

united action, such men as C. B. Hoffman of Enterprise, Kas.; Prof. Vincent and others, have devoted a great deal of time to building up the Farmers' Co-operative Shipping association, which began business July 8, 1903, and by December 1 of that year was operating 31 stations in Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska, and had handled over a million bushels of grain.

In view of the fact that in Nebraska especially there are a large number of independent farmers' elevators, whose members refuse to become members of the Farmers' Co-operative Shipping association, it is probable that Messrs. Vincent, Hoffman, and their co-laborers have at times felt discouraged because their project has not grown as rapidly as conditions would seem to warrant. But The Independent believes that this apparent slow growth is rather encouraging than otherwise.

It is undoubtedly a fact that if every farmer in Nebraska, or in the middle west, or in the entire United States, were a stockholder in one giant co-operative association, designed not only for marketing grain, but also for selling other farm products and purchasing supplies needed upon the farm, that it would be of immense advantage to agriculturists. But the very nature of agriculture, and the individualistic lives led by farmers, render the building up of such a co-operative institution a task requiring much time and an indefinite amount of hard work.

As The Independent views the situation, there is not the compelling necessity for co-operative action by farmers such as has brought about the rapid concentration in other lines. Besides, there are no "special privileges" in the way of legislation and favoritism from the great transportation companies, to aid in the farmers' movement toward co-operation—and these tend to retard the work of organization.

But all of these independent farmers' elevators are schools teaching co-operation. They are the "awkward squads" in the great army which will doubtless ultimately be formed in line of battle. Even if it were possible today to make every farmer in the United States a stockholder in a farmers' trust, it would likely break down before a year, because a great majority of farmers are yet untrained and unfitted for co-operation. Farm life has developed strong individualism in the farmer, but has tended to make him a sort of Ishmaelite. He is inclined to be unduly suspicious of his fellowmen—not because of anything inherent in his nature, but because his environment makes it easy for him to be suspicious. And until he can by actual experience learn to have a little more confidence in his fellows, the ultimate farmers' trust must still be a long way off.

The organization and successful operation of local, independent, co-operative concerns, however, by drilling the "awkward squads" into soldiers trained to the manual of co-operation, must finally make it easier to build up the bigger organizations. After another year has elapsed, and the Farmers' Co-operative Shipping association has demonstrated its ability to render the farmers better service than a local co-operative concern could do, there should be little difficulty in adding to it a large number of the present independent concerns. The home concern teaches the farmer that co-operation is a benefit to him, wears off the sharp corners of his individualism, and gives him more confidence in his fellow men. When that is accomplished, he will be ripe for the greater co-operation.

A crusade for "dollar gas" has been started by the Lincoln News, but up to date has not assumed startling proportions. However, The Independent wishes it success. With \$350,000 worth of actual property, the gas corporation is paying interest on over a million of

bonded debt and trying to squeeze out dividends on two and a half millions of stock. The News says: "The result of this crusade will be, either that the gas company must reduce its rates or there will be municipal ownership, with its various drawbacks. The public prefers to deal with private corporations because it is too busy to go into the business itself, but it must insist that the private corporations deal fairly. The Lincoln company has not done so. It must do so or suffer the consequences."

MR. BRYAN'S BANQUET SPEECH

The personality of Mr. Bryan has always given him a warm corner in the hearts of Nebraska populists. Many of them do not believe that he takes sufficiently advanced grounds on the questions of money and transportation, and some of them have thought that he clings too tenaciously to the name "democrat" and to the fetish of party regularity—but they love and honor him nevertheless because of his undoubted sincerity, courage and honesty of purpose.

Accordingly, it was to be expected that the banquet, given Monday night in honor of his home-coming, should be attended by a goodly number of populists from over the state. His speech was especially pleasing to populists, who had felt that his action and editorial utterances relative to the recent campaigns in Iowa and Ohio portended that his regard for party regularity would induce him to submit to a compromise platform and candidate for the sake of harmony. He spoke in no uncertain tones regarding the impossibility of "harmony" with the plutocratic element of his party. "We want the trust magnates against us, not for us," he declared, continuing that no reform is possible with the money-changers in charge of the party. If he could have his way, the St. Louis convention would first of all reaffirm every plank of the Kansas City platform, and then add planks to cover present needs. There must be no going back and no apologies.

Bishop L. B. Heller, Belmar, N. J.: "Best thing in your paper is Bigelow's sermon. I am sick of politics."

The Independent has been favored by the Hearst Syndicate, 15 Spruce street, New York, with a copy of Representative Hearst's address, "sent in reply to various invitations to attend Jackson day celebrations," and regrets that lack of space prevents its reproduction entire. Mr. Hearst insists that "the criminal trusts must be destroyed, because they menace prosperity," but is rather indefinite as to the method of destroying them. If the proposed destruction is to be accomplished by a shifting of tariff schedules and criminal prosecutions only, and no resort is had to government ownership and control of the two great factors in the distribution of wealth—money and transportation—then The Independent hasn't much faith in it. Mr. Hearst's attitude on the question of transportation, as evidenced by his newspapers, would indicate that he would use also the weapon of government ownership to wipe out the "criminal trusts." But there is still the question of absolute control by government of the amount of money to be coined and issued, and upon this Mr. Hearst's attitude is not so clear.

Former Attorney General Smyth said Monday night at the Bryan banquet regarding fusion: "It may be that it is at an end because impracticable, but no man who contributed to its creation and assisted in its maintenance can feel aught but a sense of pride that he was permitted to do so." That is a sensible way to look at it. Our populist brethren who live in states where corporation democrats

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are in the saddle, have never understood the situation in Nebraska, where for the past eight or ten years the moving spirits in the democratic party men like Mr. Smyth, have been better exponents of real populism than many who called themselves populists. There need be no recriminations or regrets over the past in Nebraska on the part of either populists or democrats. Nor need the past dictate future action.

Wm. Randolph Hearst has made a public statement of his position on rational issues. He favors "organization and combination whenever the people are allowed to participate fully in the economies and advantages which result from combination," which is consistent with his attitude toward the labor unions. He believes "the tariff is more important today than ever, because of its vital influence upon the industrial combination," quoting Haymeyer's statement that the "tariff is the mother of trusts." "The distribution of wealth," says Mr. Hearst, "is just as important as its creation. Prosperity does not mean excessive wealth for a few, combined with poverty of the masses. The labor union in enforcing a high scale of wages brings about the distribution of wealth throughout the entire community."

Republican papers call attention to the fact that Chairman Jones of the democratic national committee, in his call for the St. Louis convention, "differs in a marked degree" from the call he made four years ago. "This one," they aver, "is a straight appeal to the regular democracy of the country. It does not include an invitation to the 'conservative reform element,' as did the call four years ago. In other words, the democratic national committee has shaken out the populists." These papers overlook the fact that Chairman Jones probably reads the papers and knew something about the conference which met at Denver last July, where the populists declared for independent national political action. They are not in the least worried at the "shaking out."

THEY NEVER THINK

How Three Dozen Wall Street Magnates Govern and Make 80,000,000 People Their Servants

New York, Jan. 13, 1904.—(Editorial Correspondence.)—The wagons which carry the supplies of groceries and vegetables to the people here have their most attractive signs painted on the top of the wagon covers. It is a wise provision, for the cliff dwellers, peering out of their caves high up in the air, can look down and read them and make their signals ordering the commissary supplies for the day. Many thousand more people see the signs painted on the roofs of the wagons than those that are displayed on the sides.

The lives of all of us who live upon the broad plains and wide reaches of the middle and far west are controlled in a large measure by the people who live upon a few square miles of territory surrounding this point. Here is the real seat of political power. Here it has been for the last forty years and will continue for some time.

What a few men want, whose offices are all to be found within one-half mile square of territory on the lower point of Manhattan island, the government does. The power that these men exercise comes from the obedient compliance with their wishes of the million or so of voters crowded together here.

These voters live in miserable caves called "flats," high upon the cliffs along the canons misnamed "streets," in many of which the sunlight never penetrates. They go through a daily routine that never varies, with perhaps a few days off in mid-summer—AND THEY NEVER THINK. A teacher of English gave, as a theme for his pupils to write upon, a description of the storm that occurred some time ago when the wind blew at the rate of 100 miles an hour. When the papers were turned in they were the conventional description of a storm such as the pupils had read in books, such as "A dark cloud rose slowly above the horizon, grew blacker and blacker as it spread out over the earth, the lightnings flashed, peals of thunder followed each other in quick repetition," etc.

Now, the truth was that there was little or no thunder and to a pupil walking along the canons, with inhabited cliffs from 50 to 400 feet high on either side of him, the horizon is almost overhead. These pupils were like their fathers and mothers. They could neither see things as they are nor think. They follow the trail as a mule does the tow path along the bank of a canal.

This shows that even the school boys travel along in their intellectual life at the bottom of deep canons where there is no view to be obtained except of a little line of light overhead and the granite blocks beneath them which have been worn smooth and glassy by the feet of the millions who have passed and repassed along the same way. They, in youth, follow the well-worn path over the granite blocks to and from school and in later life to and from the place of business and NEVER THINK. Of the multitudes rushing along the streets not one in ten thousand has a line of thought upon his face. There is a similarity—a sameness about them all—a sort of a doughy, putty face that never shows a gleam of intelligence or interest in anything except when the dollar is in sight. The horses upon the streets that never hear the roar of the elevated trains, pay no attention to the rusing by of the clanging electric cars or the horns of the automobilists, have exactly the same kind of an expression, and live practically the same kind of life in its different grades. The over-burdened dray horse, beaten and underfed, the deformed-docked-slicked up carriage horse with the liveried footman and coachman, the racers in the marble stables are exact representations of the grades of people who throng the streets of New York and do about the same amount of "thinking" as their brother human toilers.

Managing this million or so voters who never think are about three dozen great intellects practicing the Marxian theory of "economic determinism." With them there is no "ought" or "ought not." It is simply a drive to accumulate millions, and they handle this million of voters as the drivers do the horses on the streets. Hundreds of thousands of them they overwork, underfeed and beat and abuse from year to year. A few more are kept sleek and fat and still few more live in "marbled halls." They range from the sweatshop to the men of enormous salaries hired to manage the great corporations.

The upper grades do thinking along certain lines, all of which are guided by the principle that the accumulation of dollars is the final aim of life. All this is not to say that there are