

In one of his speeches President Roosevelt said: "I cannot too often say that the highest law, the best administration of law can do naught more than give us a fair field in which to work out the fate aright." If Mr. Roosevelt is in earnest on the "fair field" proposition, why does he object to interfering with the shelter which the trusts find in the tariff?

A Fair Field.

On October 4, 1902, William R. Hearst petitioned Attorney General Knox to bring suit against the coal trust. At that time Mr. Hearst supplied Mr. Knox with documentary proof of the existence of this trust, evidence under the hands and seals of the members of the combine. Although having been in possession of this evidence for more than six months, Attorney General Knox has not proceeded against this conspiracy in restraint of trade.

Why Not Act?

The New York World says that "no party can be said to be poor in material for a presidential candidate who can count among its members such men as Judge Thayer, Judge Gray, Judge Adams, and Judge Parker." The World adds: "These four eminent, able, upright, and fearless judges certainly afford the democrats a good choice to start with." How did the World happen to overlook the name of Judge Henry C. Caldwell? He is "eminent, able, upright, and fearless."

What About Caldwell?

John D. Rockefeller offers to contribute to the University of Nebraska two-thirds of the sum of \$100,000 provided the other third is contributed by friends of that institution. Mr. Rockefeller says that a check for the sum of \$66,667 will be forthcoming at the proper time. The Providence Journal directs attention to the fact that this is 33 1/3 cents more than Mr. Rockefeller's precise two-thirds of the total to be given and the Journal adds: "His liberal overlooking of the fraction of the odd dollar is obviously to his credit as a generous giver."

A Generous Giver.

In his speech at Princeton, Ill., President Roosevelt said: "Our currency laws need such modification as will ensure the parity of every dollar coined or issued by the government." There must be some mistake here. The republican organs and republican orators have been assuring the American people that the currency is now on the single gold standard and that the parity of every dollar coined or issued by the government is insured by the policies of the republican party; and yet here we find Mr. Roosevelt calling for such modification of our currency laws "as will ensure the parity of every dollar coined or issued by the government."

The "Parity" Again.

In his testimony before the interstate commerce commission, "Trustee" Baer announced that he intended during the month of May to advance the price of coal 10 cents. He said he believed he could control the market although he had not consulted all the other coal company men. One of the attorneys remarked, "And yet you say there is competition in the business." Mr. Baer replied, "Of course there is, fair and square competition." According to men like Baer, "fair and square competition" is provided whenever a coterie of men corner a product and put up the price to an exorbitant amount.

"Fair and Square."

A Washington dispatch to the New York World states that the original manuscript of the Declaration of Independence is in such a faded condition that it is to be seen no more by the public. Most of the text is still legible, but only one or two of the signatures can be made out. There is only a trace of the autograph of John Hancock. It is explained that "the committee equipped with powerful microscopes, made a careful examination. Today the document was photographed and then locked up." A great many people who yet believe in the principles of the declaration will be glad to know that the republican administration is manifesting some concern for the preservation

A Faded Document.

of the original manuscript. If it required "powerful microscopes" to read any portion of that manuscript, where could be found a microscope so powerful as to discover in the attitude of the republican party and in the policies of the republican administration any hint that such a document as the Declaration of Independence was ever cherished by the American people?

Tariff and Business.

Senator Quay declares that the tariff should not be revised during a period of prosperity; and the Philadelphia Record directs attention to these facts: "In 1894 the republicans said it was a terrible mistake to touch the tariff because business was so depressed. On the other hand, they changed the tariff in 1890, when the country was very prosperous. There is no time when the republicans think the tariff ought to be reduced and they think any time is a good one for raising duties if the people will stand it. When they talk about the condition of business they are throwing dust in the people's eyes."

"Trustee" Baer in his testimony before the interstate commerce commission showed very plainly the existence of a coal trust. In his testimony, Mr. Baer said that the effort was to reduce the price of coal. "But you have not succeeded in reducing the price to the consumers," said one of the attorneys. "No," replied Mr. Baer, "because you and your friends have succeeded in raising wages and putting up the cost of necessities so that profits are less." This shows very clearly that Mr. Baer and his associate "trustees" are determined not to surrender any of their immense profits. When they are required to pay higher wages they charge the extra expense up to the consumer and the consumer foots the bill.

Consumer Foots the Bill.

In his testimony before the interstate commerce commission, President Baer made two statements of special interest. In the first place, Mr. Baer said: "We do not aim to dominate the anthracite situation nor any other trade." Then he explained that "the more thoroughly we dominate the anthracite trade naturally the more money we make for our stockholders. The more things you sell at a profit the greater profit, I suppose, you make. Isn't that simple and axiomatic?" The Pittsburgh Dispatch says that this is certainly simple and axiomatic, but hardly consistent with the previous declaration that they did not aim to dominate the anthracite situation.

Simple and Axiomatic.

The New York Commercial says: "Trades unionism will never treat the employers of this country with respect or decency until it has come to stand in fear of them. That is the only sort of force that it recognizes. And we must 'fight the devil with fire.'" The Commercial poses as a representative of business interests and as a thoroughly conservative paper; and yet it would have us believe that the establishment of good relations between capital and labor must depend upon the force used by capital and the fear entertained by labor. Would it not be more in line with real conservatism to urge first the removal of all special privileges under the law, which are enjoyed by the capitalists of the country, and then the cultivation of a more friendly spirit between employer and employee? Can intelligent men depend upon a respect that is born wholly of fear?

Respect and Fear.

In his testimony before the interstate commerce commission, Mr. Baer, who is president of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad company, and also of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal company, as well as the chief executive of a number of other companies, said: "The Philadelphia Coal and Iron company exists under the statutes of the state of Pennsylvania. It does not evade any laws of the state or of the United States. I shall be glad to have the question tested in any form you may select. There is no violation of any provision of the Pennsylvania constitution in our charter. That question has been decided in various courts. The corporate franchises were granted prior to the adoption of the new constitution, and the courts have decided that those charters are inviolable." Attorney General Knox should accept Mr. Baer's invitation. According to Mr. Baer's own testimony, there is every reason to

A Hint to Mr. Knox.

believe that a coal trust exists. It might be well for Mr. Knox to test this question by bringing proceedings under the criminal clause of the Sherman law.

Some Kindly Words.

The Commoner does not, as a rule, publish the good things said about it, feeling that each reader can judge for himself whether the paper is doing good, but the editor is very much encouraged by the cordial support that is given, and the kind words that are said of the paper. A New York subscriber makes the following extravagant statement: "The Commoner is doing more good than all other papers in America." While The Commoner cannot hope to merit so high a compliment, it will do the best it can.

Sad Cargoes Coming.

The cable news from Manila on March 23 contained the information that "the burial ship Pretus has arrived here from the Jolo archipelago, bringing the bodies of 500 soldiers and a few civilians. The bodies will be sent home on a transport." This item again calls up the question, "Are the people of the United States being kept well informed as to what is going on in the Philippines?" In view of the reiterated assertion of sweet peace and content in the Philippines the spectacle of 500 dead soldiers requires some sort of an explanation.

They Promised It.

Commenting upon Senator Hanna's statement that industrial depressions are bound to come sooner or later, the Boston Globe asks, "Is that to be the outcome of operation of the trusts? Is that what the present much vaunted prosperity of the country is to end in?" To which the New York Commercial retorts: "Well, did the Globe think that the trusts had but to assure an everlasting and eternal prosperity? That some scheme had been devised to keep prices up forever; that some elixir had been discovered, a dose of which would prevent our business history of alternating good times and bad times from ever repeating itself?" That is exactly what republican papers have promised the people. They have insisted that the republican party had discovered an "elixir" and that the people had but to keep the republican party in power in order to prevent our "business history of alternating good times and bad times from ever repeating itself."

In New Jersey.

In a recent issue The Commoner said that the resolution relating to election of senators by the people was not introduced in the New Jersey legislature. William C. Gebhardt of Clinton, N. J., writes to The Commoner to say: "I introduced this resolution in the senate, not only during the session of 1903, but also during the session of 1902. I introduced it early in the session of 1903, but did not succeed in having it reported by the committee, to which it was referred, until the last night of the session. All of the democratic members of both houses of our legislature are in favor of this resolution and I believe a majority of the republican members of both houses are in its favor, but the republican members are afraid to put themselves on record. Under the infamous rules of the senate of this state, a member cannot have a bill or resolution reported, if the chairman of the committee desires to hold it up."

"More Lawful Method."

In his Wall street letter under date of April 18, Henry Clews says that in view of the decision of the Northern Securities case, "some other more lawful method will be found to prevent the suicidal competition between the railroads." He adds that the wisest course "would be to accept the present decision and abandon the appeal and then meet the emergency in the best possible way, especially as the supreme court can scarcely avoid confirming the decision." By "more lawful methods" is probably meant a more ingenious plan of violating the law than was provided in the Northern Securities company; and "the best possible way" of "meeting the emergency" will probably be a systematic effort either openly or covertly to amend the Sherman anti-trust law under the pretense of making that law more complete than it now is. At all events, those who are deeply interested in the trust system will see to it that some plan is devised whereby "suicidal competition" is to be avoided.