

# The Commoner.

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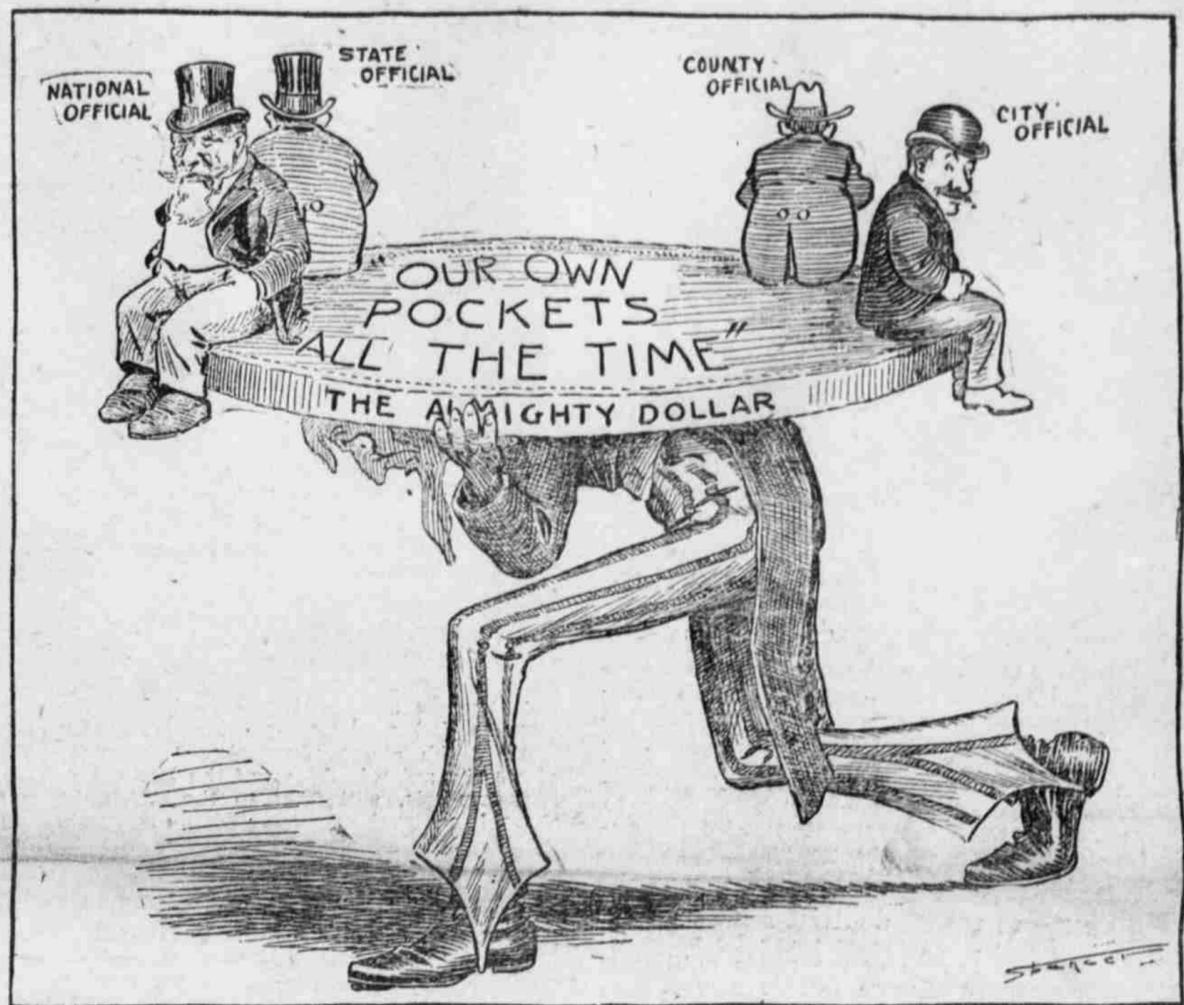
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### NEW GAME LAW NEEDED

The ruthless slaughter of bears and bob cats by the president, suggests the necessity for a more stringent game law. Now that the hunting of big game has been formally established as the proper presidential sport, steps ought to be taken to preserve a sufficient supply for future years. It is reported that the presidential party killed six bears and two cats during the first ten days of the hunt, or three-fourths of an animal per day. Now, if the president only hunts half of each year he is likely to exhaust the supply and leave no excitement for the presidents that come after him. As one who has felt at times a spasmodic interest in matters affecting to the chief executive the editor of The Commoner, in the name of fair play, appeals for legislation fixing some reasonable limit to the butchery of ferocious beasts.



What's the Matter With U S

## Has the President the Courage to be a Reformer?

Has President Roosevelt the courage to be a reformer? There is no doubt that a large number of people have faith that he is going to make a vigorous assault upon the intrenchments behind which predatory wealth is massed. It was this belief that secured for him a very considerable democratic vote last fall, and more recent evidences of reform tendencies have brought him the commendation and congratulation of the people in general. He has said and done some things to excite the hope so widely expressed. If he justifies this hope he will retire from office with great popularity among the masses; if he disappoints this hope the disappointment will be the greater because of the expectation that has been aroused.

While the question of imperialism raises the same issue between the rights of the masses who pay the taxes and the profits of the few who live by exploitation, still several other questions are involved in the discussion of imperialism and its consideration is not necessary for the purposes of this article. The same may be said of the labor question and of the money question. The issue between democracy and plutocracy not only manifests itself in these questions but it is present in every problem that confronts us today; it will, however, require all the space allowed for this article to consider three of the questions which are calling for attention at this time, namely, the railroad question, the trust question and the tariff question.

During the lull before the storm promised at the extra session, which is looked for in Octo-

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ber, it may be well to consider the work to be done and the qualities necessary for its successful performance.

What is the work to be done? The president has asked for legislation empowering federal officials to fix railroad rates, and this request has aroused almost unanimous opposition among the railroads. The influence of the transportation companies was not sufficient to prevent the passage of a bill by the house, but was sufficient to prevent the incorporation in that bill of remedies for all of the admitted evils. But the bias of the senate in favor of the great corporations was too strong to permit of the passage of the rate bill, even though it had gone through the house by a practically unanimous vote. The railroad magnates recognize that when the fixing of railroad rates is put into the hands of government officials, such officials will be compelled to act, for public opinion will coerce them

into the performance of their duty. If they fail to give the people the needed protection, the people will lay the responsibility upon those who appoint the officials, and thus party interest will become a compelling force. Then, too, public officials must act in the open. They can not be parties to secret understandings. While the regulation of railroad rates is in the hands of the railway magnates, the general public is in ignorance of what is going on. Individuals may suffer from extortion or discrimination, but their appeals and complaints are only heard in their immediate vicinity. The record of official boards and commissions, however, is published in documentary form and scattered broadcast over the land. It is only necessary to remember that the great railroad systems now traverse every state and have their paid representatives in almost every country to understand what a tremendous influence the roads can exert to prevent, or at least to delay, legislation. And their power is multiplied where they act upon a body which, like the senate, is not directly responsible to the voters. If the president secures the passage of a really effective rate measure he will deserve great credit and will receive it.

But the railroad question is only one of the questions which he has to meet. The railroad question can not be investigated without disclosing the intimate relation which exists between the railroads and the trusts, and as a reform principle necessarily grows and extends itself in all directions, it is quite certain that the discussion of the rate bill will compel the investiga-