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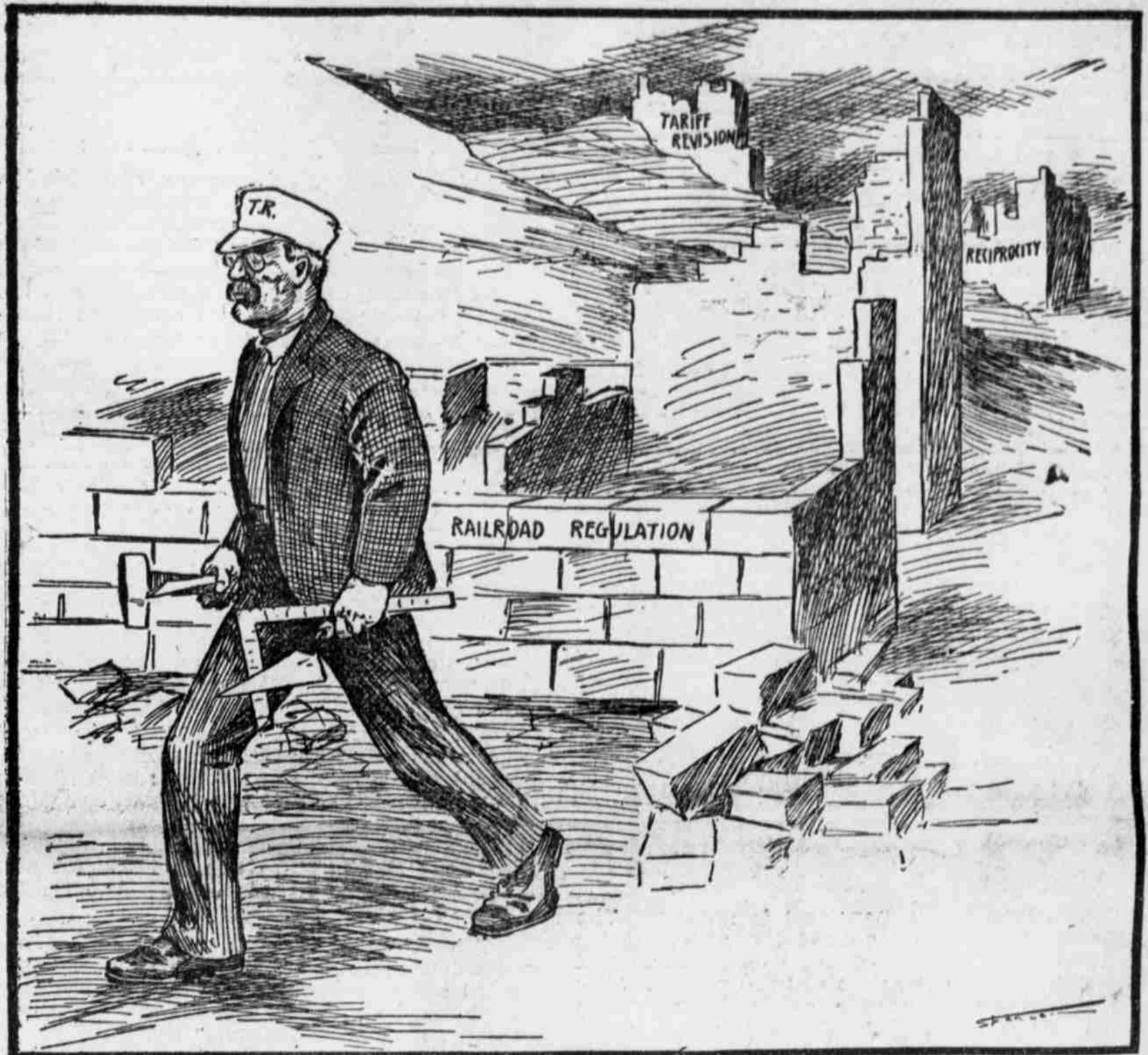
THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

NEWS OF THE WEEK

REFORM IN RUSSIA

The promise of the czar to convene "the worthiest men possessing the confidence of the people and elected by them to participate in the elaboration and consideration of measures" is a distinct advance. While the czar does not surrender the power to decide all questions, still the creation of an elective body which is to be consulted is a long step toward constitutional government. Heretofore it has been difficult for the people to rally about anyone because there has been no way by which a Russian could develop leadership and appeal to the people. Now the voters can select their representatives and these men have a chance to become leaders and to organize their following. The unlimited monarchy which has been ruling Russia with an iron hand is approaching its end. It can not much longer resist the demands of the people.

UNFINISHED CASTLES



"He (Roosevelt) is a man who must have a new plaything in the line of National Problems about once in so many days."—Walter Wellman's despatch to Chicago Record-Herald.

"Wherever There Are Free Men They Will Make Themselves Heard"

Thomas Jefferson congratulated a young friend who had announced that he intended to actively participate in the politics of his country and said: "Your country will derive from this a more immediate and sensible benefit. She has much for you to do, for though we may say the worst of American constitutions, they are better than the best which ever existed before in any other country and they are wonderfully perfect for a first essay, yet every human essay must have defects. It will remain, therefore, to those now coming on the stage of public affairs to perfect what has been so well begun by those going off it."

On another occasion Mr. Jefferson wrote: "Wherever there are men, there will be parties; wherever there are free men they will make themselves heard."

It is important that every good citizen participate in the general elections. But if men expect to exert an influence upon the policies of their government, if men expect by their votes to place checks upon greed and avarice as it manifests itself in laws and ordinances, then it is all the more important that they participate in the primary elections of their party. This is so because we are largely governed by parties and the man

who has neglected to make himself heard at the time his party formulates its policy and chooses its candidates will discover that he must accept whatever policies and candidates his more active associates have chosen for the party.

Although The Commoner's primary organization plan was made public only two weeks ago, many responses have been made—sufficient in number to show that the plan is popular and practicable. Many pledges have been received and in many cases these pledges are accompanied by letters in which the writers show that they are enthusiastic in this good work. On page five of this issue, extracts from a number of these letters are printed. It is to be hoped that every Commoner subscriber will carefully read every one of these extracts. He may imbibe some of the enthusiasm and resolve to lend his own efforts to the cause.

Attention is again directed to the primary pledge which appears on page eleven of this issue and The Commoner desires to give new emphasis to the request that newspapers favoring the plan

call the attention of their readers to it.

The democratic party should stand for the doctrine of equal rights to all and special privileges to none; it should protest against the use of the government for the benefit of a few at the expense of the many; it should be jealous of any infringement upon the rights of the masses; it should oppose private monopolies which, under the pretense of developing industry simply gather in the profits of industry and reduce to a minimum the number of those who are to be the recipients of the benefits of industrial progress. It is a proud privilege to belong to a party which stands for these things; but parties are controlled by men and no more than the people can trust their liberty in any other hands than their own can the rank and file of a party afford to permit a few men to frame the party's policies and choose the party's candidates.

In order that the democratic party may justify its existence and find promise of winning success by deserving it, it will be the duty of every democrat to actively interest himself in the work of organization. In every precinct throughout the United States democrats should organize. Every one should attach his name to the primary pledge