

tempt of the legislatures to regulate the railroads. The railroad managers are studiously circulating the idea that business has been impaired and industry generally paralyzed by criticism of railroad management and by proposed remedies.

It is impossible to exaggerate the extent to which the railroads will enter politics if the president's plan is carried out and Washington is made the arena in which the people must fight all their battles for railroad regulation. At present the people of a large number of the states are enjoying a two cent passenger rate; this reform did not come from Washington. It came from the state legislatures and Secretary Taft has gone to the trouble of telling an eastern audience that the president is not responsible for the rate reductions. It was state legislation that led the railroads to demand national incorporation and the removal of legislation from state capitals to Washington. Can this be in the interest of the people? It is a serious issue that the president presents and one that the people must be prepared to meet, for while he has fought for reforms on some other subjects, he is, on this subject fighting hand in hand with the very men who attempted to prevent the passage of the president's rate bill. The conspiracy formed among the leading republicans of the senate had for its object the prevention of any rate legislation, and only by focusing public attention upon the subject could the president defeat the conspiracy.

The fight for the preservation of the rights of the states is not a revival of the doctrine of secession. The railroad magnates attempt to make it appear such because they are not prepared to meet the real issue. The question is not whether a state has a right to withdraw from the union, but whether it shall have the right to protect its citizens while it remains a part of the union. The state legislatures are nearer to the people than congress is. A congressman represents some two hundred thousand people and is personally known to but a few of them. A member of the state legislature represents a smaller constituency and is nearer to the voters. The influence which the railroads can bring to bear upon a congressman or senator is much greater than the influence which they can bring to bear upon members of the legislature, while the influence of the people over their representative decreases in proportion to the population of his district.

Railroad development is not complete, it is but in its infancy, and the surrender by the state of all power to regulate means an enormous extension of the powers of the federal government, and a paralysis of the power of the state. Jefferson presented an unanswerable argument in favor of the dual form of government and the argument is even stronger now than it was in his time for the dangers of centralization are even greater than they were then.

Instead of saying that efforts at state control are "sure to be nullified in one way or another sooner or later," the president should join with the democrats in demanding the enactment of legislation which will protect the states from the gradual extension of the power of the federal courts. He refers to the Minnesota and South Carolina decisions as illustrating "how impossible is a dual control of national commerce." The democrats propose a remedy. They say that the district and circuit courts of the federal government should not have jurisdiction to suspend state laws. Let the railroads deal with the state courts first. If the state courts deny justice they can have their appeal from the highest court in the state to the federal court. It is not the attempt to separate the control that results "in grotesque absurdity." The absurdity is in permitting a federal judge to suspend a state law while he looks up the question of its constitutionality. It is absurd that the railroads should be given the presumption as against the people of a state.

The jurisdiction of the federal court has been extended on the theory that it was necessary to protect vested interests, but that is a false issue. The property rights of the citizen are protected by the state courts, and no one can complain that the protection is not complete. The corporations have gone into the federal courts in order to secure an advantage over the individual, and the real question is whether the man-made giant, called a corporation, shall exercise rights denied to the God-made man. It is not hostility to corporations that leads the democratic party to oppose the demands now made by railroad corporations. The democratic party believes in the corporation as a legitimate organization. The great majority of the corporations are advancing the

public interest and contributing to the public welfare, but a few of these corporations have asserted rights that are inimical to the public and these corporations must be restricted, restrained and controlled. It is enough that the corporation—a creature of law—should be equal to the individual who makes the law; it should not claim superior rights. The president's position is not only an untenable one, but it is one that menaces the welfare of the nation.

In submitting this criticism The Commoner does not reflect upon the good intention of the president, but attributes the president's error to his leaning towards the Hamiltonian idea of government. Hamilton distrusted the masses and favored a centralized government. The president is Hamiltonian rather than Jeffersonian in his ideas. He has never advocated the election of senators by the people although even the republican party in congress has declared for it three times. He must know to what extent predatory wealth controls the United States senate through the present method of election, and yet he has never raised his voice in favor of the popular election of senators. Unless the rank and file of the republican party is strangely blind to the influences which are at work, there will be an overwhelming protest against the president's plan for the absorption of power by the federal government.



TOM JOHNSON'S VICTORY

One day recently the people of Cleveland, Ohio, were permitted to ride on the street cars without payment of fare. On the same date every year, according to announcements, "street car day" will be observed and free rides will be given to the citizens of Cleveland. This is in celebration of the victory that has finally been won over the street railway monopoly of that city. And Tom L. Johnson, Mayor of Cleveland, is responsible for the victory. In spite of "ripper" bills, injunctions from courts of all degrees, writs of mandamus and every imaginable legal obstacle, Mayor Johnson has persisted in his fight for lower fares, and today the people of Cleveland are enjoying the fruits of his persistent efforts. A holding company now controls the street railway business of Cleveland, the people get lower fares, and the city gets a benefit in the way of increased revenues. Tom L. Johnson, "the best mayor of the best governed city in America," is entitled to all the congratulations that are being showered upon him.



THE HEBREW POET

Mr. Ezekiel Leavitt, of St. Louis, has published through the Modern View Press, of St. Louis, a little book entitled "Songs of Grief and Gladness." Mr. Leavitt is a Russian Jew and writes in both Hebrew and Yiddish, and his lines show that he has in him the poetic fire. He embalms in verse heroic sentiment and tells the story of his race in words that are both pathetic and inspiring. In his address to the public he says:

"My house is heaven, the angels are my friends; "My comrades—flowers, and birds that sweetly call;

"Loud-sounding praises do not make me glad, "The critic's censure grieves me not at all."

This indifference to flattery and abuse, this absorption in his purpose and his plan marks all his poems. In his ode entitled "To My Nation," his love of his people breathes forth in stately measures—

"Where is thy strength, thy understanding now, "Where is thy name, where thy old time worth, "Where are thy treasure and thy temple found, "Where is thy dwelling, where thy native earth?"

"Deborah," an epic of great merit concludes the volume.

Mr. Leavitt's poems will interest both Jew and Gentile, and the Commoner is glad to commend the volume to its readers.



FAIRBANKS AND ROOSEVELT

In his speech at Chicago recently Vice President Fairbanks took occasion to antagonize President Roosevelt's plea for a large navy, saying:

"We hear much of the need for a large navy and a large army. We all agree that we should provide adequately for the national defense. The money necessary to this end should be freely expended, but beyond our reasonable needs we should not go. Our national tranquility is not menaced from without, nor is our

domestic peace threatened from within. The skies bend benignantly above us. Our people are enamored of their institutions and are eager only to win the trophies that are to be found in the fruitful fields of peaceful industry."

The language employed also opposed Secretary Taft's argument in favor of a larger army. The vice president says:

"I would rather see the people spend their money in building up great schools, colleges and universities, churches and cathedrals than see them spend unduly for expanding armies and navies. The armies of young men and young women who are trained in schools, colleges and universities are the armies which are destined to win the victories of the future which shall most dignify and glorify American achievement. They are the armies of peace, and, in the final analysis, the armies of our enduring national security. They are the creators, and not the consumers, of the nation's wealth and resources.

"War appeals to the heroic. We have looked upon its honorable scars and we know what it is. The annual pension roll of \$150,000,000 tells something of the suffering and havoc which war has caused. I have faith to believe that Christian civilization is laying securely the foundations of domestic and international tranquility, and that an appeal to the reason among men will more and more render less necessary an appeal to the sword. We must not introduce into our American civilization the pomp and pageantry of European military and naval establishments. We have frequently heard men undertake to justify an increase of the army on the ground that the organization of workmen into large, compact bodies was a possible source of danger. There is, it seem to me, no possible justification for such a suggestion. It is an unwarranted impeachment of the patriotism of the great body of the American people. The workmen of America are friends, and not enemies, of the government, and will respond when there is national peril, as they have done in every emergency which has confronted us. They are the friends, and not the enemies, of good order."

"I would rather see the people spend their money in building up great schools, colleges and universities, churches and cathedrals than see them spend unduly for expanding armies and navies." Good for Mr. Fairbanks! It is a sound idea well expressed.



DEMAGOGUE AND PLUTAGOGUE

Writing in The Public, Louis F. Post says: "When every man who raises his voice against vested wrong is called a 'demagogue,' Mr. Bryan considers the epithet a compliment. He is right. This word, thanks to Mr. Bryan more than to anyone else perhaps, is coming back to its original honorable meaning of a leader of the people. As democracy moves on to battle with plutocracy, our 'demagogues' shall be found devotedly leading the people, and our 'plutagogues' sordidly bearing the banner of the interests."



PROSPERITY!

A commercial travelers' Taft Club has been organized at Columbus, and its motto is "Taft, peace and prosperity," but as Mr. Taft stands for a big army and a big navy, he can hardly pose as the friend of peace. The supporters of Mr. Taft ought not to talk too loudly of prosperity just now when they are proving that a panic can come under republican administration as well as in democratic times.



GOOD WORK

Henry S. Richmond, Editor Daily Herald, Fremont, Neb.—Please find enclosed \$13.00 for twenty-six subscriptions. One or two subscriptions came in this morning and I wish they could be induced to come in by the hundred every day. I never saw a convention take so much interest in anything as ours did in a description of Mr. Bryan before that great gathering of New York millionaires when he did the unprecedented thing of telling those cold blooded financiers some plain truths right in their own balliwick. I consider it the very best work a democrat can do now anywhere to get subscribers for The Commoner.

