

The Commoner.

ISSUED WEEKLY

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MR. ROOSEVELT ON TRUSTS

The Outlook editorial on the trust situation is being variously construed. Some regard it as evidence that the ex-president is irritated by the administration's charge that he was DECEIVED by the Steel trust. Others regard his editorial as a bid for the presidential nomination. It may be both. He does not like to have his judgment questioned and he does not like to have a friend—and the Steel trust has been his friend—attacked. He may not be averse to another nomination and he may relish an opportunity to retaliate on the president for his abandonment of some of his—Mr. Roosevelt's—policies, but the fact is that Mr. Roosevelt has never shown any clear comprehension of the trust evil. He has clung to the idea that there are good trusts and bad ones and he thinks that the burden of proof is upon the people to show that a trust is injuring the public. This is the weak point in his position. There is the same distinction between corporations that there is between animals. The cow is PRESUMED to be harmless unless shown to be vicious; the lion, on the other hand, is PRESUMED to be vicious. So, ordinary corporations are PRESUMED to be engaged in legitimate business but a private MONOPOLY should be PRESUMED TO BE HARMFUL. It is as much the nature of the monopoly to injure competitors and the public as it is the nature of a lion to devour.

REGULATION of a private monopoly is an absurdity; prevention is the only remedy.

The system proposed by Mr. Roosevelt would prove a dismal failure, and it would, in addition, encourage the socialists.

DISTINCTION WITHOUT A DIFFERENCE

The difference between Mr. Taft and Mr. Roosevelt on the treaty is not a matter of great importance. Mr. Roosevelt magnifies the danger of the plan to arbitrate and the president magnifies the effect of the change asked. The treaty can be safely ratified as it is but it will not weaken it to add the provision suggested by Mr. Roosevelt. The ex-president says:

"As a people we wish to make a genuine advance; we should agree definitely to submit to arbitration all disputes that do not involve the vital interest, the independence or honor of the nation, and we should at the same time, make provisions which will tend to bring about a pacific solution of all disputes not covered by the treaty.

"To this end a provision should be inserted in such treaty that if either party to it claims that a dispute involves its vital interests, its independence, or its honor, then, always provided that neither party takes a position that necessitates immediate action by the other party on the request of either party, all questions of fact and all questions of law involved in the dispute shall be referred to arbitrators, who shall have no power to decide the dispute, but shall be authorized to pass on the contro-

The Commoner.

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"SHALL THE PEOPLE RULE" —PASS IT ALONG

The democratic precinct club organization work is now proceeding in an encouraging way. Every Commoner reader ought to help in this work. The headquarters of this movement has prepared a pledge to which it asks the signatures and address of all democrats who want to keep the democratic party true to its great mis-

sion. The Commoner prints herewith a copy of this pledge and asks every reader to clip the same and forward it to Senator Robert L. Owen, chairman Federation Democratic Precinct clubs, Washington, D. C. The headquarters will send out on request printed copies of this pledge. Here it is:

"Shall the People Rule? is the Overwhelming Issue"—Democratic National Platform, 1908.

PLEDGE

The Presidency in 1912. Let Us Organize

I believe in The Rule of the People, and the party and the legal mechanism to make it effective; an Honest Registration and Election Laws, a thorough going Corrupt Practices Act and in the Election of Senators by the direct vote of the people.

I favor the election of party committeemen and of party delegates to the Democratic National Convention of MEN who are KNOWN to favor the People's Rule Program as above indicated and the progressive principles of the Jeffersonian Democracy.

It is of the utmost importance to the masses of the people that a man be nominated as candidate for the presidency who is Democratic from Principle, who is Identified with the Progressive Movement to bring the government closer to the people and make it responsive to the peoples' will and one who is Courageous Enough to lead a fight for such principles.

I will endeavor to attend all Caucuses, Conventions and Primary Elections of the party and will assist in organizing a Democratic Precinct Club in my precinct as a part of the National Federation of Democrat Precinct Clubs and will assist in making effective the principles above set forth in seeing that the Democrats are registered and attend the primaries and elections.

Name..... P. O.....

County..... R. F. D.....

NOTE—If you favor the above principles and desire to see them enacted into law kindly sign this slip and mail it to R. L. Owen, Chairman Federation Democratic Precinct Clubs, Washington, D. C.

(SEE OTHER SIDE)

On the reverse side of this pledge the following appears:

AN APPEAL

The time for action is at hand and we appeal to progressive democrats to immediately write for copies of the constitution, by-laws, organization blanks and literature for use in organizing precinct clubs that will affiliate with the State and National Federation of Democratic Precinct Clubs in an effort and determination to have the Democratic platform declare for progressive principles and to nominate candidates who are in sympathy with and who will wage a fight in behalf of the principles set forth in the platform. Address

THE FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC PRECINCT CLUBS

Bliss Building, Washington, D. C.

versy as to questions of fact and of law and to recommend such settlement of the dispute as may seem just and honorable to both contending nations."

INVESTIGATION is the important thing—allow time for investigation and there will be no war. The treaty ought to be ratified at once—as it is if possible, with the Roosevelt change if necessary, but let it be ratified without delay.

PREVENTING TRUSTS

Those who have no remedy for the trusts but content themselves with finding fault with all remedies proposed object to the democratic platform remedy on the ground that it is impractical. They say that there is no way of knowing when a corporation is exceeding the prescribed percentage. As a matter of fact it is not so difficult as one might think. The bureau of corporations could obtain reports on important business enterprises and each corporation could easily learn its proportion. A graded tax could be fixed as a penalty to compel care. Suppose, for instance, the law compelled a corporation to take out a license in order to control more than 25 per cent of the total product, the penalty for not taking out the license might be one per cent on an excess of one per cent, two per cent tax on an excess of two per cent, etc., up to 5 per cent and criminal punishment beyond that. The same rule could be applied as to the 50 per cent limit. A zone broad enough to cover any reasonable uncertainty could be

defined by law and in that zone a failure to observe the law could be punished by fine; beyond it by imprisonment. There is no difficulty if congress wants to PREVENT monopoly; the difficulty is that so many senators and members TALK against the trusts but either do not desire to interfere with them or are afraid to do so. With sixty democratic majority in congress, however, it ought to be possible to do something, especially with a group of progressive republicans to help us.

IT BROKE UP THE CLASS

At Laramie Mr. Taft catechised a crowd of some 400 school children.

"How high is it here?" he asked them.

"Seven thousand one hundred and forty-five feet!" they shouted.

"You don't feel above other boys in other cities because you are higher up, do you?" he continued.

"No, sir," they answered.

"What state do you live in?" he queried.

"Wyoming," they cried.

"Is it a territory?"

"It's a state."

"Have you a governor?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you senators?"

"Yes, sir."

"What do your senators do?"

But that question stumped the children and broke up the class.—New York Sun.