

each state can decide for itself. It may be wiser to begin by building new lines where they are now needed and thus determine the value of the old lines by the operation of the new ones. But the means to be employed for the securing of the lines and the rules to be adopted for the operation of them, will be found easy after the public has determined that the people, acting through their government, should take upon themselves the work of controlling this great branch of the business of the people.

While the democratic party in the nation is advocating the government ownership of railroads, the democratic party in the cities should upon the same theory espouse the cause of municipal ownership of municipal franchises. Private contracts for water, lighting and street car facilities have been the fruitful source of municipal corruption, and there is no solution of these municipal problems that does not involve municipal ownership. The progress made in this direction in European cities shows what can be done, and it is only a question of time when in each city in the United States the people acting through their municipal government will do for themselves, without the intervention of corporations, that which is now done at greater expense by private corporations. The municipal operation of the street car lines will result in such a reduction in fares that people can live farther from the center of the city and thus secure healthier locations. There are many questions of sociology that affect the municipal population and the democratic party must meet all of these with an eye single to the public welfare.

We have also reached a time when the post-office department should embrace a telegraph system as well as a mail system. While the telegraph lines does not reach as many people as the railroads do, and while the abuses to private ownership have not been so open and notorious, yet there is no reason why this nation should not do what other nations are doing in this respect. In the small towns the postmaster could act as telegraph operator and thus a great economy could be effected. In the larger cities the telegraph system could be under the control of the postmaster and such employes added to the postal service as might be necessary. It is safe to say that the cost of messages could be reduced one-half, and yet have the system self-supporting. There is no good reason that can be urged against the government ownership and operation of the telegraph system in connection with the postal department. The matter has already been investigated by congress and favorable action taken, but the influence of the telegraph companies exerted through their corporate interests and through the franking privilege has been sufficient thus far to prevent any action being taken. The democratic party ought to take up this reform and make it a part of its creed.

The private monopoly must be destroyed. The democratic platform adopted at Kansas City declared the private monopoly to be indefensible and intolerable. This declaration was reproduced in the St. Louis platform adopted a few days ago. To what extent this will be overcome by the influences that surround Judge Parker no one can yet declare, but it is evident that the conservative democrats, as they call themselves, will never give the country any relief from the trusts. The government ownership of railroads will exert a tremendous influence toward the destruction of private monopolies, for most of the great trusts have been built up by railway discriminations and rebates, but the democratic party cannot content itself with any partial remedy for the trusts. It must declare war upon every private monopoly and it must prosecute that war relentlessly until the principle of private monopoly has been eradicated and industrial independence again secured.

The door of opportunity must not be closed against the young men of this country. The right of the citizen to build up an independent business and to enjoy the fruits of his toil must be guaranteed to him. It is the basis of our industrial development and it is the guaranty of our political liberty. The state should be encouraged to employ every power that it has to prevent the incorporation of a private monopoly, and the power of congress over interstate commerce should be invoked to resist any and every effort to use a state charter for the exploitation of the whole country. A line must be drawn between the inalienable rights of the natural man and the law-conferred rights of a corporation. A corporation has no inalienable rights; it has no rights except those given it by law, and the people cannot be presumed to desire the creation of a man-

made giant, having both the power and the disposition to trample upon the rights of the God-made man. The private monopoly must be destroyed, root and branch.

The democratic party has in two campaigns stood for an income tax. The plank was omitted this year because the men in control of the party thought it would jeopardize success in the eastern states. This objection may have weight when the appeal is made to a particular section and to the wealthy men of that section, but it cannot have weight when the party goes forth, as it must ultimately, to appeal to the masses. It is unnecessary to say that a progressive democratic party must favor a tariff for revenue only. It cannot favor the taxation of the many for the benefit of the few.

An income tax is just and without it it will be difficult to secure any effectual tariff reform. When the people understand the income tax the popular demand for it will be so great that no party will dare to ignore it merely to court favor with the comparatively few who are now avoiding their share of the expenses of the government and throwing too large a portion of the public burden upon the poor.

Even as now organized the democratic party stands for the election of senators by the people and it ought to stand for direct legislation as far as the principle can be conveniently applied. Everything that brings the government nearer to the people is good. There is more virtue in the people than ever finds expression through their representatives.

Our party should also consider whether our federal judges should not be elected by the people to serve for a limited period. The life position in the civil service is not in harmony with our theory of government and the appointment of judges for life is not justified by experience. The president must rely upon his advisers when he appoints United States judges and the people at large can make the selection better than any president can. Elections for a stated period would bring the judiciary into closer touch with the people whose servants the judges are.

I suggest, not for the purpose of insisting upon it, but merely to bring the matter to public attention, that it may be found desirable to change the method of selecting postmasters. At present they are appointed by the president upon the recommendation of congressmen. The postoffice department is now a great political machine presided over by a man skilled in political maneuvers, and the wishes of the people in the various communities are entirely ignored. Why should a federal administration ignore the wishes of the people whom the postmaster is expected to serve? If a system can be devised whereby the federal government will still retain the power of appointment and the power of removal and yet be restricted in appointment to persons named by the local community, a step in advance will have been taken. The right of local self-government can thus be vindicated and the use of the postoffice department for the benefit of the congressmen or for the benefit of the administration prevented. Such a change would also make it impossible for a federal administration to force colored postmasters upon white communities for political purposes. Is there any good reason why the president in making appointments should not consult the convenience and the will of the people who patronize the postoffice?

The differences between labor and capital are becoming more and more acute. And why? Because capital has not only been permitted to monopolize the resources of the government and feed fat upon the toil of the people, but it has been given a free hand in dealing with labor. It has been permitted to use labor for its own enrichment and then to dictate terms to the wage-earner. The democratic party must be the champion of the man who toils—not his defender when he does wrong, not his apologist when he is led into error, but his exponent in the effort to secure the protection of his rights and the conservation of his interests. The democratic party is not the enemy of wealth; on the contrary, it is the best friend of honestly acquired wealth, for by preventing the acquirement of wealth by illegal and unjust methods it would give to the possessor of wealth the honor and the distinction to which his thrift, energy, industry and economy ought to entitle him.

The democratic party, if it is to be a power for good in this country, must be the defender of human rights. It must devote itself to the protection of human rights. It must declare, establish and defend the true relation between man and property, a relation recognized by both Jefferson and Lincoln—a relation which puts man first and his possessions afterward, a relation

which makes man the master of that which he has created, a relation which puts the spiritual and moral life of the nation above its material wealth and resources. This is the great struggle of today and it is a struggle in which the democratic party must take an important part.

The contest above outlined must be made whether the party wins in November or not. A single election is but an incident in the life of a party. For more than a century the democratic party has stood forth as the representative of certain great ideas. Jefferson founded it, Jackson defended it, and even Cleveland could not destroy it. If Mr. Parker is elected his administration will rid us of imperialism and of the threat of a race issue and give us greater freedom in the taking up of economic questions. Nothing that he can do or say as president will thwart the purpose of the democratic masses to rid the party of plutocratic influences or tendencies. The republican party is growing more and more plutocratic and it can furnish a home for all who believe in the rule of wealth. The democratic party cannot be a plutocratic party; it cannot belie its history; it cannot disappoint the hopes of its members. The fight must go on and must go on until victory is secured. Can we win? Who can doubt it? To those who think that a temporary victory of the conservative element ends progress in the democratic party let this reply be made:

O ye of little faith! Go forth into the fields and see how the myriad grains, bursting forth from their prison in the earth, push upward toward the light. Watch them as under the influence of sunshine and shower they grow to maturity and furnish food for the race. Go into the orchard and see the seed or the grafted twig grow into a great tree whose leaves furnish shade and whose fruit gives nourishment to man. Measure if you can the mighty forces behind the grain and the tree, and know ye that the forces behind the truth are as irresistible and as constantly at work. God would have been unkind, indeed, had He made such ample provision for the needs of man's body and less adequate provision for the triumph of those moral forces which mean more to the race than food or clothing or shelter. He is a political atheist who doubts the triumph of the right. He lacks faith in the purposes and the plans of God who for a moment falters in the great struggle between truth and error—between man and mammon.

Those Little Questions.

Congressman Williams of Mississippi, in his reply to Mr. Bryan, complained because Mr. Bryan was proposing that certain questions be submitted to Candidate Parker. Mr. Williams described them as "little questions." When the readers of *The Commoner* know what the questions were, they can better judge whether they were little or not. They were:

First—Do you favor a diminution of the volume of silver dollars?

Second—Do you favor an asset currency?

Third—Do you favor branch national banks?

Fourth—Do you prefer the national bank note to the United States note, commonly known as the greenback?

These questions were rejected by the committee because the committee wanted to avoid any mention of the money question. When, however, the Parker telegram came and his friends proposed to answer the telegram by declaring that the silver question was no longer an issue, the friends of bimetallism felt that the party's position ought to be stated, or at least the candidate's position known on those phases of the money question which are before the country.

The questions submitted by Mr. Bryan in his amendment are not only pertinent, but they are important questions. Whether 578,000,000 of silver dollars should be retired or not is not a little question; it is a question of vast proportions and one that must be met. Whether we are to have an asset currency or not, is not a little question, but one of great magnitude affecting the entire country and affecting it vitally. Whether we are to have a great national bank with branches spreading over the country, like the bank which Jackson destroyed, is not a little question, but one whose importance cannot be overstated.

Whether we are to have a currency of bank paper or a currency of government paper is a question that has nothing to do with the silver question, but has a great deal to do with the nation's welfare. To call these "little questions" is not to belittle the questions, but to disclose a profound ignorance of the issues before the country. It was evident that Mr. Parker's friends would vote down any proposition that was displeasing to him, and the amendment was withdrawn not only in the interest of harmony, but