. While Mr. Johnson is the gubernatorial candidate, he is even more interested in the selection of a democratic legislature than in his own election because the next legislature will elect a successor to Senator Hanna and will also have to deal with important questions of taxation.

The McLean element endeavored both to defeat the nomination of Johnson and to make the platform colorless, and the campaign that element will throw every possible obstacle in the way of success, but with a platform that is honest, definite and fearless the party can appeal to those honest republicans who are becoming tired of corporation rule in their own party. If the democratic party expects to win the confidence and support of earnest men it must show itself earnest.

Every reader of The Commoner will bid Godspeed to Johnson and those on the ticket with him. A victory in Ohio this fall would not only accomplish wonderful good for the people of that state, but it would stimulate the party all over the country and give an auspicious beginning to the campaign of 1904.

The Aldrich bill provides for depositing government money in favorite banks. Mr. Rockefeller owns the favorite banks. Senator Aldrich's son married the daughter of Mr. Rockefeller. The administration's financial policy is quite a neat little family affair.

Those eminent republicans who were horrified at the idea of providing the people with an increased volume of real money are now laying awake nights trying to frame up a scheme for giving them a token money based on intangible securities.

The Ohio democratic platform does not please republican organs and their assistants. The Ohio democratic platform was framed largely for the purpose of displacing the aforesaid organs.

Our great and good friend, Abdul Hamid, sultan of Turkey, is afflicted with falling eyesight, but he can still distinguish the difference between an ultimatum and a warship.

Up to date the administration has sent no battleship up the raging Wash-bash to demand summary punishment of a man implicated in the assassination of Governor Goebel.

Democrats who are discouraged by two defeats in battling for principle might study with profit the persevering qualities of Sir Thomas Lipton.

A large number of postoffice officials insist that the government "stand pat" on the statute of limitations.

It will be cheerfully admitted that Secretary of War Taft knows as much about war as Secretary of War Root did, and Secretary Taft didn't know war when he saw it. If he did he would not admit it.

A genuinely democratic platform means the same in New York that it does in Nebraska; the same in New Jersey and Louisiana.

Mr. Taylor did not "stand pat" until after he had reached the north bank of the Ohio river.

Has the New York World yet received formal notice of the dissolution of the law firm of Stetson & Cleveland?

Ohio democracy lost no time in making it known that it is democratic.

In a race between a man's will and a woman's won't the latter invariably wins.

No woman is a heroine in the eye of her cook.

A fool is a man who laughs at his own folly.