

Government by Corporations---See New York Evening Post

The following editorial is taken from the New York Evening Post: "When you consider for a moment that this \$500,000 was contributed by a single corporation in this city was more than we were able to raise in either of the campaigns in which I was a candidate from more than 6,000,000 voters, you get a fair idea of the tremendous influence, one way or another, that the corporations can exert if they want to."

In these words Mr. Bryan commented yesterday on the revelation that the street railways of New York had contributed within a few years a half-million or more to politics. This fact, brought out by Thomas F. Ryan's testimony before the grand jury, will not, we are confident, be lost sight of in the coming campaign; Mr. Bryan and his supporters will ring the changes on it wherever they can get a hearing. Yet, as Mr. Bryan says, it is not exactly news; "It merely gives us some details we did not know before." For more than a generation people have been complaining, with more or less specification, that the machines of both political parties are run by corporation influence. The Pennsylvania Railroad, for example, has been notorious as a corrupting force in the politics of Pennsylvania and New Jersey; the New York Central in New York; the New York, New Haven and Hartford in Connecticut and Rhode Island; the Boston and Maine in New Hampshire the Prudential Insurance Company and the Public Service Corporation in New Jersey; and the protected interests in the national congress. No one could watch the proceedings at Harrisburg, Trenton, Albany, or Washington, without becoming convinced that big corporations were trafficking in laws and lawmakers; but definite proof was often lacking.

Since the last presidential election, however, the damning evidence was poured upon us in a torrent. The echoes of Mr. Roosevelt's eloquent denial of Judge Parker's charge as to campaign contributions from the corporations had hardly died away, when the flood-gates were opened. First came the admission that

each of the three large life insurance companies had paid \$50,000 to help elect Mr. Roosevelt; and behind this display of patriotism loomed the whole vast system, managed by Andrew Hamilton, for accelerating or stopping the passage of laws. Then the letters between E. H. Harriman and President Roosevelt were published—"We are practical men"—showing that the president had persuaded Mr. Harriman to raise \$260,000 late in October, 1904, for the obvious purpose of buying votes in this state. "The result," said Mr. Harriman, "was that at least 50,000 votes were turned in the city of New York alone." And now comes this last addition to the list—the Metropolitan Street Railway. It backed any party from which it secured a quid pro quo. The managers of this traction company robbed their stockholders in order to oppose Mr. Bryan; robbed them in order to secure support of democrats and republicans at Albany; robbed them in order to placate the grand old party under the leadership of Odell; robbed them in order to fatten Tammany under Charles F. Murphy. It was an orgy of political debauchery.

The plight in which the Metropolitan found itself is instructive. Senators, assemblymen, local officials large and small, district leaders, and ward heelers fastened upon it like leeches. They were all practical men, and they made that bleeding corporation pay handsomely at every turn. It paid for the things to which it was justly entitled, exactly as it paid for the things to which it was not entitled. Once the blackmailers found that the Metropolitan was vulnerable, that it could be held up by threats, they were perfectly remorseless. Such was also the experience of the insurance companies. Once they began the maintenance of their "House of Mirth" at Albany and their lobbies at other state capitals, they were lost. The faster the insurance business grew, the more exorbitant the demands of the venal legislators. These practical men insisted on being bribed to pass proper laws; they introduced bad bills in order to be bought off. And so it has been

all the way up the line. The protected manufacturers paid for schedules in the McKinley bill and the Dingley bill. At every congressional election since they have paid to keep those schedules unchanged. The manners of the republican national committee may be more refined than those of Odell and Murphy, but the methods are quite as practical and ruthless. And, indeed, we fail to see the essential difference on the ethical side when Mr. Roosevelt summoned Harriman to Washington. Mr. Roosevelt is too practical a man to imagine that Mr. Harriman and his friends give up \$260,000 for nothing. These contributors may not have had their money's worth back from Roosevelt, but they expected it, just as the insurance companies expected it, and as the Metropolitan expected it from Odell and Murphy. From Murphy to Roosevelt, it was an effort to make the corporation see a profit in footing the cost of the campaign.

Such things cannot go on. For some of our corruptionists the day of retribution has already arrived; for others it is too long delayed. But people are stirred as never before about the relations between corporations and politics. In the coming election it will go hard with any party which is believed to draw support from the treasuries of railways, lighting companies, protected manufacturers and trusts. Taft, as republican candidate, with the widespread disaffection among the working men, will have no votes to spare; and if Bryan is running against him, that adroit speaker will make terrible onslaughts upon the republicans, against whom the evidence relating to former elections is already overwhelming. Then, should congress refuse to pass Representative McCall's bill providing for publicity of campaign contributions, the argument can be used with double force. We cannot contemplate without dread the idea of a professional agitator like Mr. Bryan becoming president; but if he succeeds, he can thank the folly and wickedness of such corporation magnates as Thomas F. Ryan.—New York Evening Post.

Some of the Exactions of the Beef Trust

Representative Hitchcock of Nebraska delivered a speech in the house April 28 in which speech he told some interesting facts concerning the beef trust. In his arraignment of the trust Mr. Hitchcock brought out these points:

That the increase in the price of commodities for the year 1907 over the past ten years was sixty per cent.

That one cause of the increase in the cost of living was the increase in the production of gold and the supply of money; but that this was world-wide and not injurious. This natural cause was aggravated by the selfish devices of man, a fair index of which is the beef trust.

That the administration has done nothing to afford relief since the immunity bath given the packers by the Garfield report.

That Mr. Garfield stated in his report that the packers made an average profit of ninety-nine cents per steer, while figures show that they make about \$8 per steer.

That the price of cattle has advanced thirteen per cent within the past years, while the price of beef at wholesale has advanced twenty-nine per cent.

That representatives of the packers get together once a week and fix prices they will pay for live stock on foot and the prices they will charge for provisions sold to wholesalers and retailers.

Mr. Hitchcock's speech was as follows:

"The greatest practical question which confronts the United States today is the increase in the cost of living. This has now been going on for at least ten years, steadily and rapidly, and has become a menace to the welfare of the great body of the American people, a menace serious enough last year and in the years preceding, but increasingly so since the panic of last October, which threw out of employment probably more than one million wage earners and salaried men.

"The evidence of this increase may be had on every hand. It is known to every housewife and to those in moderate circumstances it is one of the daily worries. Perhaps the simplest and clearest way to get an idea of what it means is to glance at the figures given in the Bradstreet

Review, purporting to give the index figures or average prices of the 107 leading commodities.

"Ten years ago, if we added up the total market price of the smallest quantity of marketable commodity, we found these 107 commodities footed up \$6.11, so we say that the index for the year 1897 was \$6.90. Footing up the total prices of these commodities for the year 1907, we find that the index figure of the 107 commodities is \$8.90, an advance of almost sixty per cent. Embraced in these 107 commodities are all the necessaries of life, articles purchased and consumed by rich and poor alike.

"To the families in affluent circumstances, it is a matter of little moment this increase in cost; but to the millions living on say \$800 for the family, that increase means a very serious matter; and we see the effects in a number of ways. We see a reduction in the annual savings of the American people. We see an increasing number of children driven into mines and factories to help out the family income, and legislators are devising means to check that tendency. We see women who formerly were confined to household lives and household duties driven into commercial life to eke out the family income. We see the standard of living reduced and people obliged to do with less.

"What has caused this increase? There has been one great cause that is world-wide, natural, and not injurious—the increase in the production of gold and supply of money. Naturally gold has fallen in value, which means that commodities have risen slightly; but that cause is world-wide and not injurious. In other countries it has not been a serious matter; in our republic alone that natural increase in cost of living has been tremendously aggravated by the devices of selfish man.

"Heretofore I have at times declaimed against trusts permitted and protected by the tariff. I have shown that they have raised the prices of their commodities, that they have been selling their products in foreign lands cheaper than in the United States, and I might now show the baleful effects produced upon the American people by the tariff on lumber, which has per-

mitted the lumber trust to increase in ten years the cost of lumber seventy per cent, which we have felt in increased cost of homes and in higher rents and in the destruction of our forests. I might dwell upon the steel trust, which has aggravated the cost of every home, increased rents, increased the cost of raising crops, increased the cost of all our American railroads, and thus affected freight and passenger rates.

"But today I am to speak of a trust which is not the child of the tariff—of the meat trust; and I am doing it because I feel that I shall be denied the opportunity to speak under the rules of this house when my resolution comes up here for a vote, a resolution which I introduced some weeks ago, which has been reported favorably by the committee on interstate and foreign commerce, calling upon the secretary of commerce and labor to lay before this house statistics showing the prices of meats and live stock in the great markets during the last two years. So under license of general debate I am to say something of meat and live stock prices, and review briefly the failure of this administration to bring relief.

"On page 184 of one of the bulletins issued by the bureau of labor in July, 1907, I find a computation of the changes in the prices of various necessities of life during the last few years. The author of this bulletin estimated the average price of various products and then sought to indicate in what way these have changed. Taking the average prices that prevailed on certain packing house products for the ten years ending 1900, extending from 1890 to 1900, this official shows an advance as follows:

	Per cent.
In salt pork or bacon.....	50
Fresh pork	38
Chickens	29
Lard	28
Hams	27
Mutton	24
Veal	23
Beef	16
Eggs	34

"Now these increases represent prices in 1906 compared with the average of the last de-