

A Populist Conference

The editor of The Independent has received several letters from earnest workers in the populist cause residing in several different states, suggesting a populist conference, or taking it for granted that such a conference is to be held, asking when and where. There seems to be a desire that such a conference should be held. The Independent would like to receive an expression of the rank and file on that subject. It is no use for a few leading men of the people's party to get together and formulate plans for action, unless the members of the party generally intend to support such action. The Independent would be glad to hear from the party on that subject.

Banks continue to break at an astonishing rate. So far, in almost every case, it has been pure swindling, absolute dishonesty, except where as in one or two cases the banker has proved to be a bigger fool than a goldbrick purchaser. The courts continue to give encouragement to bank swindlers, by a leniency which they show to no other class of criminals. An Iowa man who bilked a bank for \$250,000 was sent to jail for three months, another who embezzled \$25,000 was given thirty months in jail, and then the authorities caught a man stealing a dollar and soaked him for ten years.

A new book has recently been published called "Poverty." The author is Robert Hunter and the publisher Macmillan & Co., N. Y. The work is attracting a good deal of attention. By "Poverty," Mr. Hunter means "the inability to obtain those necessities which will permit the people to maintain a state of physical efficiency." Mr. Hunter shows from the records that 24 per cent of the inhabitants of New York were compelled to apply for relief, 14 per cent of the inhabitants of Manhattan, the island on which New York city is built, were evicted because they could not pay rent and 40 per cent of the burials in New York city were in the potter's field. Besides that 2,000,000 of the wageworkers in the United States were without employment from four to six months. That is what plutocracy calls prosperity. Mr. Hunter therefore comes to the conclusion that "there is something grievously wrong with our social and economic environment." That is what populists have been saying for ten years.

Wall street stock exchange has sunk so low that it has no effect on the financial interests of the country. The operators can bet, bankrupt and rob one another as often and as much as they please and the country at large pays no more attention to them than it would to any other set of gamblers. The time was when if there was a panic on the stock exchange everybody was excited, and bankers everywhere began to fear a run on their banks. Now bankers, outside of those that lend money on Wall street collateral, pay no attention to the fracas there.

The comparative statistics of presidential elections since 1868, show that Judge Parker was the weakest candidate ever nominated by the democratic party for president. Even Greeley had 44 per cent of the popular vote, while Parker got only 33 per cent. With such facts as that staring them in the face, western and southern democrats still refuse to cut loose from the Wall street gang of Belmonts and Hills, join with the genuine reform forces and sweep plutocracy out of power.

In the counties where they live and where the people have a knowledge of their characters, the republican candidates in this state are very often and very severely repudiated, while the candidates of the opposition are supported by large numbers of all parties. When the people know a republican candidate, they generally don't want him. In Polk county, the republican candidates who did not live in

that county had an average majority of 132. Mickey had lived there for twenty-five years and the people knew him and Berge beat Mickey by 600. On the other hand in the county where Berge lived and Mickey has been residing for two years so that the people had become somewhat acquainted with both, Berge ran ahead of his ticket almost 1,000 votes. The same state of affairs was evident when Mickey ran against Thompson. Thompson's neighbors voted for him almost unanimously. When the people know these republican candidates they don't want them, but it is only possible for a few to be acquainted with a candidate for a state office.

The Springfield Republican has at last come to the conclusion that "we have got to deal with railroads as monopolies and nothing else." Glad to see the advancement that it is making. That is what the populists have said all the time.

Two men who were serving out terms in jail were elected to offices in Boston the other day. One was elected alderman and the other a member of the legislature. Boston must be hard up for la-makers when it takes a large per cent of them from the jails and sends them to the city hall and state house.

What is to be done with the starving thousands of people in the eastern cities no one seems to know. Dispatches from Brooklyn say: "An appalling condition of destitution prevails in Brooklyn. The almshouse at Flatbush shelters almost 1,600 inmates, an increase of 40 per cent over the number housed there a year ago. The society for improving the condition of the poor has almost doubled its force of investigators, and is supplying immediate aid to a greater number of applicants than ever before. Every relief agency finds its functions doubled and its treasury unable to bear the strain." No such condition at this time of the year was ever known in this country before. The paupers increase in exactly the same ratio that the millionaires increase. It could not be otherwise. The wealth of the country can not be concentrated in few hands without producing just such results.

The Boston Advertiser calls attention to the increased requests for aid made upon the associated charities and other benevolent organizations. It says that in many instances the applications come from families coming from New York. While the New York dailies will not say anything about the horrible conditions there, consisting of millionaires on one side and starving tens of thousands on the other, the facts are slowly coming to the knowledge of the whole nation.

The Civic Federation of New York, an organization that is to advance holiness, righteousness and peace on earth and especially among corporation employers, working men and manufacturers, has elected August Belmont president. When that thing was done, all the angels of peace flapped their wings and burst out in one grand hallelujah! As for the gourmets at the dinner where this thing was done, they did not sing the doxology, for the Chicago university had abolished that and the blessings they are looking for were not to come from the Most High, but from Belmont. Carnegie was there, but he did not say anything about Homestead and the Pinkertons.

Rockefeller has been working precisely the same game with the Colorado Fuel and Iron company that he did with Standard Oil away back in the beginning of his career, that is, he is getting a rebate equal to the price of the product shipped. He has been playing that game on coal and some other things. And Paul Morton is a trusted cabinet officer of the president

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who is going to stop rebates. We in Nebraska who know something of Paul Morton and the Santa Fe can only lean back in our easy chairs and smile at all that. In one case it was proved that the Santa Fe charged \$5.90 cents freight on coal shipped by an outsider and delivered the same coal from the same mine to the Fuel and Iron company for \$5.75.

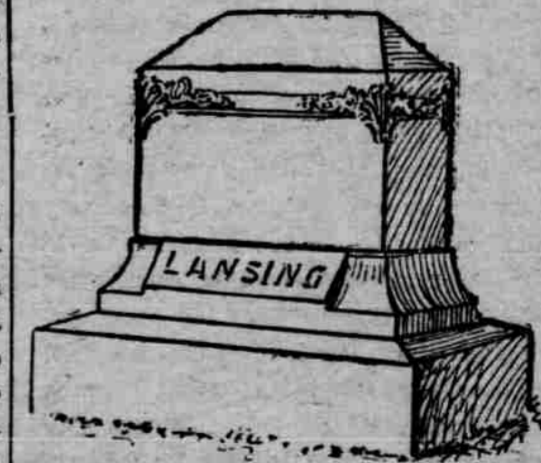
The three daughters of the late Mr. Leiter are now all provided for with English husbands of quality. One married a viceroy, one a lord and one a major. Americans will send over a million or so a year to enable them to maintain their position among the aristocracy and nobility. If the shipments of farm produce continue to fall off as they have during the last year, that may be a very difficult thing to do in a few years.

The testimony recently given shows that the free pass system is one of the most potential features of rebates. Officials of the western roads have been holding a consultation over the matter and it is reported that the pass system is to be greatly modified. The general furor over the country caused by the evidence that rebating is practiced by all the roads, has produced a feeling among railroad officials that more caution must be used.

The public utility corporations of New York city owe the city \$22,500,000 of taxes and most of it is three years

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past due. If one of the humble citizens of that city does not pay his taxes his property is seized and sold. Not so with the corporations. There is one law there for the common people and another for the corporations, which is just as it should be as long as the people insist on sending corporation agents to the legislature and congress.