

same principles which govern them in dealing with national questions will govern them when dealing with questions of state and city. There has been a rapid growth of public sentiment in favor of the municipal ownership of municipal franchises. At the beginning of the last century nearly all the cities obtained their water supply from private water plants; now, nearly every city of any size has its own water plants, and those that have not, ought to have. The ownership of lighting plants comes next, and each year finds a larger number of cities providing their own light and furnishing light at cost to their people. The municipal ownership of street-car lines will follow, and municipal ownership of the telephones may come even before the street car lines are acquired. Where competition is impossible, and a monopoly unavoidable, the benefits of the monopoly must accrue to the whole public and not to a few favored individuals. Municipal ownership of natural monopolies is not only necessary to protect the people from extortion, but for the purification of city government and city politics.

"Not only must the city own the natural monopolies of the city, but the nation and the state must for the same reasons follow the same course in regard to monopolies that come within their sphere of operation. The consolidation of railroads, the giving of rebates, the making of discriminations, the watering of stock, the charging of excessive rates and the corruption of public officials—all these are combining to force upon the public the consideration of the railroad question. President Roosevelt is just now entering upon a contest for the regulation of railroad rates, and the democrats ought to heartily support him in the position he is taking. If with democratic assistance, he succeeds in securing more strict regulation of the railroads engaged in interstate commerce, the public will receive the benefit and the democratic party will share in the credit. If, even with democratic assistance, he fails, the democratic party will profit by the educational work which he is doing, and the railroad question will be made still more acute. While I am anxious that the virtue of government supervision and regulation shall be fully tried, I find myself inclining to the belief that public ownership is the only permanent cure for the evils which have grown out of the management of the great arteries of trade by a few individuals who have only their own pecuniary interests in view and who exploit the public to the extent that the traffic will bear it. I believe that the federal ownership of trunk lines and the state ownership of the net work of local railroads will furnish a solution of the problem. State ownership of the multitude of local lines would give the people the benefit of public ownership without the dangers of centralization and the federal ownership of trunk lines would answer the purposes of interstate commerce.

"It is for the members of the democratic party to deal with these and similar questions with the courage that Jackson displayed in dealing with the questions which confronted his generation. That democratic principles are sound does not, among democrats at least, admit of dispute, for they rest upon belief in the brotherhood of man. That those principles will triumph can not be doubted by those who believe in their truth, for truth is mighty, and must at last prevail.

"If any of you lack faith go forth into the fields. You find that a tiny seed planted in the ground contains a germ that, bursting from its prison walls sends its roots down into the ground and its leaves up into the air. Under the influence of soil, and rain and sunshine, that seed multiplies until it furnishes bread for the race. Go forth among the orchards and you find that a little slip or twig will grow into a tree which will furnish shade for the weary, and fruit for the hungry. You know that behind the seed and the twig is an irresistible force that working constantly, supplies the needs of man. The forces behind moral and economic fruit are no less irresistible. We have but to plant and attend them, and the harvest of blessings is sure."

### Home Rule For Cities

Governor Folk of Missouri, in his inaugural address urged home rule in the cities, in the following language:

The government of the large cities of the state is a subject of great importance. The police departments of St. Louis, Kansas City and St. Joseph are controlled as an arm of the state by boards appointed by the governor. This has been the system in our state for more

than forty years, and changes that are made should only be after due consideration and close study of this serious problem. Hasty action on measures intended for the benefit of some political party may lead to serious public injury. These questions should be approached with a due appreciation of their gravity and of the good or evil that would result from any new laws on the subject. I believe the people can be trusted to govern themselves, and that if these cities are given the privilege of selecting their own officials the people there will give more attention to their political affairs. If it be wrong to give local self-government in the selection of local officials to any part of the state, then it would seem that the entire theory of our government is wrong. If the people of these cities do not take enough interest in public affairs to secure good government for themselves, they ought not to expect to get it from the outside. It is insisted that the criminal classes congregate in the larger cities, and if the police departments, for instance, are subject to local control, these criminal classes would have an undue influence over the members of the departments. Unfortunately, it is true that the criminal and corrupt, though constituting but a small proportion of the entire population of the great cities, have a powerful influence in politics, by reason of their pernicious activity. They have this influence, however, because of the inactivity of good citizens. Local self-government would compel the latter, in self-protection, to attend to the public business, which is their own business, after all.

Governor Folk's reasoning is sound. The doctrine that the people of St. Louis, Kansas City and St. Joseph can not be trusted to control their own police force is inconsistent with the theory of self-government. If the people can not take care of their own local affairs how can they be expected to act wisely in dealing with things remote from them? The tendency toward the centralization of power at some remote center is a dangerous one. Governor Folk has sounded a democratic note and he ought to have the support of all the democrats in the Missouri legislature. If the democratic party ceases to trust the people the people will cease to trust it. Nothing in Governor Folk's message furnishes more conclusive proof of his loyalty to the fundamental principle of free-government. Success to his effort to restore home rule to the cities of Missouri.

### The Commoner

In this issue The Commoner enters upon its fifth year. In its initial number The Commoner said that it would be satisfied if by fidelity to the common people it proved its right to the name which has been chosen. It is not for The Commoner to say whether this right has been established. Yet it will not be denied the privilege of saying that if mistakes have been made they were mistakes of the head rather than of the heart, and that the errors of The Commoner have been to hew close to the line of what its editor believes to be in the public interests and to faithfully champion those principles which give the highest promise of providing "the greatest good to the greatest number."

The increasing number of subscribers and the cheerfulness with which men in all sections of the country give their aid to the effort to widen The Commoner's sphere of influence, provides reason for believing that the great work to which The Commoner has been dedicated is appreciated at least by those who sympathize with the principles advocated by The Commoner.

In the future, as in the past, The Commoner will exert itself in behalf of democratic principles to the end "that this nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

### Governor Folk Inaugurated

The inauguration of Governor Joseph W. Folk at Missouri's capital on January ninth was a political event of great moment. This vigorous young democrat won a notable victory and his inaugural message—an abstract of which will be found on another page—gives promise of a beneficent administration. His discussion of home rule, lobbying, hoodling and failure to vote was espe-

cially strong. Much encouragement is to be found in the fact that such an earnest protest should be made against corporate domination and against the lobby by a democratic governor in Missouri and by a republican governor in Indiana—for Governor Hanly has also taken strong ground against the lobby, the railroad pass and corporation rule.

Governor Folk not only censures the stay-at-home voter, but suggests a remedy. He advises that the indifferent voter be temporarily disfranchised, with provision for a restoration of the franchise by court decree on proper application. This is an excellent idea. It ought, however, to be accompanied by the postal vote, so that a person, sick or necessarily absent from home on election day, could vote wherever he happened to be and send his vote by registered letter to the proper officials at his voting place.

Mr. and Mrs. Bryan attended the Folk inauguration and the reception which followed.

### No Federal Incorporation

The Wall Street Journal suggests the federal incorporation of inter-state commerce corporations. That is not only not necessary, but it is actually dangerous. Let the states create corporations and control them insofar as they operate within the state. Then let Congress regulate all corporations engaged in inter-state commerce by fixing the terms on which they do inter-state business.

### Good Work

One of the best known democrats in Iowa, a gentleman having a national reputation, writes to say:

Let me present you a new year's gift of the above eighty-six new bona fide subscribers for The Commoner. I will shortly send the other fourteen to make a round one hundred. I have not retained the commission of 40 cents in a single instance, preferring to enjoy the reward of helping to promote the cause. Find enclosed draft for \$51.60 to cover the same.

Another democrat, living in Missouri, writes as follows:

I inclose my check on St. Louis for \$18.60 for thirty-one subscriptions to The Commoner. Please acknowledge receipt of same and extend my time for paper accordingly. This costs me more in time and money than if I paid for my subscription, but then I am built that way. I wish you success.

Both of these gentlemen are very busy men, but they believe that The Commoner is doing a good work and they are therefore anxious to aid in the increase of its circulation. These two letters may provide a hint to other Commoner readers. Those desiring to assist in the effort to widen The Commoner's sphere of influence will find the opportunity in the special subscription offer.

According to the terms of this offer, cards, each good for one year's subscription to The Commoner, will be furnished in lots of five, at the rate of \$3 per lot. This places the yearly subscription rate at 60 cents.

These cards may be paid for when ordered, or they may be ordered and remittance made after they have been sold. A coupon is printed below for the convenience of those who desire to participate in this effort to increase The Commoner's circulation.

### THE COMMONER'S SPECIAL OFFER

Application for Subscription Cards

5	Publisher Commoner; I am interested in increasing The Commoner's circulation, and desire you to send me a supply of subscription cards. I agree to use my utmost endeavor to sell the cards, and will remit for them at the rate of 60 cents each, when sold. Name ..... Box, or Street No. .... P. O. .... State ..... Indicate the number of cards wanted by marking X opposite one of the numbers printed on end of this blank.
10	
15	
20	
25	
50	
75	
100	

If you believe the paper is doing a work that merits encouragement, fill out the above coupon and mail it to The Commoner, Lincoln, Neb.

1905  
v. 5  
f.c. 73  
305