

# PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AND THE EQUITABLE

The enthusiastic endorsement given by Mr. Roosevelt to the Paul Morton management of the Equitable Life Assurance society is strangely in contrast with the arraignment made, by New York's superintendent of insurance, of the new trust arrangement for voting the stock agreed upon by Thomas F. Ryan and the three trustees designated by him.

It should be remembered that Mr. Morton is merely the employe of Thomas F. Ryan to whom the New York World recently referred as "the new Rockefeller." Every one in New York is not quite so enthusiastic concerning Equitable affairs under the Ryan regime as Mr. Roosevelt is. For instance the New York World is curious to know why Mr. Ryan invested \$2,500,000 for the control of the Equitable when the investment would bring an income of only \$3,500 a year. The World does not appear to be convinced that Mr. Ryan intends to sacrifice his personal interests for the benefit of the 600,000 policyholders of the Equitable. It intimates that Ryan made this investment for the purpose of obtaining control of the eighty millions of surplus of the Equitable Life which, added to the enormous surplus of the Mutual now controlled by Ryan and associates, would enable them to hold the whip hand in the speculative markets of America. The World suggests that perhaps Mr. Ryan is ambitious to become "the leading exponent of high finance of America and necessarily a menace to the interests of every man who shall hereafter or during the Ryan regime as high financier, endeavor to reach a commanding position in the world of commercialism." The World calls upon Mr. Ryan to

say whether in paying \$2,500,000 to obtain the legal interest of \$3,500 a year he made the investment for the purpose of bringing the \$80,000,000 surplus, and incidentally the four hundred million dollars of reserve, into his control.

The World further intimates that when Paul Morton ordered "a thorough investigation into the affairs of the Equitable" he saw to it that the investigators were his own creatures. The World demands to know why the very complete report made by the Frick committee did not satisfy Mr. Morton, and it points out that Mr. Morton has no other interests in the Equitable Life other than the salary promised him.

The World is so greatly disturbed concerning the plans of the management to which Mr. Roosevelt gave such enthusiastic endorsement that it even goes so far as to question its patron saint Grover Cleveland. The World demands to know why Mr. Cleveland consented to act as trustee for the Equitable, and it intimates that his duties and privileges under the name of trustee are circumstantial. The World actually has the effrontery to intimate that Mr. Cleveland is "a dummy trustee" and addressing the ex-president it demands, "Do you think there is any difference between the Ryan control with a board of dummy trustees and directors, and the Hyde control with a board of dummy directors?"

The World seems to think that Senator Depew has brought to bear every possible political influence upon the state superintendent of insurance to suppress the fact that for about twenty years Senator Depew has been drawing from the Equitable Life \$20,000 per year. The World wants to know why the New York senator is ashamed of having accepted this fee.

Similar and equally embarrassing questions are submitted by the World to several other men now conspicuously mentioned in connection with Equitable affairs. Concluding an editorial entitled "The Great Ryan Mystery" the World says:

Dummies are dummies, fraud is fraud, law is law.

A majority of the stock is a majority of the stock, whether owned by Ryan or Hyde. That majority of stock elects the directors, dictates the management, controls the property, fixes the policy of finance, uses at will the vast assets, the surplus—everything!

And Chairman Paul Morton, late of the Santa Fe—is he not a dummy himself? Indeed, are not Messrs. Cleveland, O'Brien and Westinghouse, although all honorable men, still dummies of Ryan, selected by him, representing his interests as the actual positive owner of the stock?

If that is the fact—and is it not?—all the dummies must go—even Mr. Cleveland.

Paul Morton must go.

Ryan himself must go.

The system must go.

It cannot be said that the New York World is prejudiced against Mr. Ryan, Mr. Cleveland or Mr. Morton. Compare the arraignment of the Equitable Life Assurance society under the Ryan regime—as made by the New York World—with the glowing eulogy given the Ryan-Morton management by Theodore Roosevelt, president of the United States. It is plain that many of Mr. Roosevelt's warmest friends are convinced that he went altogether too far in his devotion to the fortunes of Paul Morton.

## FOR INSTANCE

Professor Willet of the Chicago University, one of the Rockefeller professors, complains that the Bible is not artistic. Too bad! But if the professor will read it again he will find that it makes up in plain truth what it lacks in art. For instance, it says: "Thou shalt not steal."



## NOT A SACRIFICE

Recently a great deal has been heard concerning the men who have made "great sacrifices" in order to accept high position under the government. The latest example is that of Mr. Root, who is being lauded highly because he gave up a law practice worth perhaps \$100,000 a year to accept a cabinet position at a salary of \$8,000 a year. In a recent address President Roosevelt lauded Mr. Hay and Mr. Root because as he put it, they preferred the public service to the mere accumulation of money. Would it not be well for the president to acquaint the public with the real facts. Mr. Hay was a wealthy man, and it required no real financial sacrifice on his part to devote his life to the public service. Mr. Root is also a wealthy man, and he made no real sacrifice when he accepted a cabinet position.

President Roosevelt himself inherited a fortune, and he has never felt the pinch of poverty. Why, then, speak of wealthy men who accept public office as if they were making great sacrifices for their country? It has been a long while since a cabinet position was held by a man who was forced to mortgage his home or undergo financial straits in order to give the country the benefits of his wisdom and statecraft.



## DOES BONAPARTE STAND ALONE?

An Associated Press dispatch under date of Washington, July 11, follows: "It is stated at the navy department that Secretary Bonaparte has defined his position in reference to accepting passes for free transportation on the railroads by returning passes that have been sent to him, with thanks for the courtesy, but stating that by reason of the public position which he occupies he feels unable to avail himself of such consideration."

Secretary Bonaparte has taken a commendable position.

What is President Roosevelt's position on this question? Should he not feel that by reason of the public position he occupies he is unable to avail himself of free transportation at the hands of the railroad managers?

Secretary Bonaparte has suggested an interesting line of inquiry.

Has Elihu Root, the new secretary of state,

accepted passes? If so, will he follow Mr. Bonaparte's good example?

Does Attorney General Moody accept passes? If so, will he return them?

Have Secretary of War Taft, Secretary of the Treasury Shaw, Secretary of Commerce Metcalf, Postmaster General Cortelyou, Secretary of Agriculture Wilson—have these gentlemen accepted passes? If so, will they take the hint given them by the new secretary of the navy?

Secretary Bonaparte stated a well understood truth when he said, in effect, that the public official has no right to avail himself of free transportation on the railroads. But Mr. Bonaparte has raised a question that is likely to become very embarrassing to the administration. The people will be curious to know if Mr. Bonaparte is the only member of the cabinet to whom free transportation has been tendered or if other cabinet members have been favored. They will want to know whether Mr. Bonaparte is the only member of the cabinet who has declined these favors.



## "MALICIOUS" OF COURSE

The Outlook defends the administration's refusal to permit the prosecution of Paul Morton on the charge of having violated the anti-rebate law, and says:

Unless the administration has adequate evidence that Mr. Morton personally participated in the violation of the law which is charged against the Santa Fe railroad, his criminal prosecution for the act would come perilously near what the law designates as "malicious prosecution."

In an interview published in the Chicago Inter Ocean December 30, 1904, E. P. Ripley, president of the Santa Fe system said that at the time of the issuance of the order by which the Colorado Fuel and Iron company was granted rebates Paul Morton was in charge of all freight matters for the Santa Fe. While Mr. Ripley denied that it was rebating, claiming that it was "simply a figure agreed upon by private contract" he added, "Mr. Paul Morton was cognizant of it, and though his name may not be affixed to the order of its being carried into effect, he was the man from whom Mr. Biddle, the freight traffic manager, got authority to haul coal for the Colorado Fuel and Iron company on the terms which you mentioned."

Messrs. Judson and Harmon, who made the investigation, decided that the testimony was "adequate." They said:

This secret agreement with the fuel company involved the carriage of hundreds of

cars per month; the concessions from the established rates must have amounted to \$1,000,000 for the two and one-half years during which they were granted; and it is incredible that this scheme was devised and carried out by any authority but that of the chiefs of the railway company who were in control of its traffic department.

If the rule adopted by the administration for the protection of Paul Morton were followed in other cases there would be few criminal prosecutions in this country.



## WILL YOU CO-OPERATE?

Those who approve of the work The Commoner is doing have the opportunity of rendering material assistance through the special subscription offer. Every reader is invited to co-operate in this work.

According to the terms of this subscription 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.

Anyone ordering these cards may sell them for \$1.00 each, thus earning a commission of \$2.00 on each lot sold, or he may sell them at the cost price and find compensation in the fact that he has contributed to the educational campaign.

These cards may be paid for when ordered, or they may be ordered and remittance made after they have been sold.

The coupon is printed below for the convenience of those who desire to participate in the 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.