

questioned the need of such law, but many doubted its existence.

"Such, then, were the conditions of this case and the circumstances surrounding it when it was called for trial by Judge Thompson. The trial lasted several weeks, and many witnesses were examined and much documentary evidence introduced. In deciding the case for the people Judge Thompson, in a written opinion of considerable length, reviewed the evidence and applied the law in a manner so clearly and forcibly that the supreme court on appeal followed without deviation or halting the new roadway of justice that had been opened and cleared by the power of his clear reasoning and pure logic. He found from the evidence that the state board did not assess the defendants on their franchise property. That their refusal to do so was unreasonable, willful and fraudulent. That the value of such property omitted from assessment was about \$235,000,000. That one of the defendants, a street railway corporation, was paying regularly to its stockholders a dividend of 35 per cent per annum on their capital stock. That the company did not own a single item of tangible property. That it did not pay out a dollar for labor, repairs or insurance. That its earnings were derived wholly from the rents of its franchise, which it leased to another railway company. This franchise property was valuable enough to pay its owners this enormous dividend, and yet it did not pay a cent of taxes. In referring to this particular defendant Judge Thompson made use of this language:

"There is no reason why the owners of this class of property should rely on the law to uphold and enforce its franchise contract with the city, under which these great profits are realized, and be exempt from contributing toward the expense of maintaining the government that protects them in such ownership. The franchises are special privileges granted by the governing power, and under the law are personal property. They, like all other forms of property, are subject to taxation. Being intangible property in no way exempts them from this burden."

"Another of the defendants, the People's Gas company, had by some means induced the state board to value and assess its property at \$450,000. On the trial the court found the assessable value of the same property to be over ten millions of dollars. The difference in annual taxes to be paid by this company, on the value fixed by the state board and that found by the court, would be approximately a half million of dollars.

"In holding it to be the law that in cases where the assessing officers willfully or unreasonably undervalue property for taxation it constitutes a fraud and is the same as if no assessment had been made, and that the courts have the power to compel such officers to perform their duty under a writ of mandamus, Judge Thompson laid down a new, but necessarily just, rule by which such abuses may in the future be corrected. For the first time in the history of the state the arrogant corporation managers and the notorious state board were compelled to respect the revenue laws.

The opinion of Judge Thompson did more to revive public confidence in the impartial administration of justice and in the integrity of the judiciary than any act of recent years. No one who was familiar with the nature of the case and witnessed the panic among the tax dodgers and the members of the state board when the final orders were about to be made to coerce the board to assess these corporations, doubts that a judge of less integrity and firmness would have found a way to save hundreds of thousands annually to these corporations, and secure a fortune for himself. How easy a matter this would have been, those who know the history of the case and the character of the parties interested in it can readily conjecture. But fortunately for the people an absolutely honest and wholly fearless man held the scales, and justice and right prevailed over fraud and corruption.

"A president with such integrity and such firmness as his would be wholly immune from the dangerous influences of trusts and monopolies. The country needs just such a clear, level-headed man as he, whose inflexible integrity and indomitable courage would enable him to safely guard the interests of the people and uphold the honor of the nation under all circumstances. The admiration for him among all classes of people in the state, for his great knowledge of the law and his courage and ability to administer it as exemplified in the tax case, has crystallized into an affection that is rarely enjoyed by any public officer."

The Jewish Petition.

The action of our government in offering to forward a petition of American Jews and others

asking the czar to afford protection to Russian Jews, has had the desired effect, even though our government was notified that the petition would not be received. It has called public attention to the cruelty practiced in Russia and has helped to create a public sentiment that will make for righteousness and humanity. Mr. Leon N. Levi, of New York, well expresses it in the following interview:

"The answer made by Russia to Secretary Hay's note is no surprise to me. The movement, however, has had all the good efforts that were in contemplation and even more. It has enabled the American people and the government to make an enduring record of their views on the Kishineff horror.

"The petition, being now an official document, will be preserved in the archives of the United States and will forever testify to the lofty humanity of the people, which is splendidly represented by the signers and of the president and his official advisers. I am convinced, too, that the influence in Russia of the petition and of the agitation which preceded it has been powerful and good.

"The precise method of conveying the petition was never regarded by the United States as of controlling importance, and when Russia indicated, semi-officially, that it would be unacceptable, we deemed it best for the interests of this country and of the Jews in Russia to avoid a course that would produce unnecessary friction. It was therefore that we, upon our own initiative, and without any suggestion whatsoever, besought President Roosevelt to alter his decision to send the signed petition, and to transmit its text instead."

The Commoner is pleased to be able to commend the part taken in the matter by President Roosevelt and the secretary of state.

When Was He Sincere?

Addressing the people of Denison, Ia., on June 2, Mr. Roosevelt said:

"I think you will do me the justice to say that I do not say what I do not mean. I never said anything off the stump that I would not say on the stump. So what I say now you can take as sincere."

In view of these statements, Charles G. Edwards of Washington submits some interesting suggestions as to Mr. Roosevelt's sincerity.

Mr. Edwards is anxious to know whether Mr. Roosevelt was a sincere free trader when he was a member of the New York Free Trade club in the early '80's, and when he said that he would "die for free trade." Mr. Edwards is also anxious to know whether Mr. Roosevelt was sincere when he wrote his letter of resignation to Poultney Bigelow, secretary of the club, which letter, according to Mr. Edwards, was written after Mr. Roosevelt had "decided to go over to Platt and the professional politicians whom he was elected to fight and against whom he had expressed great antagonism." Mr. Edwards is anxious to know whether Mr. Roosevelt is now willing to repeat his "free trade" speeches on the stump.

In 1902, Dr. Schurman gave as a slogan for 1904, "Roosevelt, reciprocity and revision"—of the tariff. Mr. Edwards is anxious to know that if, as generally supposed, Dr. Schurman then correctly summarized the Roosevelt position on the tariff as assumed from the Roosevelt speeches in New England, is Mr. Roosevelt now willing to repeat those speeches? And if not, why not?

Mr. Edwards is anxious to know if there is any truth in the widely published statement that the protective tariff league people persuaded Mr. Roosevelt to change his views when they informed him, when he left Washington on April 1, that if he did not cease to talk revision they would seek to prevent his nomination.

Writing in the Review of Reviews for September, 1896, Mr. Roosevelt said:

"The men who object to what they style 'government by injunction' are, as regards the essential principles of government, in hearty sympathy with their remote skin-clad ancestors who lived in caves, fought one another with stone-headed axes, and ate the mammoth and woolly rhinoceros. They are interesting as representing a geological survival, but they are dangerous whenever there is the least chance of their making the principles of this ages-buried past living factors in our present life.

"They are not in sympathy with men of good minds and sound civic morality."

Mr. Edwards is anxious to know whether Mr.

Roosevelt is willing to repeat on the stump the things he wrote for the Review of Reviews several years ago.

Mr. Edwards is curious to know why Mr. Roosevelt did not repeat on his recent stump tour what he said of the farmers, mechanics and workmen in his book entitled "Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail." In that book, Mr. Roosevelt said that although the cowboys and rough riders might be "broken by weeks of brutal dissipation," yet they are much better fellows and pleasanter companions than small farmers or agricultural laborers, nor are the mechanics and workmen of a great city to be mentioned in the same breath."

Mr. Edwards is anxious to know how as a civil service reformer Mr. Roosevelt can justify the appointment to high office of such men as Payne and Clarkson; and he is also curious to know if Mr. Roosevelt thinks it entirely proper for the president, who every year must sign many bills affecting the railroads, to ride in private cars at the expense of these same railroads.

And finally Mr. Edwards reminds Mr. Roosevelt, in the language of the strenuous one, "words are good when backed up by deeds, and only so."

It will occur to a great many people that Mr. Edwards has built up a very interesting case; and it is not at all likely, judging from what we have already observed of Mr. Roosevelt's course, that he will "make good" any considerable number of his well nigh numberless words.

Foreigners in China.

At the Christian Endeavor Society meeting, held in Denver recently, a Mr. Beach, described in the press dispatches as a missionary in China for six years, declared that foreign syndicates had secured every available railroad concession or business enterprise in that country and that the greed of these foreign operators had brought about an industrial revolution in that country.

"If the Chinese had the spirit of the men of 1776," he added, "there would not be a foreigner or missionary left in China." This explains the anti-foreign sentiment which is to be found in the countries that are being "developed." The "civilized nations" are engaged in commercializing the world. The business men of these nations obtain concessions and monopolize trade, and then the home government is expected to back up the demands of the traders with armies and navies.

Money! money! money! Human rights are being subordinated to it; nations are being embroiled in it, and Christianity is being retarded on account of it. Until within a few years America was free from suspicion and her representatives could go anywhere, but now that we have joined other nations in land-grabbing we must expect to meet the same opposition and, if we are going to get our share of the plunder, we must leave a trail of blood as other exploiting nations have done. Imperialism must be abandoned or it will work a complete change in the ideals and methods of our government.

Immigration.

A reader of The Commoner writes: "Will you please publish the number of immigrants to this country for each month?" We do not happen to have the statistics at hand. An interesting article on this subject will, however, be found in the American Review of Reviews for July. Samuel E. Moffett, the author of this article, says: "We are just now on the crest of the greatest wave of immigration we have ever known and many are asking whether we shall be able to ride the flood in safety." According to Mr. Moffett, in April the Hamburg American steamer, "Pennsylvania," broke all records by bringing 2,731 steerage passengers to New York in one day. In June, the "Batavia," of the same line, surpassed that feat with 2,854. Until this year, the total immigration of 788,992, in 1882, has stood as the unapproached high-water mark. That included nearly a hundred thousand arrivals from Canada, who are not now included in the returns; yet without allowing for that element, the immigration for the twelve months, ending with April, 1903, was 803,272. The contributions from Canada and Mexico would probably bring this up nearly or quite to 850,000. The figures from Europe include only steerage passengers.

The Kenton (O.) Press thinks it is strange that the president neglected to quote from the Declaration of Independence when he sent that Fourth of July cable to Manila. The Press has seemingly overlooked the fact that a censor has a desk at the other end of the cable.