

republican leaders would not countenance his candidacy in 1908, although the LaFollette element in the republican party is bound to grow. The only question is whether the republicans will nominate some outspoken opponent of Rooseveltism or select a compromise candidate with the idea of keeping both elements together. If an anti-Roosevelt man is nominated, the democrats may expect a large support from the Roosevelt republicans, provided, of course, the party so conducts itself as to deserve the confidence of republican reformers. If the republican convention nominates a compromise man not entirely satisfactory to either side, his campaign is likely to be as listless a campaign as the democratic campaign of 1904.

From the standpoint, therefore, of expediency as well as from the standpoint of principle the democratic party must make a courageous fight in behalf of necessary reforms and take advantage of the education which has come through the radical utterances of the president. The conservatives went into the last convention promising victory and pointing to two democratic defeats as a reason why they should be entrusted with the party leadership. They can not make that argument this time, for they led the party to an overwhelming defeat in the east as well as in the west. The conservatives can help win a democratic victory if they are willing to follow and support those who have advocated reforms. They have demonstrated their inability to lead the party to success along conservative lines. Their plans were a failure in 1904, and there has been an immense development of radical sentiment since.

It is folly to talk of putting the democratic party in a position to appeal to the owners of swollen fortunes and the financiers of predatory wealth. It would be folly from the standpoint of expediency; it would be criminal from the standpoint of principle.

#### DOWN WITH THE SILVER TRUST

One of The Commoner's exchanges says: "If possible, legal action will be brought against the silver trust which is boomed by Bryan." The editor who wrote the paragraph is guilty of a misrepresentation of Mr. Bryan's position, and it would be a reflection upon the editor's intelligence to say that the misrepresentation was unintentional. Mr. Bryan has never boomed the silver trust, and he is as much interested in the overthrow of the silver trust—if such a trust exists—as he is in favor of the overthrow of any other trust. If there is a silver trust, let the administration begin action against it. If there is any trust which has no friends it is a silver trust, for the advocates of bimetalism oppose a trust on principle and oppose a silver trust as much as any other trust, while the advocates of the gold standard ought certainly to be willing to prosecute this particular combination.

And let the criminal clause of the statute be enforced. Let the silver trust magnates be hunted down and put behind the bars. If we can not imprison the steel trust magnates, the sugar trust magnates, the tobacco trust magnates, the whisky trust magnates, the starch trust magnates, the salt trust magnates, the cracker trust magnates, the harvester trust magnates and the other trust magnates, we certainly ought to be able to imprison the silver trust magnates. Hunt them up! On with the fight, and the bimetalists will be the last to cry "Hold! Enough!"

#### THE PRESIDENT SUSTAINED BY THE FACTS

On another page will be found an abstract of Secretary Taft's report of the dismissal of the battalion of colored troops. The order issued by the president has aroused so much criticism among the colored people that Secretary Taft's utterances were awaited with interest. Now that the findings have been presented, the public can form its opinion upon the president's action. Whatever constitutional lawyers may decide concerning the power of the president to discharge or to reinstate, no unbiased person will deny that the offense was grave enough to justify the president in doing whatever he has power to do. It is inconceivable that fair-minded people should criticize the president for attempting to relieve the military service of the menace of a body of troops whose members will shield a group of criminals. The evidence shows that some ten to twenty members of the battalion deliberately went forth upon a murderous expedition and that the remainder of the troops refused to disclose the guilty ones.

The critics of the president say that the in-

nocent should not suffer with the guilty. That is a sound proposition when the innocent can be distinguished from the guilty, but in this case the question is, shall the innocent members of the community suffer from the presence of the troops or shall the innocent members of the battalion suffer for refusing to join the government in the preservation of law and order. There is no principle in law or in morals that requires that greater consideration should be shown to the innocent soldiers who prefer to conceal the guilt of their comrades than to the public in general.

The second ground of criticism urged by those who take issue with the president is that the soldiers ought not to be required to tell on each other, and the case is put upon a level with the case of schoolboys who do not tell on each other when caught in some Hallowe'en prank. The cases are not at all similar. There is a very clear distinction between the sports of the schoolboy and the commission of crimes. If a dozen schoolboys were present when one or two of their number killed a fellow student, no one would justify the silence of the boys who looked on. They would be required to tell what they saw even though it resulted in the punishment of their comrades. And still more is it the duty of soldiers sworn to support the constitution and the laws to assist in bringing to punishment those who are guilty of criminal offenses even though the guilty parties belong to the same company.

The friends of the black man, whether they be themselves white or black, can not afford to defend crime or the shielding of crime. It may be that the president has gone beyond his authority; if so, the question ought to be discussed as a legal one. Those who assert the moral right of colored soldiers to shield comrades charged with a capital offense will not give any material assistance in the settlement of the race question.

#### THE MONEY QUESTION

The money question is a very impudent thing. It keeps obtruding itself in the most impolite way. Just as our financiers think they have a satisfactory Philippine currency, silver rises in value and the Philippine dollars go into the melting pot and then something has to be done to reduce their weight and keep them in circulation. And then the bankers who said we had enough money ten years ago are clamoring for more in spite of the fact that there has been an enormous increase in the volume of gold coin and a large increase in the silver dollars occasioned by coining the seigniorage and a considerable increase in the banknote currency. In spite of these additions to the country's currency, the bankers now demand that they be permitted to issue emergency notes at least, and many of these want a general authority to issue asset currency. Why does not the money question stay settled and behave itself?

Even in England they are having difficulty. A member of parliament rises to ask whether the silver dollar in the Strait Settlements has been recently debased—whether the British government is tampering with the currency.

One might suppose from the financial papers that the advocates of free silver were the only ones guilty of stirring up the money question, but it seems that the self-constituted champions of an honest dollar are the ones who are always wanting something done. They want the silver dollars retired; they want subsidiary coinage supplemented by the melting of silver dollars; they want dollars with nothing back of them but the bank's assets. When will they be satisfied to let the money question rest?

#### COMMUNISM FAILS IN RUSSIA

News comes from St. Petersburg that the czar has issued a ukase which permits the peasant to renounce his share in the communal ownership of village land and become the individual freeholder. This change has been under discussion for some time, and the reformers of Russia have regarded it as one of the important measures of relief. Experience has shown that the ownership of the land by the communities has discouraged the industrious by making them pay for the idler as well as for themselves. It raises the old question—a very old question—namely: How can you encourage industry without securing to the industrious the reward of his toil? Voluntary co-operation rests upon a sound basis and should be encouraged. Under a voluntary co-operation each partner is stimulated to effort because the partnership can not continue unless all parties are satisfied. Under forced co-operation the sit-

uation is entirely different. The man who is willing to work is discouraged when he finds that the undeserving profit by his labors and the spur of necessity is withdrawn from the shiftless. The cable dispatch from St. Petersburg says: "Thousands interested in the problems of today will watch the result of the change in Russia because it throws light upon the issue between the individualist and the socialist." While civilized society recognizes that it is right to place upon all the burden of keeping the unfortunate no matter from what cause the misfortune arises, a very different question is presented when it is proposed to compel the energetic, the industrious and the enterprising to share their profits with those who lack energy, industry and enterprise. While there is a wide zone in which religion, fraternity and the spirit of brotherhood may work, we have not found any safer principle yet for the economic world than that which insures to each member of society a reward proportionate to his contribution to society.

#### GOVERNOR DAVIS' PROGRAM

Governor Jeff. Davis, of Arkansas, who begins his senatorial term next March, has already laid out for himself an important work in his attack upon the bucket shop and the exchange gambler. In a recent interview he says that the senate does not need harmony so much as an old-fashioned row. He complains that "the race of life at this time is not the fair and equal one which was in the minds of the framers of the government; that the combinations of capital, called trusts, have defeated the objects of the constitution and the law."

Governor Davis adds: "But the trusts are not the only evil. There are the bucket shops. The bucket shop has brought more misery, ruined more homes, wrecked more business, made more straight men crooked and destroyed more lives than any other agency." He describes the New York cotton exchange as a bucket shop "where a few gamblers stand around a brass railing and make a plaything of the south's great staple." Good for Davis! He will find plenty to employ his leisure hours if he will give his attention to the exploiters who grow rich gambling on the price of the farmer's product. It is strange that the people of the city who live upon what the farmer raises should be as indifferent as they are to the farmer's welfare. Senator Davis can render a great service if he can awaken the people of the cities to the importance of protecting the agricultural classes from the speculator and the market manipulator.

#### A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Among the many letters received at The Commoner office, an occasional one comes from some earnest democrat who, having labored for many years for reforms which to him seem manifestly just, concludes that nothing can be done because progress has not been as rapid as he had hoped.

There is, however, no reason for discouragement. Never has the reformer had more reason to be happy than now, for there is abundant evidence of a public awakening that presages reform.

Let a few instances of progress suffice. Take the election of senators by the people. Sixteen years ago there were advocates of it, but it had never received the attention of congress. About fourteen years ago a resolution proposing the necessary constitutional amendment passed the house; it passed again twelve years ago. These houses were democratic. Two republican congresses followed and nothing was done, but the sentiment continued to grow until even a republican house passed the resolution. Since that time two other republican houses have acted favorably upon the resolution, and the democratic national convention has twice declared for it. Something like two-thirds of the states of the union have endorsed the proposition, and there is no doubt of its ultimate triumph. It does seem that a reform so obviously necessary should be more easily secured, but it takes time to get matters before the public. The election of senators by direct vote of the people is coming, and it is coming because those who labor for it have hope, and having hope, continue to work.

Twelve years ago the democratic party included an income tax in its revenue bill. The measure was opposed by an element of the democratic party and was strenuously opposed by the republican party. The supreme court, by a majority of one, declared the law unconstitutional, and the one vote was cast by a judge who changed his mind between the first and the second hearing.