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"Immediate" does not mean some time in the distant future.

The Italian earthquake certainly jarred the world's pursestrings loose.

By this time the seat on the water wagon is either comfortable or vacant.

The Claus Spreckles will seem certain to stir up a sweet mess of litigation.

By the time Wilbur Wright breaks another record or two he will have to remain in the air all the time.

After advising everybody to "Write it 1909," we let the first issue of The Commoner in the new year go through dated "1908."

Less than two more months of Roosevelt in which to land a few millionaire trust magnates in jail for violation of the anti-trust law.

President-elect Taft is framing up a scheme to win the south to the republican party. Lots of other men have smoked the same pipe.

"Is J. Pierpont Morgan a sucker?" queries the Omaha World-Herald. Well, J. Pierpont seems to have soaked up a lot, at any rate.

If the "standpatters" can manage to keep up this clatter about the secret service long enough they may be able to stave off tariff revision.

The Chicago man who offered his wife as bail is doubtless just the kind of a man who would jump his bail bond if he got half a chance.

Mr. Burton is not the only one to be congratulated because Charles P. Taft withdrew from the Ohio senatorial race. William H. Taft is entitled to a full measure of congratulations.

A few months ago stricken San Francisco was asking for help. The other day San Francisco cabled \$60,000 to the Italian earthquake sufferers. Those who have suffered can sympathize.

John Hays Hammond has been selected to steer presidential patronage southward with a view to landing a few southern states in the republican column in 1912. John is going to experience difficulty with his tiller ropes.

# The Commoner.

## SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF 1908

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

### THE SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY

In its issue of November 13, The Commoner invited contributions to a symposium, having for its purpose an inquiry into the causes of the results of the 1908 election. The Commoner asked the co-operation of its readers in every section of the country, submitting these questions:

Did the democratic party make losses in your county and precinct?

If so, to what influence were such losses due?

"What course shall reformers adopt for the future?"

Can the democratic party hope ever to gain control of the federal government?

The fifth installment of this symposium is printed in this issue. It should be understood that the publication of any particular opinion does not mean that The Commoner endorses that opinion. In order that the inquiry shall be thorough it will be necessary that wide scope be given the contributors to this symposium, and these opinions are to be printed with the names of the writers.

George E. Chester, City Point, Fla.—Falling off here was partly due to an increasing demand by business interests for a protective tariff. A more important factor was the appropriation by Mr. Roosevelt of the most important democratic issues. Democrats need not despair in the face of a defeat which, in its last analysis, was due solely to the opportunity and the genius of one man. It may be that the mission of the party of the common people is to outlaw oppression and to tax pernicious fortunes out of existence, if so, neither Mr. Roosevelt nor his party can hinder it in its appointed time.

H. Nye, Enon Valley, Pa.—The trusts did it. The trusts largely controlling the wealth of the country were against us. And the Catholic church had every reason to be against us, because of the "my policy" of the administration in the Philippine Islands, Cuba and the Catholic church in general. To sum it up in two words political prejudice did it. None of us are free from it. To free ourselves from prejudice would be to make us free indeed. Education is the only way out of it.

A. R. James, Elbert, Colo.—Outside of the solid south there is a strong conviction in the minds of a majority of the people that a protective tariff is for the best interests of the country. It is necessary to change that conviction. We lost because while even a majority of republicans approved our platform they thought the protective tariff of more importance. In my opinion we can elect in 1912, but we must begin the work of education now.

George U. Geyer, LaFontaine, Ind.—A successful pulling of the wool over the eyes of the non-thinking individual. The utter disregard for the platforms, and the derisive snarl of the name of "Mr. Bryan" without investigation, explanation or justification. All done by the beneficiaries of republican legislation or those under control of the system.

George L. Bittinger, Kokomo, Ind.—In my opinion we lost by the unrestrained use of the federal officeholders under the leadership of Theodore Roosevelt, together with the unscrupulous measures resorted to by him to deceive the people. By the use of large amounts of tainted campaign funds contributed by trust beneficiaries after the election. The democratic party made large gains in this (Howard) county, and in all of the precincts. Reformers for the future must get together and crystalize living, urgent reforms and push them on to victory. The democratic party under a new name that will include and harmonize reformers of decided ability from the republican party may hope to gain control of the federal government.

C. H. Creed, Columbia, S. D.—Money was used without stint. For the future all genuine reformers should unite in one party under a new name. The democratic party can never hope to again gain control of the federal government.

F. A. Partlow, Clear Lake, Wis.—The whole north of Wisconsin made gains but I am convinced the republican party can be dislodged only by a combination of Bryan democrats and progressive republicans.

M. W. Grinnelle, Penobscot, Me.—The cause of our defeat in the state of Maine was rum and the trusts. They work together. If the democratic party can break up the trusts and

put a stop to free rum they can win hands down.

Colonel E. Colyer, Howard, Kan.—Educate the people. Republicans with their subsidized press and their large slush fund tell the people absurd things and deceive them. Organize and educate and if this does not dethrone the party in power some day revolution will do it for the American people were not born to be slaves.

W. A. Cornelius, Newport Beach, Col.—If there is no reason above all others for Mr. Bryan's defeat it is that the democratic party has no press to speak of. Nearly every influential newspaper in the country is controlled by the republican party and the greater part of the people were not permitted to see both sides of the question. That Bryan's election would be ruinous to the country was hammered at the people every day all over the country by an intensely partisan republican press and the democratic side of the argument was suppressed or ignored entirely. For instance Bryan's last open letter to Roosevelt was not printed by the two leading papers in Los Angeles although they gave great prominence to Roosevelt's letters to Bryan. Neither did the republican papers print the Rockefeller interview indorsing Taft. After all, Taft's election is the best thing for the country, not because Bryan's policy would necessarily have been ruinous, but because the big papers of the country through misrepresentation have led the majority of the voters to believe that Bryan's election would be nothing less than a national calamity. After having this doctrine preached to the people so thoroughly during the last few months Bryan's election could have had no other than a paralyzing effect on business for a time at least. Mr. Taft can thank the newspapers of the country for his election. They have done their part and done it well.

W. S. Furnam, Sidney, Ohio.—A large number of shopmen changed their intended vote, I learn, within ten days prior to the election. Whether the assertion, "that the manufacturers predicted a closing of shops and factories in case Bryan was elected," was the controlling cause of this change will, perhaps, never be definitely ascertained, but I am convinced that this was a potent factor. It is very certain that Bryan lithographs in the homes of many republicans, who had expressed an intention to vote for Mr. Bryan, were taken down and Taft pictures substituted, within the time mentioned. History repeats itself. The history of all nations has demonstrated that there comes a time when the people realize conditions—become fully awake, and take the reins into their own hands. The predatory rich, the monopolies, trusts, and corporations—all children of the republican party—fostered and nursed by a high protective tariff, may control elections and legislation for a time, but again, history repeats itself, and there will come a time when the verdict of the voters will be adverse to those who now control. Keep the fight going. The war is not ended—only a battle has been fought and lost. Lawrence was defeated and killed on the Chesapeake, but Perry won a great victory on Lake Erie. We were right on the great questions of this campaign, and although defeated, the fact remains that we were right, and right wins in the end. Right may be a long time in achieving its victory, but it is omnipotent and must triumph at last.

A. C. Weaver, Colfax, Ia.—The result was due to the prediction of panic by republican leaders and newspapers during the last week of the campaign. For the future I should say limit the platform to two of the most important issues and discard your foolish trust plank—a plank which in its true working would only limit monopoly instead of killing it, forcing the trust to operate only in half the states of the union. This plank, while being clearly unconstitutional, limiting individual effort and enterprise, does not strike at the root of the evil. The fourth question sounds like it was propounded by a standpatter. Shame on you! You may as well ask, "Shall the truth prevail?" Why raise a question which does not admit a discussion? A true reformer never knows when he is whipped. It matters not to me whether or not the democratic party "gains control of the federal government." The paramount question is, "Shall the democratic party continue to be right?" Hang on to your faith in humanity and if you can answer this question in the affirmative you have answered the other. It matters not by which party the true principles of reform are secured. Reformers should