

tions to the right to transport and deliver goods, legal obstructions to the right to buy goods—in a word, monopoly obstructions to competition, the only natural and the only fair regulator of industry—be repealed.

That is our suggestion regarding the direction in which to go. It is the right direction both morally and economically. So far as concerns the first step to take, it is of small moment provided it be in this direction. The first step may be the restoration to municipalities of municipal monopolies. That would make competition freer. It may be the restoration of any state function or national function now in private hands to state and national control respectively. It may be the abolition or reduction of tariff duties, which interfere with foreign trade. Or it may be, what in our judgment is nearer at hand than anything else, and would be more quickly effective—the release of competitive industry from all taxation direct and indirect, on tools, buildings and products, and the taxation instead of site-value exclusively. As the Columbus (O.) Press-Post of August 12 succinctly says:

The power to tax is the power to destroy. With that power intelligently used, the people could eliminate the element of monopoly grown industry, increase the security of all legitimate forms of property, and increase the opportunities for remunerative employment for both labor and capital.

But as the Press-Post also says: "No one is going to drive the people to freedom," and "until they gain wisdom we must expect their blind protests to end in failure." All that an intelligent and honest statesman can do is to fight for remedies that public sentiment does welcome, provided, and provided only, but positively provided, that they lead on in the right direction and not in the wrong direction.

That most of these remedies must be adopted locally is true. But great national policies are not necessarily subjects for congressional action only. It is coming to be more clearly seen that national leaders can render inestimable national service by making themselves champions of policies that

can be established only by local action. Even in congress, though there is important work to do regarding trusts in the direction we have indicated, it must be done by repealing old measures rather than by enacting new ones. The national statute books are full of legislation obstructive of competition, a great deal of which the public would gladly see repealed if agitations to that end were set on foot. The most effectively obstructive national statute of this kind is the tariff law. If that were repealed and a system of direct taxation substituted, one strong monopoly prop would be removed from the support of the trusts. If it were reduced to a revenue basis, the prop would be greatly weakened. If only protection for trust goods were abolished, a fine beginning would be made. The repeal of national legislation obstructive to competition is the kind of congressional action to promote, and not laws in restraint of one of the effects of obstructive legislation. The latter would at best be like an attempt to "tie up locomotives with pack thread;" the former would be like "digging under the walls of the castle."

#### VII.

In this review of the Commoner's article our emphasis has rested upon political and economic considerations. But moral principle is primary. We agree with Mr. Bryan that "there is no way of judging what is expedient," except on the theory that the best principle is the best policy; and that "we can only do what we believe to be right and accept the consequences." The case against the trust rests at last, therefore, upon moral grounds. Laws restraining non-invasive individual action are morally wrong. In essence they legalize personal slavery. Monopoly of land, whether worth little or much, is morally wrong. In the degree in which it operates, it divests men of their indispensable birthright. To propose the repeal of the one and the abolition of the other is, consequently, to propose a righteous consummation. To propose even a single step in that direction, however short, is to propose a righteous policy. When, moreover, such a policy appears, so evidently as it does with reference to the trusts, to tend toward

the removal of a great burden which the people are eager to escape, it is not only morally righteous but politically expedient. Political questions like the trust question must be decided, as Mr. Bryan rightly admonished Mr. Watterson with reference to another moral question in American politics, "by the application of fixed and immutable principles."

## NEWS

At the close last week of our report of the labor controversy in the steel trade, President Shaffer had issued his call for a general strike. It was to begin, unless sooner amicably settled by the trust, with the last turn of work on the 10th. Before the hour then fixed for making the strike general, Mr. Shaffer, in behalf of the strikers, authorized a proposition by third parties to Mr. Morgan, representing the trust, that the dispute be submitted to arbitration. Mr. Morgan curtly refused, saying "There is nothing to arbitrate." Mr. Shaffer is named as authority for this statement. The trust refuses to give the public any information. At the close of the first full working day after the general call went into effect, the 12th, it was estimated that 14,000 men had responded. The same estimates put the total number on strike at that time, inclusive of these additional strikers, at 59,000 out of approximately 200,000 employes. These figures are conservative, probably excessively so. Some mills that had been closed by the strike in its earlier stages were got again into operation by the trust, and others that had thus far remained in operation were stopped in response to the general call. The balance, however, is reported to have been against the strikers.

An ominous manifestation—ominous to the strikers, but entirely satisfactory to the trust—is the refusal of some lodges of the Amalgamated association to obey the strike call. Notable among these are the employes of the Federal Steel company, one of the constituent concerns of the general trust. A vote was taken on the 11th by two lodges of Amalgamated men employed by this branch of the trust at South Chicago. They are under a labor contract with the predecessor of their present employer, which has come to their pres-

ent employer as an asset in the process of the formation of the steel trust. The question before them, therefore, seems to be whether they should give priority to their transferred labor obligations or to the Amalgamated association of their trade. At any rate they decided on the 11th, by a vote of 190 to 47 in a membership of 572, to disobey the strike call. It is understood however, that they offer to support the strike financially. Milwaukee and Joliet employes of the Federal company, and Amalgamated men at East St. Louis, Ill., are reported to have taken similar action. In consequence of these discouraging decisions, Michael F. Tighe, assistant secretary of the Amalgamated association, came to Chicago on the 13th, armed with plenary authority. Immediately upon his arrival he called a meeting of the South Chicago lodges for the 14th, to reconsider their insubordinate action of the 11th. Only 72 members responded. Mr. Tighe addressed them at length, explaining that he was not seeking financial aid in the west, but moral support. A motion to adjourn without reconsidering the vote of the 11th being made, Mr. Tighe warned the lodge, that if this motion were to carry he was authorized to revoke their charters. In the face of his warning the meeting at once adjourned by unanimous vote, and the charters were thereupon revoked. This revocation is subject to approval by the next annual convention of the Amalgamated association. But meantime, William C. Davis, district vice president, who alone has quit work, is the only union steel worker in Chicago.

An appeal for financial aid and moral encouragement was issued on the 12th by the Amalgamated association. It is addressed especially to members of labor organizations, but also to the general public. Even before the publication of this appeal, President Gompers, of the American Federation of Labor, had announced that his organization would support the strikers. He said:

We shall stand by the Amalgamated association in the present conflict to the full extent of our power, both morally and financially. We shall aid in every lawful way the men on strike or who may come out on strike to maintain the workers in their rights to organize and secure the extension of their organization, so that the only power which stands for their protection and advancement against the av-

arice of concentrated wealth may be perfected and perpetuated.

Several other important strikes, overshadowed by the greater importance of the steel strike, are in progress in the United States. One of them is a cigarmakers' strike in Tampa (alluded to editorially at page 274), which has been checked by the kidnaping and secret imprisonment, by a local mob, of the strike leaders. Another is at its height in San Francisco. This is a fight between the Employers' association and the organized teamsters of that city. An agreement had been made between the organized teamsters and organized employing draymen. It existed down to the time of the recent convention of the Epworth league, when the draymen — both those who were organized and under contractual obligations with the Teamsters' union, and the nonunion concerns, formed a syndicate to raise prices for baggage delivery. In carrying out this arrangement a nonunion delivery company called upon a union drayman to haul certain baggage for it. Under its contract with the Teamsters' union, the union drayman could not use his teamsters for this purpose; but he nevertheless ordered them to do the work. They refused and were subsequently sustained not only by their own organization, but by a majority vote of the organization of draymen. At this point the Employers' association of San Francisco stepped in and threatened to boycott the draymen's organization unless it would compel its union teamsters to work for the nonunion concern. Influenced by that threat, the draymen's organization yielded, and the union drayman ordered his union teamsters to work for the nonunion concern. This caused the strike. Mayor Phelan has tried to settle it, but the Employers' association refuses to recede. One of the other large strikes is that of the New York garment makers (employes of "sweaters"), which we mentioned last at page 264. It has been partially successful, more than two-thirds of the manufacturing concerns having agreed to cooperate with the "sweaters" in improving the working conditions of the strikers. The strike is still on. So is the machinists' strike, mentioned last at page 135. Some concerns have yielded, but others have not. The storm center at present is at Chicago, where a large concern—the Allis-Chalmers plant—

is now trying to make up a working force by importing workmen from the East.

No other domestic news calls for special explanation. Neither is there any further trustworthy news regarding the Venezuela-Colombian situation, reported last week, except that the United States has ordered warships to Panama to protect railroad communication across the Isthmus, and that the representative in the United States of the Colombian insurgents has warned them to place no obstacle in the way of Isthmian traffic. But there is an unverified report, that Gen. Rafael Uribe Uribe, the insurrectionary leader in Colombia, was killed on the 27th, in battle at San Cristobal, Venezuela, where he was fighting with the Venezuelan troops against an armed invasion by the Colombian government.

From South Africa, however, comes news of a novel plan on the part of Great Britain for terminating the stubborn resistance of the Boers. It is nothing less than a public proclamation warning all citizens of the South African republic and the Orange Free State, that those who shall not have surrendered by September 15 will be banished forever. Our last reference to this war was made at page 250. Since that time the news has been meager and unreliable, owing to the British military censorship, which leading London papers now assert, upon the authority of clandestine mail advices, has been misleading. It has indicated, though, when read intelligently between the lines, that the British commander is completely baffled. Although the war is costing \$10,000,000 a week, according to the latest London reports, and the reconcentrado camps are thickly populated, the Boers are still unsubdued. Consequently the expatriation proclamation referred to above is resorted to. It was published on the 7th by Lord Kitchener. Reciting (1) the annexation of the two republics by Great Britain, and (2) her occupation of their seats of government, governmental machinery and principal railways; (3) the capture or surrender of 35,000 of their citizens, being a great majority; (4) that those still in arms are only few in number, without munitions, devoid of military organization, and unable to carry on regular warfare, yet (5) that they make isolated attacks upon small Brit-