

The Commoner

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The Rule of the Rich

The legislation of the present Congress shows conclusively that our government is under the rule of the rich. The laws passed on the subjects of revenue and tariff give conclusive proof that Big Business is in control. The repeal of the tax on the profiteers and the reduction of tax on big incomes, as well as exorbitant tariff rates given to favored manufacturers,—all furnish abundant evidence that the Republican leaders are giving to those who have large fortunes and taking from the poorer members of society.

The contributions made to the campaign committees are in harmony with the legislative policy of the parties. The Democrats, opposing special privileges and defending the equal rights of all, could not go to individuals or to any class and demand payment for favors done, or contributions in advance for favors promised. The press dispatches report \$80,000 collected by the Democratic committee and \$721,000 collected by the Republican committee. These contributions include those from the beginning of the campaign up to the date of publication,—about ten days from the date of election. The Democrats gave small amounts as compared with the Republican contributions. The brother of the Secretary of the Treasury, Mellon, gave \$25,000—nearly a third as much as the entire amount collected by the Democrats. This looks like quite a sum and yet it is much less than the amount saved to Secretary Mellon by the reduction of the tax on big incomes. As he recommended the reduction and as the House passed it, Mr. Mellon would have been saved hundreds of thousands on his income tax. If the bill had become a law as the Conference Committee agreed upon it, he would have saved nearly twice as much as he did; but even as it was he saved far more than his brother contributed (unless his wealth has been very much overestimated).

Take the next contributor: John D. Rockefeller, Sr., gave \$15,000 and his son \$10,000—together this makes another \$25,000. One family, father and son, gave nearly a third as much as the Democratic fund—two families gave nearly two-thirds as much as the total of the Democratic funds.

The Rockefellers are largely interested in the Standard Oil Company which is soon to declare a dividend of 400 per cent.

Strange that any open minded man should fail to see the connection between campaign contributions and the enormous fortunes accumulated by the aid of favoritism in government. Contributions, and in return money out of the pockets of the people—then more contributions, repaid by more money taken from the pockets of the people. It is a "vicious circle," or what may be called an "endless chain." To fix the principle in the memory, I venture to illustrate it by a story I heard many years ago:

A visitor commended a little boy for taking medicine so willingly. "But," explained the boy,

"Mamma gives me five cents every time I take a dose."

"What do you do with the money?" asked the stranger.

"I put it in the bank," replied the boy.

"And what do you do with the money in the bank?" asked the stranger.

"Mamma uses it to buy more medicine," replied the boy.

When the rank and file of the people understand what the rule of the rich means, they will become fully aware of the change that has been made in the policy of the government. Lincoln, following the philosophy of Jefferson, advocated a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Now we have a government by the representatives of Big Business for the benefit of Big Business. When the awakening comes, it will not take the voters long to reassert their power and make the government again responsive to the people's will and an expression of the people's welfare. W. J. BRYAN.

A LIVING WAGE

The Railway Labor Board has caused widespread discussion of a very fundamental question when it refused to consider the establishment of a living wage. It is not a new proposition and can not be settled by the action of any one board or court.

The minimum wage has long had its advocates and its opponents; it is one of those class questions which is sure to arouse heated controversy. To the capitalist the demand for a minimum wage seems very unreasonable—as unreasonable as the suggestion of a maximum profit. His idea is that he should be permitted to pay as little as possible and to make as much as possible. Society, on the other hand, is interested in fixing a limit to capitalistic greed—quite willing to limit pressure upon the producers, as well as extortion upon the consumers. Society is as much interested in its own protection as the capitalist is in his own prosperity.

The real question involved in the labor dispute is not whether abstract justice requires the fixing of a minimum wage, based upon what is regarded as absolutely necessary for existence in comfort, but whether any one group of laborers should be singled out and given this protection without regard to its effect upon others equally worthy. If, for instance, those who toil in certain lines of occupation are guaranteed an income sufficient for their need the burden does not fall entirely upon the employers, but is handed on to those who purchase the employers—in the case under consideration the patrons of the railroads. The farmers constitute a third of the nation—there are more farmers than there are skilled laborers. If those engaged in the railroad business are to be protected from wages unreasonably low, by what logic shall we refuse to protect the farmers from prices unreasonably low? The farmers' wages are concealed in the price which he receives for his products and these wages are sometimes entirely inadequate. And so with the wages of unskilled labor. How shall these be protected?

The Labor Board has opened up a very large question; discussion will bring out the truth and the truth is what we want. Why not consider a minimum wage for all labor and a maximum price for all farmers? And why not a maximum profit for the middleman? W. J. BRYAN.

Bryan Elected Governor

Charles W. Bryan was successful in the November election, being elected governor of Nebraska by a majority of upwards of 50,000. The exact majority will be given in a later issue as the ballots had not been officially canvassed at the time this issue of The Commoner goes to press.

In addition to Mr. Bryan's election as governor, Charles W. Pool, a Democrat, was elected secretary of state, and the Democrats gained three congressmen in Nebraska. Ex-Governor John H. Morehead, Democrat, was elected in the First congressional district by a majority of about 3,000. Former Lieutenant-Governor Edgar Howard, Democrat, was elected in the Third congressional district by about 2,500 majority, and ex-Governor Shallenberger, Democrat, was elected to congress from the Fifth district by a majority of about 2,000.

President Harding carried Nebraska two years ago by about 130,000 majority. The Republicans this year elected their candidate for United States senator, Mr. Howell, by about 75,000 majority, elected all the state officers with the exception of governor and secretary of state, elected a majority of both branches of the legislature and elected three congressmen. Two years ago the Republicans elected all six congressmen.

Although the entire Democratic ticket was supported by all elements of the party, Mr. Hitchcock speaking in the campaign in behalf of Mr. Charles W. Bryan for governor and both Mr. W. J. and Charles W. Bryan campaigning throughout the state for the re-election of Senator Hitchcock, the latter was not successful at the polls. Senator Hitchcock's defeat is attributed to causes that had no connection with the issues of the present campaign. Senator Hitchcock's platform and the views he expressed during the Nebraska campaign were in entire accord with those of The Commoner, and his defeat is not only deeply regretted by all Democrats, but the people of the state suffer a distinct loss by his removal from the Senate, where he is recognized as the leader of his party and where he could be of great service to not only the people of Nebraska, but of great service to the nation.

Charles W. Bryan was elected governor on issues which in a large measure affected only the state. His attack on high taxes and the specific program which he outlined for placing the state again on a business basis and putting the state government back into the hands of the people proved to be very popular with the voters.

Further information about the Nebraska campaign will be published in a later issue. Below will be found telegrams exchanged between Senator Hitchcock and Charles W. Bryan, also between Mr. Randall, Republican candidate for