

# The Public

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Mayor Jones, of Toledo, has announced his intention of supporting the Democratic ticket in Ohio this year. This is not because he prefers the candidates as individuals, nor the party as a whole, but because he believes in the principles for which the party in Ohio has declared.

One of the motives of imperialism was disclosed by Gov. Taft on the 11th at a public banquet in Manila. In the course of his after-dinner speech he asserted, to quote the news dispatch, that "laws granting franchises and mining rights were imperatively demanded." One part of his speech, however, which may be a misprint, but if not has a more encouraging sound, urged "laws prohibiting the sale of public lands and timber."

When the cotton mills of New England raised wages, the fact was heralded over the land as proof that the "advance agent of prosperity" had not "billed his show" in vain. The credit was claimed for Mr. McKinley. But now the New England cotton manufacturers announce a cut of 15 per cent. in wages to take effect on the 3d of September. Would it be patriotic or irreverent to rise up and remark that Mr. McKinley, the "advance agent of prosperity," appears to have gone over to the opposition and become the "advance agent of adversity?"

A complete confession of bafflement is embodied in the proclamation of the tory ministry of Great Britain, which warns the Boers that those

who do not surrender before September 15 will, when captured, be perpetually banished. More than once in the progress of their war of conquest has the tory ministry brought shame upon the British name, but it has remained for this proclamation to confess British weakness. At the same time it is an admission that on the part of the British the war has been one of conquest and not of defense. When the defenders of a country are told by its conqueror to stop defending or suffer perpetual exile instead of temporary military imprisonment if captured, the plea that the invaders are not invading is decidedly gauzy.

If it is true, as Mr. Shaffer asserts, and neither Mr. Morgan nor any of his lieutenants denies, that the steel trust has refused an arbitration offer, upon the ground that there is nothing to arbitrate, then all questioning in the public mind as to the responsibility for the steel strike should cease. As a matter of cold unsympathetic business judgment, the only interest of the public in this strike is with reference to its effect in disturbing business conditions. From that point of view it is objectionable, and the party responsible for the disturbance is the culpable party. Now the party to a quarrel who is properly responsible for disturbing other people, is not necessarily the one whose cause is wrong. It is the one who refuses to submit the quarrel to arbitration. That party in this case is not the strikers. It is the trust. But the trust says there is nothing to arbitrate. If this is true, and it might be, then the refusal to arbitrate is not a confession of culpability. Only refusals to arbitrate quarrels that are susceptible of arbitration make the party refusing responsible to the pub-

lic for disturbing it. The question, then, which the disturbed and complaining public must now ask itself is whether or not there is in the steel strike anything to arbitrate. That question is easily answered. The trust insists that the strikers' demands would force nonunion men into the union against their will. The strikers on the other hand assert that their demands involve nothing of the kind. Upon that issue apparently the conflict turns. The details of the strikers' demands are in themselves clearly susceptible of arbitration. Why not the question of whether the demands are hostile to nonunion men? Evidently this question could be arbitrated. Upon the face of the matter, therefore, if an offer to arbitrate has been rejected by the trust, the trust is responsible for the strike and will be so regarded by the calmest and the coldest business man who is not a partisan.

Exactly what the merits of the quarrel are, no one appears to know. Some of the leading papers which sympathize naturally rather than dutifully with the trust speak of the points of disagreement as slight. The New York Nation, for instance, describes them as seeming "to be very slight." The inference intended is that the strikers are making much ado about nothing. But it would be just as legitimate and more considerate to infer that it is the trust that is involving the country in all this turmoil over a slight disagreement. Why should the strikers be expected to give up slight differences, rather than the trust? What more can be asked of them, and what less of the trust, than that they arbitrate, since the differences are slight?

Perhaps the merits of the quarrel are obscure because neither party cares

to put into words its ultimate purpose. Whatever may be the position of either side at this juncture, each is probably playing for position, the one to unionize ultimately all the mills of the trust and the other to de-unionize them. On the one hand the Amalgamated association is planning to command the labor market in the steel industry; on the other, the steel trust is planning to command it. The plan of the latter can only be guessed at. It may try to bring about a condition like that between the railroad pool and railroad engineers, as indicated above; or, failing to force to the front a labor leader of suitable capacity and disposition for the purpose, it may try to crush the union.

In this struggle for control, the trust and its journalistic clique is making strenuous efforts to excite sympathy for nonunion men. And it must be conceded that much of what is said in their behalf would be true if they are really free to join the union or not. But these efforts are made in the worst of bad faith. It is not because nonunion men have rights as men that the piteous appeals for them are made. It is because the trust needs them. Nonunion men are to a trust as pawns in the game. It will sacrifice them at any moment to gain strength. When it does sacrifice them the plutocratic press will lose all that interest in their rights as men and brethren which it now exhibits. They will then be to the better classes only indistinguishable units in the despised lower classes of labor. It is not for the interests of the nonunion man that the trust pleads his cause, but for its own.

Mr. Shaffer, the president of the Amalgamated association and leader of the steel strike, was reported during the presidential campaign as having testified before the Industrial Commission in favor of trusts. Whether this particular report is true or not, it certainly is true that many leaders in the powerful labor unions have long regarded the trust as a natural and favorable develop-

ment, and have looked forward to a perfect organization of capital with which a perfect organization of labor might enter into partnership, the organization of capital controlling the goods market and the organization of labor controlling the labor market.

This idea in embryo had lodgment in the brain of John Jarrett, once a great labor leader but now employed by the steel trust. Mr. Jarrett used to advocate protective tariffs upon the rather comical plea that the tariff would enable employers to make greater profits and that workingmen could then coerce them into giving up a share by perfecting strong organizations. Comical as this plea was, it was seriously considered, and it made protectionists of workingmen at a great rate. It eventually landed Mr. Jarrett in a better job with the bosses than he had held with the workmen.

The typical trade union, with reference to a partnership between trust organizations and labor organizations, is that of the locomotive engineers, of which Mr. Arthur is the head. Mr. Arthur is a good business man, and the railroad combination deals through him smoothly with the engineers. If they have a fanciful grievance, Mr. Arthur calms them. If it is real, he adjusts it with the roads. It thus comes about that the locomotive engineers, as an organization, are upon a friendly footing with the railroad corporations. Mr. Arthur is a very wealthy man, although he has never been in receipt of a large income from his work, either as a locomotive engineer or as business head of the engineers' union. His fortune has been made by investments. It is suspected that railroad managers and manipulators have favored him with good advice regarding his investments; but however that may be no one suspects him of disloyalty to his organization. If he has made himself useful to railroad magnates, otherwise than by shielding them from labor disputes, in which he has also

faithfully served his union, it has been by impressing his followers with the idea that the railroad's interests are their interests, in congress, in legislatures, and at voting booths. The importance to the railroads of such a partnership with a powerful labor organization is manifest.

It should be equally so to the steel trust. Better than periodical labor conflicts and dependence upon unorganized labor which may at any time organize and make trouble, would be a business relationship, through a labor leader of broad business views and large business capacity, with a labor organization which would make reasonable service contracts with the trusts, and repose confidence in its leader when at election times he assured his followers that the trusts' interests and theirs were identical. Possibly Mr. Morgan had some such arrangement in view when he condescended to confer twice with Mr. Shaffer. He may have been measuring the man to determine whether this was a leader who could be trusted to do for the steel trust and its workmen what Mr. Arthur has done for the railroad pool and its engineers. If that was Mr. Morgan's purpose, he must have decided against Mr. Shaffer. He certainly did nothing to encourage the workers to settle the strike, and it is apparent, now the fight is beginning, that on the part of the trust and its newspaper clique it is more a fight against Shaffer personally than against his organization. Should he be unhorsed as labor leader, and a better man for partnership purposes come to the front, the trust organization may abandon its ostensible purpose of crushing the labor organization.

The hostile comment that papers opposed to the referendum are making upon its recent use in Columbus, O., gives special importance to the facts regarding that experiment. At a special election held in Columbus on the 2d two separate propositions for the issue of bonds were submitted