

**POPULIST
CENSORSHIP.**

The supreme court of Nebraska is probably receiving more attention throughout the country by reason of its contempt proceedings than it ever did because of its legal opinions. The New York Tribune thus refers to the court:

"If we remember rightly, Mr. William J. Bryan of Nebraska is a great stickler for democratic principles, including the freedom of the press. He ought to turn his attention to affairs at home and see that his populist supporters, in their anxiety to control the election machinery next fall and give him the state's electoral vote, do not invoke to muzzle the press those tyrannical court processes which he so vigorously denounces when exercised to keep striking railroad men from wrecking trains. If there is anything worse than a mandamus or injunction in the eyes of a good populist like Mr. Bryan it is a process for contempt of court issued when the alleged contempt is not committed in the presence of the court. When Debs was summoned for contempt because of action among the strikers of Chicago it was a high-handed outrage, but when a Nebraska editor, far away from the court room, sees fit in a moderate fashion to discuss a public question involving the rights of the citizens of Nebraska, the populist judges summon him for contempt of court.

"The city government of Omaha is republican and the populists want to get possession of the police and election machinery. Accordingly they have trumped up a suit attacking the law under which the local authorities control these functions and seeking to restore to the populist governor the appointment of city commissioners. When Governor Holcomb, the former populist governor was in office the same question came up and, it is alleged, he was thoroughly committed as a politician to the position which his populist friends now take. Holcomb is now on the supreme bench and one of the judges on this question in which he himself has taken so strong an interest. A republican newspaper when the suit was brought in temperate language expressed the objections of the republicans to having the case tried in the supreme court, and urged that Judge Holcomb ought not to sit in judgment on it. This would seem to be a fair exercise of the right to comment on public affairs, and it might even seem to have been a duty to the court to warn it of a widespread popular feeling of this kind. But Judge Holcomb and his populist colleagues, who form a majority of the court, were angered and have ordered the editor to show cause why he should not be punished for contempt.

"This action is regarded by many people in Nebraska as a high-handed

attempt to silence the press and smooth the populist path to the seizure of such powers as the party does not already possess in the state. Mr. Bryan ought to consider it. It will be difficult to distinguish populist despotism and censorship from the other brands of those articles which he and his party are so fond of denouncing if he does not take prompt steps to moderate the zeal of his followers."

**SUPPLY AND
DEMAND.**

In his speech at Richmond, Virginia, September 19, 1896, found in Volume I of the Prophecies of Bryan, ("First Battle"), the 16 to 1 candidate thus interpreted economic law:

"We apply the law of supply and demand to money. We say that the value of a dollar depends upon the number of dollars and that you can raise the value of dollars by making the dollars scarce. And we charge that our opponents are in favor of making money scarce because they are controlled by those who want money dear."

He warns the people of a conspiracy to corner all the gold in the world and make it dear. He charges his opponents with the diabolical intent of making money scarce. Four years have elapsed since Prophet Bryan made this startling discovery and courageously proclaimed it to the world. How have these four years borne out the prediction of the exponent of calamity? When he charged his opponents of plotting to make money scarce the per capita circulation was \$22.96. Today it is \$26. Further comment is useless.

**TARIFF REFORM
IN NEBRASKA.**

THE CONSERVATIVE publishes elsewhere a letter from Mr. Albert Watkins, of Lincoln, one of the most scholarly men in the west, and for many years connected with democratic journalism. In view of the prominence of Nebraska in national politics, Mr. Watkins' reference to political history in this state is of peculiar interest:

"Coming west I advocated free trade for some twenty years. This doctrine was unpopular—it seems to me because it was so simple and plain. An exclusively agricultural country, like these western plains, palpably has everything to gain and nothing to lose by unlimited and unrestricted markets for its vast surplus of food staples. By the time a resolute band of doctrinaires, as they were contemptuously called, had changed a small minority of tariff reformers into a large majority, but who in the meantime had barred themselves out of congress and all other elective offices, the money question came along. Of course those of us who impaled ourselves on the principle of free trade repeated the self-immolation, with the gold standard as a weapon—and here we are. A gold democrat has just as much chance of

being elected to anything in Nebraska just now as a tariff reformer had thirty years ago."

As Mr. Watkins says, the gold democrats have already seen their views upon the tariff accepted by a majority of the people of Nebraska. The trust, the child of protection, verifies democratic prophecy of twenty years ago. Then, too, the growing demand for foreign markets has been potent in educating the people into accepting democratic economic theories. They now realize that exclusion at home means restriction abroad. Retaliation is the great principle of trade. The American producer of meat is painfully aware of this because of the recent action of Germany in excluding his porker from German markets. He now accepts *in toto* the gospel of tariff reform. He sees that it is destructive of his interests to close foreign markets to his products in order to keep foreign manufactured goods from American markets and thereby enable American manufacturers to combine and control the price of their products. The farmer is thus doubly injured. He is deprived of an enlarged market for his products and he must sell at a lower price and at the same time, because of the tariff trust, he must buy at a higher price.

As the word of these "doctrinaires" upon the tariff has been given the stamp of approval, so their opinions upon the money question will be accepted and completely verified. The gold democrats have been the pioneers in seeking economic truth. As is frequently the case with pioneers, the rewards for their self-sacrifice and patriotic devotion to principle have gone to others.

During the last ten years, according to the Burlington Hawkeye, only 180 complaints, of sufficient importance to justify a hearing, were filed with the interstate commerce commission. When we consider the large volume of business handled each year by the railroads it is indeed a favorable showing for the companies. THE CONSERVATIVE can see nothing in this record to justify taking from the railroads and entrusting to five men, who constitute the interstate commerce commission, the power of determining freight rates. The railroads are capable of attending to this important part of their business and in a manner, too, that meets with the general approval of their patrons. Where there is cause for complaint the law already provides a remedy, viz., by regular legal process through the established courts of the republic.

The suggestion of the Hawkeye to do away with the commission is not a bad one. Why pay Power Unlimited. \$250,000 a year to a commission to hear less than eighteen