

jealously guarded and resolutely defended, but it will be found necessary to add federal legislation. If the Standard Oil company has anything like a complete monopoly its withdrawal from the state of Missouri may result in inconvenience to the people, for they must have oil. If there are rival companies in Missouri they may be prepared to meet the new demand upon them but if they are not prepared, or if they make the new demand an excuse for raising prices the friends of monopoly will make the extortion an argument in favor of repealing the state anti-trust law. The immediate results of the enforcement of the law may thus impress consumers more than the protracted evils which the law is intended to cure.

It was to protect the people of the various states from this very embarrassment that the democratic national platform proposed congressional legislation intended to limit the amount one corporation can control and thus ensure competition. The platform fixed the maximum limit at fifty per cent, leaving room for enough competitors to insure rivalry.

The states can apply the same principle; they can limit the proportion of the business that one corporation, domestic or foreign, can control. The proportion controlled is the very essence of monopoly. If, for instance, a corporation controls only five per cent of the total product it can not exercise a monopolistic influence—if it controls ninety-five per cent it can. Just where a monopoly begins no one can say but a corporation being a creature of law can be compelled to obey such restrictions and limitations as the law-making power may think necessary for the protection of the public. Such a law would be more easily enforced than any existing anti-trust law.



#### SOME INTERESTING POINTS

A Commoner reader sends a marked copy of the Wall Street Journal of December 24. From an article entitled "Broad Street Gossip," the following is taken:

"The corner stone of the market is a sense of heavenly harmony among the big interests in control of transportation and industry. The important people of the country, who are mostly congregated in and about New York, have been mixing it up very pleasantly of late in a social and business way. Everything is altogether lovely. All jealousies are forgotten, and cross purposes are things of the past. Possibly over-indulgence of highly-seasoned foods at some of those love feasts may have resulted in physical indigestions but the spirit of affection surmounts all these recollections. The railroad map of the United States, especially that part lying west of the Alleghenies, has been or is being subdivided amicably. Mr. Harriman has ceased to desire to dominate the entire situation and is willing that Mr. Hill and the St. Paul interests may reach out into his trans-Mississippi territory and take such part of the business as he doesn't particularly desire or can not get. As for the northwestern part of the transportation game, he is not particularly concerned, for he is presently to take over the controlling influence of New York Central, of which the Northwestern is merely an extension. It is also recited that Mr. Harriman has already secured an influential relationship in the Gould system west and southwest of St. Louis. As for Rock Island—well Rock Island doesn't amount to much in the grand scheme of readjustment. The Moore-Reid combination only has a little matter of 14,000 miles of railroad, gridironing every quarter section of territory lying between the middle longitudinal line of Indiana and the Rocky mountains east and west, and Minneapolis and New Orleans north and south, with a rumor possibility of grabbing off the Wabash system east of St. Louis. This bagatelle of a railroad may or may not come into the harmony arrangement. If it does, well and good. If it doesn't, good-bye Rock Island and everybody connected with it. The ultimate purpose of this halcyon harmony of heretofore competitive interests is to be an act of congress legalizing pooling, something which the public has been desperately fighting against for forty years or more. The public has a foolish idea that competition is necessary to assurance of reasonable rates for freight and passengers. This theory appears to be on the verge of being superseded by the more recently adopted proposition that competition is the very worst thing that can happen for buyers of transportation. Mr. Roosevelt has apparently subscribed to the idea and before the taking of the vote in congress it seems to stand very well—in Wall Street. Anyhow the stock market is being bought aggress-

sively in the full faith that while communism and socialism are tabooed, the spirit behind these cults is about to dominate the railroads and the business situation—all to the increase in net returns on investments in stocks at current quotations."

It will be seen that some very interesting points are made in this Wall Street article.

It is interesting to be told that:

The "important people of the country are mostly congregated in and about New York."

"The railroad map of the United States, especially that part lying west of the Alleghenies, has been, or is being subdivided amicably."

If the Rock Island doesn't come into the "harmony arrangement" then "good-bye Rock Island and everybody connected with it."

The public has a "foolish idea that competition is necessary."

"Competition is the very worst thing that can happen for buyers of transportation." "The spirit behind communism and socialism is about to dominate the railroads and the business situation."

Surely there is yet a wide field for the patriotic student of government.



#### THIS IS IMPORTANT, TOO

The Philadelphia Record says: "Major Mearns, of the army medical corps, was examined for promotion, and found physically disqualified. Therefore he was retired as of the rank of lieutenant colonel. The president desired his company on his African trip, and there was nothing in the way of an officer on the retired list obtaining leave to go abroad. But the president also desired to have Colonel Mearns make the trip under the most favorable financial circumstances possible, and the obliging war department by some hocus-pocus put the doctor back on the active list, with the rank of major. The pay of an active major is higher than that of a retired lieutenant colonel, but Colonel Major, or Major Colonel Mearns, M. D., will not render any service to the army; he will merely provide congenial society for and look after the health of an ex-president of the United States."

Now if the secret service can spare sufficient time from the Tillman typewriter it might pay some attention to the remarkable situation described by the Philadelphia Record.



#### IN OTHER WORDS

A Washington dispatch printed in the New York Tribune, republican, says:

"The president has been advised that a method of prosecution has been found, and although it is too early to reveal the government's plans, it may be said that the prosecution will be pushed with energy. The president is deeply interested in this case, and those charged with the prosecution realize that they will earn his gratitude if their efforts are successful."

In other words, if the lawyers hired by the American government to do public service are able to find a means whereby newspapers or individuals may be successfully prosecuted for lese majeste then they may confidently count upon smiles from the king. Doubtless there would be even more gratitude if these lawyers could discover a method whereby Representative Rainey of Illinois could be called to account for his remarks with respect to the Panama canal.



#### INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM IN NEBRASKA

In the Nebraska legislature Representative Miller of Custer county has introduced a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the state constitution providing for the initiative and referendum. Mr. Miller's resolution is a copy of the Oregon constitutional provision and is as follows:

Be it resolved by the legislature of the state of Nebraska that Section 1 of Article 3 of the constitution of the state of Nebraska shall be and hereby is amended to read as follows:

Section 1. The legislative authority is vested in a senate and house of representatives, but the people reserve to themselves power to propose laws and amendments to the constitution and to enact or to reject the same at the polls, independent of the legislature and also reserve power at their own option to approve or to reject at the polls any act of the legislature. The first power reserved by the people is the initiative, and eight per cent of the legal voters may

propose any measure by such petition, and every such petition shall include the full text of the measure so proposed. Initiative petitions shall be filed with the secretary of state not less than four months before the election at which they are to be voted upon. The second power is the referendum, and it may be ordered (except as to laws necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety) either by a petition signed by five per cent of the legal voters of the state, or by the legislature, as other bills are enacted.

Referendum petitions shall be filed with the secretary of state not more than ninety days after the final adjournment of the session of the legislature which passed the bill on which the referendum is demanded. The veto power of the governor shall not extend to measures referred to the people. All elections on measures referred to the people of the state shall be had at the biennial regular general elections, except when the legislature shall order a special election. Any measure referred to the people shall take effect and become the law when it is approved by a majority of the voters voting thereon, and not otherwise. The style of all bills shall be: "Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska." This section shall not be construed to deprive any member of the legislature of the right to introduce any measure. The whole number of votes cast for governor at the regular election last preceding the filing of any petition for the initiative or for the referendum shall be the basis on which the number of legal voters necessary to sign such petition shall be counted. Petitions and orders for the initiative and for the referendum shall be filed with the secretary of state, and in submitting the same to the people he, and all other officers, shall be guided by the general laws and the act submitting this amendment until legislation shall be especially provided therefor.



#### COMRADES!

What self-restraint President-elect Taft and John D. Rockefeller showed the other day when they met in Georgia! The papers reported that they exchanged compliments and from the reports they showed no visible signs of displeasure, and yet how Mr. Taft must have gritted his teeth when he thought of the "mean trick" that Mr. Rockefeller played on him by coming out openly in his support just before the election; and Mr. Rockefeller must have glared at Mr. Taft as his indignation rose within him at the memory of Mr. Taft's brutal repudiation of his support. Or, was the ante-election controversy a part of the play?



#### MR. ROOT'S MISTAKE

In his speech of acceptance addressed to the New York legislature Senator-elect Root said: "I am opposed to the direct election of senators as I am opposed to the initiative and referendum, because these things are based on the idea that the people can not elect legislators whom they can trust."

Plainly Mr. Root has the cart before the horse. The purpose of the election of senators and of the initiative and referendum is to make it reasonably certain that the people can trust their legislators.



#### PAY THE OTHER ONE, TOO

The papers report that the Standard Oil company is threatening to pay its \$1,600,000 fine to Texas in silver dollars, just out of spite. Well, the silver dollars may not be as easily handled as silver certificates, but if the Standard will pay its \$29,000,000 fine to the federal government in silver dollars, it will be accepted and no questions asked.



#### A DELICATE QUESTION

It seems that the United States senate is discussing the methods employed in appointing United States judges. Be careful, gentlemen, that is a delicate question! The favor-seeking corporations resent any opening up of that subject and assure us upon their honor that they only consider the high moral character and professional ability of the men whom they recommend.



Between decisions like that of Justice Wright and libel suits like the one instituted against the New York World, the Russification of the republic's press seems well along.