

of the whole people, then the guaranteed bank ought to come and come to stay. If, however, legislation is to have for its object the securing of privileges to a few of the community at the expense of the rest of the community, your argument is sound.

I believe that it would be perfectly safe for the federal government to guarantee deposits in the national banks, collecting from all the banks in proportion to deposits the amount that it would have to pay out to the depositors of banks that fail, and I believe that it would be safe for states to adopt a similar system to guarantee the depositor in state banks. In that case, the government would have back of it the assets of all the banks. Experience shows that the loss has been less than one-tenth of one per cent in the case of national banks during the last forty years, and it ought to be even less than that with the better regulation that would come with a guaranteed system. But if objection is made to an absolute guaranty by the government, the same end can be reached by the system adopted in Oklahoma whereby the banking board collects a guarantee fund and is then empowered to make such further assessments as may be necessary to restore the fund in case money is drawn from it to pay the depositors of a failed bank. This puts all of the banks behind each bank, without involving the government in a direct guarantee.

I thank you for your letter. Your position in the banking world is so prominent that I can assume that you have said all that can be said in opposition to the guaranteed bank, and when you fail so completely to make out a case and show so conclusively that you take a one-sided view of the subject and ignore the welfare of depositors and of the country at large, I need not expect that any stronger arguments will be presented by anyone else. I think your letter will make an excellent campaign document because it shows that the depositors must look out for their own interests and secure legislation for their own protection.

This letter, like yours, is intended for the public as well as for the one to whom it is addressed, and I shall, therefore, give it to the press without waiting for it to reach you, and I shall take pleasure in printing your letter in full in The Commoner, that the readers of my paper may have the benefit of your views.

Very truly yours,  
W. J. BRYAN.

[Mr. Forgan's letter will be found on page 14 of this issue of The Commoner.]

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**INHERITANCE TAX FOR THE PRESENT**

Aside from the remedies which are aimed at specific causes, there are some which are now intended to deal with conditions as they now exist. The inheritance tax, for instance, has been proposed as a means of compelling the holders of excessive wealth to turn over a part of it to the government at death. There can be no doubt of the right of the state governments to regulate, as they will, the descent of property, and many of the states now collect an inheritance tax. It is probable that the supreme court would uphold a federal inheritance tax, although since the adverse decision on the income tax it is hazardous to say in advance just what the position of the court might be upon a question of taxation. But while a federal inheritance tax is justified by existing conditions, it can hardly be defended as a permanent policy. It is advanced as a means of reaching fortunes already swollen, but it is wiser to prevent swollen fortunes than to prevent them to be accumulated and then seize upon a percentage as a penalty. If the federal government will cease to grant privileges to favored individuals, and content itself with the equal protection of all, there will be few fortunes large enough to constitute a menace.

An income tax has also been suggested as a means of reaching fortunes abnormally large. While a graduated income tax would have this effect, an income tax can be defended as a permanent part of our fiscal system. As both our import duties and our internal revenue taxes are collected on consumption, and, therefore, bear most heavily upon the poor, we need an income tax to equalize the burdens of government and to compel wealth to bear its share.

Upon a careful consideration of the subject one must be convinced that the remedy for swollen fortunes is to be found in a return to the Jeffersonian doctrine: equal rights to all and special privileges to none. Where we find unearned fortunes, we find that in nearly every case they rest upon favors granted by the government, and in too many instances the injustice has been aggravated by inequalities in the

tax law, so that the very ones who owe their great wealth to the generosity of the government shirk their taxes and shift to the shoulders of others the burdens which they themselves should bear.

Now that public attention has been turned to the ethics of money making, it is to be hoped that the awakening will result in the inauguration of such thorough reform that all citizens will be put upon the same footing and treated with equal consideration in the creation of wealth and in the payment of the taxes necessary to support the national government.

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**INSTRUCT**

Herman Ridder, editor of a New York paper, recently traveled through the south urging, so the New Orleans Times-Democrat says, the democrats of that section to see to it that Mr. Bryan is not nominated at Denver. In an interview with the Times-Democrat Mr. Ridder says: "I am convinced that Mr. Bryan can not carry a northern state, and I would like to suggest to our southern friends that they should not instruct their delegates for Mr. Bryan, but that they should go to Denver uninstructed, so that the democrats all over the country may consult and advise together in regard to the best man to put at the head of the ticket. Perhaps by that time Mr. Bryan himself will come to the conclusion that by his public utterances he has made himself impossible and will agree with the other democrats in nominating a winning ticket."

But why should the rank and file of democracy leave to their representatives the duty of doing what the rank and file should do? The men whom Mr. Ridder represents would, according to the Philadelphia Press, be satisfied with "anybody but Bryan." Why not trust the rank and file to say what the party's course shall be? So far as Mr. Bryan is concerned he has not asked and will not ask for the vote of any man or of any state. He does say, however, that it is the duty of democrats in precinct, county and state convention to instruct their delegates as to their choice for the democratic nominee.

The New Orleans Times-Democrat puts it well when in referring to Mr. Ridder's "no instruction plan" it says: "We think that the will of the constituencies can not be made too plain. An uninstructed convention would present boundless possibilities of chicanery. No candidate should be considered, unless his record will stand the probe of popular scrutiny. Under our primary system, we have learned to judge candidates on their merits and have forever foregone the assistance of the middlemen who used to pack conventions and thwart the people's will. We once labored under the delusion that United States senators could not be chosen without days and weeks of wrangling in state legislatures. But, happily, all that has been changed and we can not see why the democracy's standard-bearer should not be selected in like fashion. Whatever is done, let it be done in the open. The dark horses should be kept in the stable—and so should the jockeys who are too eager to mount."

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**"BIX IS DEAD"**

Lovers of dogs—and who, indeed, is not the lover of a dog?—will be interested in the lines written by Edgar Howard, editor of the Columbus (Neb.) Telegram in tribute to a faithful animal. Mr. Howard is one of Nebraska's best known democrats. When Commoner readers have finished Mr. Howard's tribute to his dog they will not need to be told that he is a master of the language of words, even as he is a master of the language of love:

"Bix is dead. Bix was a dog in the animal kingdom, but a tall man in the attributes of kindness and loyalty. He never spoke about his own virtues, but he showed them in his every-day life. I wish I might know the man who gave the deadly poison to my dog. I have no desire to carry physical injury to that man, but only a desire to make him a better and a gentler man by painting for him a picture of poor Bix and his sufferings. For many days, under skillful treatment of a veterinary, and the nursing of those who loved him, Bix fought against the effects of the drug, never complaining, never showing resentment, rewarding every effort in his behalf with a wag of his tail or with an expression of thanks from his kindly eye. In the last effort of his life he dragged himself to my feet, raised his drooping muzzle and laid it in my hand, as oft I've seen a child repose a weary head on mother's knee. Thus he died, and in the death-glaze upon his brown eyes I thought I read a message of pardon for

the whipping I gave him one day, when anger had driven from my head that fair sense of reason which should direct the movements of men, if not of dogs. I have never been able to accept the teaching of those ancients who held that at death-time the souls of men and women sometimes are transferred to the bodies of birds and dogs, but if I could accept that view I should then believe that one day there lived upon the earth a rare and radiant soul within the body of the gentlest woman that ever came to brighten and to bless the earth with her good presence, and that when she died the death of the body the gods transferred her soul to the body of poor Bix, so gracious and good he was. But I can't believe such things, and all that is left for me now is to give to Bix in my memory-garden a place among the roses, with a promise and a pledge to strive to make my own life among men reflect somewhat the lessons in loyalty and kindness acquired by contact with my dog. And so, good Bix, goodbye."

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**LABOR ORGANIZATIONS NOT TRUST**

The defenders of trusts are hiding behind labor organizations—they insist that an organization of capital to control trade is identical in principle with co-operation between laborers or farmers. They overlook an important distinction, namely, that laborers combine to protect their own labor and that farmers combine to protect their own labor, transmitted into farm produce, while those who form trusts combine to control the labor or products of others.

Among our inalienable rights are the right to life, the right to liberty and the right to the pursuit of happiness. Men can lawfully combine to protect their own lives, their own liberties and their pursuits of happiness but they can not combine to control the lives of others, the liberty of others or the pursuit of happiness by others.

Those who unite for the protection of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness do so only when driven to it by necessity and their organizations have not secured for the producing masses more than a fair share of the wealth produced. Trusts are founded upon greed—not upon necessity—and these trusts have already enabled a few manipulators to amass enormous, swollen and unearned fortunes.

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**ATTENTION STANDARD OIL**

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in his annual address to the young people's society of the Fifth Avenue Baptist church, New York, February 18, deprecated the low standards of honesty in business methods of the present day. "One of the highest standards for us to follow is truthfulness," said he. "We must always tell the truth whether it is expedient or not, whether it is to our advantage or disadvantage, whether it brings upon us success or ruin. Business honesty of the present age is a pretty low grade of goods. Our high standards should not be laid away like Sunday clothes, to be worn only at church and Sunday school. They should be like the workman's overalls—used during the whole week."

The Commoner commends this to the careful consideration of the managers of the Standard Oil trust.

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**MORE TROUBLE**

Someone has discovered that in 1891 (March 6) and during the time when Uncle Joe Cannon was temporarily out of office Mr. Roosevelt said: "We cannot escape from the fact that it was no credit to the republican party of the House that Mr. Cannon of Illinois should be one of its leaders."

Now that's a nice thing to be bringing up just at this time. Hasn't the grand old party enough trouble on its hands without inviting an open breach between the big stick and the house gavel?

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**WHAT ABOUT CRUSADER ROOSEVELT?**

The Sioux City (Iowa) Journal says: "If Crusader Bryan were put into the Roosevelt shoes his party would go back on him in a week's time."

But what is the republican party doing to carry out the recommendations made by Crusader Roosevelt?

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**"FULL"**

With 88,000 men out of work in Chicago and 90,000 in New York the full-dinner-pail argument is likely to be badly battered up before the next campaign opens.