the British press censorship. Our inferences in this regard are now verified. More than one responsible correspondent of the British press has managed, after long delays, to get explanations of the censorship through to his paper. Among these is a correspondent of the London Telegraph. After describing the situation as one in which the British authorities "are rapidly getting abreast of the mischievous methods of Napoleonic bulletins," trusting to the ancient proverb "about giving 'the thing that is not so' the start of truth," which "is grasped," he says, "by the military mind," he shows that "the restriction cannot be to prevent news being taken advantage of by the enemy" but thinks rather "it looks as if the enemy were the British public, who were to be held in strings as much as possible and only permitted access to official bulletins." That is undoubtedly the motive for the censorship. It is to mislead Russians, not the enemies of Russia, that the Russian authorities maintain a censorship. It was to mislead Americans, not the Filipinos, that our own censorship was enforced at Manila with Russian severity and is still maintained in some degree. Of course it is to mislead the British public and not DeWet or Botha that the British invaders concoct false bulletins and suppress the facts about the baffling war it is waging in South Africa.

MR. BRYAN ON TRUSTS.

With the intellectual sincerity and genuine candor that characterize all his public utterances, Mr. Bryan replies in a Commoner editorial of August 2 to The Public of July 20, on the subject of trusts. We purpose reviewing his reply.

I.

In our article, we criticised Mr. Bryan for urging congressional regulation, insisting that this would promote federal centralization and is therefore undemocratic. The Commoner, in its reply, pleads the necessity for congressional action. It urges that—

> **laws must deal with conditions, and under present conditions it is impossible to deal with the trust question completely by means of state laws.**

Explaining this assertion the Commoner says:

> **If a trust has absolute control of the production of the necessaries of life, a law preventing the monopoly from doing business within a given state might bring great hardship upon the people by depriving them of the article controlled by the trust.**

In further defense of Mr. Bryan's proposition that congress regulate corporations doing an interstate business, the Commoner argues that this mode of suppressing trusts would be supplementary to and not an encroachment upon state functions.

We cannot accept that conclusion. If such action as Mr. Bryan proposes were adopted, it seems to us that the inevitable outcome would be a national business corporation to which the old United States bank that Jefferson was opposed to and which excited Jackson's ire, would, for centralizing and oppressive purposes, be as a pygmy to a giant.

Democrats in the days of the United States bank saw no authority in the constitution pursuant to which congress might create a corporation. The supreme court, dominated by a federalist chief justice of transcendant intellectual gifts, discovered such authority as an "implied power." Shall the democracy of our time, led by a man who for loyalty to the democratic impulse is next in succession to Jefferson, Jackson and Lincoln—shall our democracy, so led, become so far a federalistic centralizer as to make itself responsible for the nationalization of gigantic corporations, controlling the industry of the country and leading on to a regime of governmental socialism? Mr. Bryan does not contemplate this, it is true; no one would shrink from it quicker than he. But it is the logical culmination of his proposed system of corporation-licensing by congress. From licenses to charters is an easy step.

That congress has the authority to adopt Mr. Bryan's plan, under the federalistic interpretation of the constitution which now prevails, we do not deny. Neither do we deny that congress has taken similar action heretofore. But that is unimportant. The trust question is not a legal question. It is political and economic. Not what courts have decided, but what statesmen think, is the important thing. The whole tendency of which Mr. Bryan's proposition is part is centralizing and undemocratic. It should therefore be antagonized rather than fostered by democratic statesmen.

But the Commoner not only falls in line with this tendency; it sets up a principle of constitutional construction which would give the centralizing tendency a field for development as expansive as the anarchistic doctrine of necessity—a doctrine that proverbially knows no law. We quote:

> **The federal government was organized to give to the people of the nation that protection which must be secured by the joint action of the people of the several states, . . .**

That is not, in our judgment, what the federal government was organized for. We believe the true democratic doctrine, in essential principle as well as historically, to be that the federal government was organized to execute the powers, and only those, which the people through the constitution, confer upon it. Its present powers might, indeed, be so enlarged by constitutional amendments as to comprise every power which the states, acting each for itself, cannot effectively exercise; or, for that matter, all the power they have, whether they might themselves exercise it effectively or not. But the question of constitutional amendment is not under discussion.

The political aspects, however, of the Commoner's reply to the Public are less vital than the economic considerations it raises.

II.

Preliminary to our observations on those economic points, let us state a fact which no regular reader of the Public needs to be reminded of. We fully agree with the Commoner that remedial laws must deal with conditions as they are. No social reform, however valuable in itself, can go much ahead of public sentiment. If it does so, it is revolutionary and its benefits are endangered by reaction. Social progress cannot proceed by

leaps and bounds. It must go a step at a time. Consequently the trust evil cannot be cured by the arbitrary application of a radical remedy, however perfect. Unless public sentiment be in some considerable degree prepared to welcome the remedy, it gets no fair opportunity to operate.

But though progress can take only a step at a time, it must go nevertheless in the right direction and not in the wrong. A step at a time in the wrong direction is not progress. At the parting of the ways there may be no distinguishable difference between the man or the nation that is to go a step at a time in the wrong direction and the one that is to go a step at a time in the right direction. They stand back to back and heel to heel, almost upon the same spot, and which direction is more expedient no one can tell, except by inferring that in the long run he who goes nearest to the right direction morally will go nearest to the best direction experimentally. In such emergencies, be the problem personal or national, individual or political, the best possible advice is that which Mr. Bryan himself gives to Democrats in the Commoner of the 9th, when, referring to the prospects of the Democratic party, he says:

Those who argue from the standpoint of expediency seem willing to sacrifice any principle or indorse any policy if they can thereby win. But there is no way of judging what is expedient; we can only do what we believe to be right, and accept the consequences.

That Mr. Bryan believes he is going in the right direction when he proposes national supervision of corporations as a remedy for trusts is not open to debate. Mr. Bryan's moral courage and almost unexampled sincerity as a public man have been sufficiently tested to command the confidence, even of his political enemies, in his personal integrity.

But it is not enough merely to believe that one is right. One's belief must rest upon understanding. The man whose honest convictions are without intelligence, is like a chartless missionary at sea in a rudderless boat—his motives are good, but he doesn't know his way and couldn't steer if he did. Mr. Bryan adopts this view also. In at least one of his campaign speeches last fall he made intelligence the hand-maid of good intentions. While urging his hearers to throw their "influence on the right side of every public question," as they saw it, he admonished them to "obtain all the information possible" in order that their views might "be as nearly correct as human wisdom can make them."

Now, we are far from charging Mr. Bryan with lack of intelligence in connection with his remedy for trusts. We believe that he is intelligent as well as sincere; that he not only states his belief honestly, but that he has acquired it thoughtfully. Still, he has as yet, in our view, not merely failed to reach a true conclusion, but has reached a false one.

This is shown to be so, we think, by the economic phases of the article in the Commoner which we are here reviewing.

III.

It will be observed that Mr. Bryan's trust remedy is in the nature of an obstruction to competition. Though that is not its purpose, that is its essential character. The Commoner, recognizing this, defends the remedy upon the ground that competition needs limitation. "Competition," it says, "like any other useful thing, may be carried to excess."

That is not in Mr. Bryan's best vein. We are more accustomed and gratified to hear him say that if a thing is right we can't have too much of it, and if wrong we can't get rid of it too soon. But the Commoner does not intend the above quotation to be taken too literally, for it follows it immediately with this modification:

Or, more correctly, there can be fair competition only where there is measurable equality between competitors.

With that sentiment we most cordially and unreservedly agree. Like gravitation true competition maintains equilibrium. Destroy equality of forces in either, and equilibrium is disturbed. But what destroys equality of forces in competition? The Commoner gives an instance which we may interrogate:

Competition between the Standard Oil company or the steel trust and an ordinary individual is as one-sided as a combat between two individuals, one armed with bow and arrow and the other with a repeating rifle.

The illustration is imperfect. Such competition is far more one-sided than such a combat. The man with bow and arrow might have a fighting chance against his adversary with a repeating rifle; but the ordinary individual, in competition with the Standard Oil company or the steel trust, has none. To perfect the illustration the combat should be supposed to be between an unarmed man and one who controls all the repeating rifles and all the sources from which either rifles or bows and arrows may be obtained.

The inequality which gives to the steel trust and the Standard Oil company their extraordinary power in competition is institutional. It is produced by social institutions that treat as legitimate private property things which cannot morally be private property, and which cannot be private property without menacing property rights that are morally legitimate. Under the sanction of such institutions those two trusts control sources of supply, channels of transportation, and terminal sites. True competition cannot exist when those privileges prevail. Is it not legal strangulation of competition, then, and not competition itself, against which the indictment properly lies?

The Commoner proceeds:

Society may protect the principle of competition, and yet place limits upon it.

That society may do this, is true; but only in form, not in substance. It is impossible to protect the principle of competition by law while placing limits upon it by law. If the limitations are maintained, the principle must be thereby to that extent rejected. Any effective limitation of the forces of competition logically and inevitably produces monopoly, which is the opposite of competition. In this connection the Commoner explains that—

fire is necessary to human life; and yet fire uncontrolled becomes a destructive force; water is required for man's existence, and yet the devastating flood may do immeasurable damage; air which we breathe is indispensable, and yet when that air is put into violent motion it becomes the cyclone or the tornado. Competition is necessary, it is the law of

trade; it is a controlling force in American affairs, and yet may become destructive.

As illustrations of the Commoner's meaning these references to the regulation of material forces are valuable; but they do not help the Commoner's argument. The material forces of combustion, for instance, and the social forces of competition, are not comparable. This is not because the former are physical and the latter social; but because the former are intended as servants of man, and it is within his province to harness and enslave them, whereas the latter cannot be harnessed without enslaving man himself. When we limit fire we give useful direction to a potentially destructive physical force; but when we limit competition, we give arbitrary direction to individual and non-invasive human impulses.

Evidently, however, what the Commoner alludes to when justifying limitations upon competition are not limitations of competition at all, but attempts in the name of limitation to minimize the destructive effects of other limitations. Thus it says:

If competition leads parents to put their children into factories at an early age, we pass laws fixing the age at which children may be employed; if competition unreasonably prolongs the day's work, we fix minimum limits; and so if competition with the man-made giant called a corporation becomes destructive of the rights and interests of the God-made man, we can place restrictions upon the corporation. . . . . .

But is it normal competition that leads parents to put their children into factories when they ought to be at school and at play? Is it not one-sided competition, competition thrown out of equilibrium by institutional limitations upon normal competition, that does this? Parents who are still able to compete upon the basis of approximate equality need no child labor laws to help them keep their tender offspring out of factories. Natural affection is enough.

Those laws are only needed for parents who, disinherited by institutional monopoly, are forced to compete for work in a glutted labor market, where the disinherited and consequently disemployed are so numerous that every job is in excessive demand. In such conditions workers cannot compete. They are helpless. All they can do is to beg for work. "Please, mister, give me a job!" is the laborer's plea when competition suffers from strangulation. But the trust manager may pick and choose, and hold up threats of discharge as a terrible penalty, for he monopolizes the inheritance. Workmen compete for jobs; but trusts do not compete for workmen. Such competition is one-sided, jug-handled; and it is this jug-handled competition that makes parents sacrifice their children in factories. They sacrifice them to monopoly for the same reason that Russian travelers have been known to sacrifice babes to packs of wolves.

The same jug-handled competition, competition toppled sidewise by institutional monopoly, makes eight-hour laws apparently necessary. Under free competition every workman would fix his own hours, nor fear starvation if his demands were not complied with, for there would always be more good jobs than workmen. Labor cannot be starved unless it is first disinherited.

IV.

The Commoner's reference to the "man-made giant called a corporation," which it would restrain in the interest of "the God-made man," discloses, we think, the primary misconception by which it is misled. It regards the corporate franchise as necessary to the trust. "Every trust or monopoly rests," it says in another part of the article we are considering, "upon a corporation, and the entire abolition of corporations would destroy trusts, but Mr. Bryan has not believed it necessary to apply so radical a remedy."

That is purely a lawyer's view. Because the courts have decided against combinations of corporations, and the marsupial corporation has been substituted for the old form of trust, the Commoner assumes that trusts cannot exist except as corporations.

Queerly enough, it adds that no monopoly can exist except as it rests upon a corporation. This last proposition is so obviously erroneous that we only mention it in passing, as probably a slip of the pen or a careless expression; though it may be due to a confusion of thought, elsewhere manifest in the article, which treats "monopoly" and "trust" as synonymous terms, instead of treating the latter as one species or manifestation of the former.

With reference to corporations we have never been able to see that they have any economic reason for being except to evade laws against entail and laws for the collection of debt. In a voluntary association, if it fails, every member is personally liable to the full extent of his fortune for its debts, whereas in a corporation each member's personal liability is limited. If there were no laws for the collection of debt, a voluntary association could accomplish everything that can be accomplished by chartered corporations. For laws against entail can be evaded by successive wills, by secret transfers in expectation of death, and by other purely personal means known to lawyers in profitable metropolitan practice. The history of the Astor estate testifies that the law of entail actually is evaded without corporate charters.

We do not ignore the fact that conspiracy laws may be avoided by corporations. But that is solely by means of a legal fiction, namely, that a corporation is only one person. Consequently, as it takes two or more persons to conspire, a corporation cannot be accused of conspiracy for its own act. This fiction appeals only to the technically legal mind.

As a matter of economics and statesmanship—for statesmanship alters legality—the corporation has no functions. Yet the Commoner rests Mr. Bryan's case upon the expressed doctrine that "every trust or monopoly rests upon a corporation, and the entire abolition of corporationss would destroy trusts!"

It is evident that monopolies do not depend upon corporations, but can and do exist without corporate franchises. It is evident also that trusts, except in a baldly verbal sense, need not rest upon corporations, but may just as well consist of a "God-made man" like J. Pierpont Morgan, as of a "man-made giant" like the United States Steel company.

We should therefore drop this subject here, if we were merely indulging in controversy. But as our principal purpose is to secure for what we believe to be the real secret of the monopoly evil which now assumes the form of trusts, that intelligent and candid consideration which it is the habit of Mr. Bryan to give to all vital questions, we solicit a reconsideration on his part of our previous explanation.

V.

We contended that Mr. Bryan is in error in supposing that "corporations make trust monopolies, instead of seeing, what is the fact, that monopolies make trust corporations."

In elaboration of that point we argued that under conditions of free competition—

actual competition would not be necessary to prevent trade combinations from becoming monopolies. The ever-present possibility of competition would be enough. For this reason, an overproduction of plants and an oversupply of special operatives could not occur. No one would compete unless the market called for competition; and if the market called for competition the combination could not destroy its rival. Every instance to the contrary will prove upon investigation to be a case in which the destructive combination possessed some legal advantage—transportation, tariff, location, patents, sources of natural supply, or all together.

Replying to this the Commoner asserts that trusts can exist under free trade, without discriminating freight rates, without patents, and without controlling natural sources of supply. It makes no allusion to superior location, one of the factors we mentioned; but that undoubtedly was an oversight, and is not important in view of what it says about the other factors.

As the assertions are made we cannot dispute them. It is true that trusts can exist without the tariff; it is true that they can exist without peculiar transportation privileges; it is true that they can exist without patents; it is true that they can exist without superior location; it is true that they can exist without controlling the sources of supply. But they cannot exist unless—and this is the point we intended to make and which we now emphasize—they have the advantage of at least one of these things.

To illustrate its contention that trusts can throttle competition by mere combination, without primary monopolies, the Commoner instances woolen mills, which it says might form an effective trust.

Now, in fact, there is a woolen mill trust—the American Woolen company. It governs 25 woolen mills and has been organized more than two years. It is recognized in the trade, so we are informed by worthy authority not plutocratic, as the nearest possible approach to a trust in that line of business, that can be formed without greater monopoly privileges of location or transportation, etc., than those which it possesses. Yet the output of this trust does not exceed 50 per cent. of the total. The fate of the woolen mill trust is easy to predict with approximate accuracy.

Unless it fortifies itself better with monopoly privileges, privileges much more monopolistic than its corporate charter, it will be obliged to follow the example of the cotton cloth trust formed at Fall River three years ago. Unable to hold out against competition, that trust was dissolved early this month by mutual consent of the constituent concerns. The wall paper trust came to the same end.

These trusts controlled some monopoly privileges; but they were not sufficiently exclusive, and competing concerns were able to cope with them in monopoly power as well as in productive skill.

The essential principle about trusts is, that in so far as they are combinations of competing interests only, they cannot carry organization to the point of monopolizing a business. The notion that they can and do, proceeds from the false supposition that business combination is progressively economical; which in turn proceeds from the fact that business combination is economical up to a certain point. Busness combination is not in truth progressively economical. As soon as it reaches the point of highest economy in a given case it becomes progressively uneconomical. To overcome this tendency, business combinations must secure monopoly, as distinguished from competitive, interests. Good will serves to a degree. Trade-marks, a species of good will, also serve. The buying habits of the public can be monopolized by these means even for inferior goods for a time and to a degree. But no permanent trust can be founded upon those personal advantages. Such a trust requires the primary monopolies enumerated above, and they are created by law.

Of those primary monopolies the patent privilege is, indeed, comparatively slight and counts for little, because its power is temporary. The tariff serves only to limit the field of competition, and although powerful is not final. But some of the privileges named are of gigantic power, while all together are irresistible.

Both actual experience and rational economic principle support this view; and we are confident that the more carefully Mr. Bryan analyzes the trust, the more closely will he come to our conclusion. It is not a product of corporate charters merely, nor a resultant of competitive forces, but depends upon institutional limitations upon competition.

VI.

Let us now answer the Commoner's question as to the fundamental cause of trusts, namely:

Is it possible that Mr. Post believes that private ownership in land is the foundation of trusts?

That depends upon what is meant by "private ownership in land."

If it means private possession of land merely, without private ownership of site-value, then we answer, No. That kind of private ownership in land is not the foundation of trusts.

But if it means private ownership of site-value, then our answer is, Yes.

For that is a kind of value that grows with progress. It is not earned by the land owner. Consequently whoever receives it gets labor without giving labor in exchange, which makes it the subject of the greatest gambling the world has ever witnessed or can witness. Men buy land not to possess and use it, but to win dazzling prizes in higher site-values as society advances and the monop-

olized land comes into keener and keener demand. As a result of this gambling all land within the region of actual and probable social advantages is monopolized and held at prices which constantly border upon and frequently overleap the limits of profitable use. Hence stagnant industry and disemployed labor, with all that these conditions mean.

Labor is thereby cheapened, and trusts are able to dictate wages. Firm foundations for the trusts are also thereby furnished. By combining ownerships of especially productive land, trusts secure control of products at their natural source; and by combining ownerships of important transportation terminals—also land—they secure control of products at the great delivery points.

That is the secret of the Standard Oil trust's power. Though it does not own all the oil wells, it owns land that controls the output of those wells; and at the seaboard it controls the terminal sites. So with the steel trust. With one hand Mr. Morgan, through railroad combination, controls transportation terminals, while with the other, through the steel trust, he controls—as Mr. Schwab testifies—80 per cent. of the ore mines, to say nothing of the absolute monopoly of coking-coal. In the Mesaba iron range alone the steel trust monopolizes land, only part of that 80 per cent., which is thus described by two disinterested English experts in Cassier's Magazine for October, 1899:

> **There is more ore in sight to-day, three or four times over, than the whole Lake Superior region has produced in 50 years. Its deposits are deeper, wider, larger, better than those of any other range. More of its ore has been used for some years past than of ore from any of the older ranges, and the disparity seems to become greater year by year. . . . . There are in sight 400,000,000 tons of ore, better in quality than the average used in the States. . . . and the end is not yet. It is not by any means a wild prediction that the Mesaba range will produce 500,000,000 tons of iron ore before it is abandoned.**

A further idea of the advantage of controlling the enormous natural but monopolized deposits of iron in the Lake Superior region may be had from the observation of the same English experts, that "the circumstances that the ores are brought an average of 800 miles to the furnace where they are smelted, and that they have displaced almost entirely the poorer local ores, for the utilization of which the northern iron trade was originally established, is of itself evidence of their richness, purity, and cheapness." With monopolistic powers over natural sources of supply, the potency and magnitude of which are thus only suggested, coupled with absolute control of terminal sites, both depending not upon corporate charters, but upon real estate deeds, why search for the monopoly of the steel trust in its mere charter of incorporation?

All the sinister power of the steel trust, of the oil trust and of every other really great trust, has land monopoly for its foundation; for natural sources of supply and terminal sites are land. Farms also are land—partly. What would be left were the improvements destroyed, is land. But one important terminal site or one rich mine, is worth in power and pelf whole dukedoms of farming land. Mr. Schwab has testified before the Industrial Commission, that the steel trust owns "something like 60,000 acres of Connellsville coal, which cannot be bought for $60,000 an acre, for there is no more Connellsville coal." In that single mine, then, the steel trust monopolizes land equivalent in value to nearly 2,000,000 average Illinois farms!

Having asked incredulously if we believe that "private ownership in land is the foundation of trusts," the Commoner propounds another question:

> **If so, must we calmly submit to monopolies until the people are willing to accept Mr. Post's views on the land question?**

If these views are right, then with such calmness as we can command we must indeed submit. Mr. Bryan himself is authority for the doctrine that no question is settled until it is settled right. Let us add to that, quite in harmony with his ideas we are sure, that no question can be settled right until we proceed in the direction of a right settlement.

That suggests our answer to the Commoner's next question—

> **Is it not the part of wisdom to apply such remedies as are within our reach?**

If the supposed remedies are in the right direction, Yes; if in the wrong direction, No.

It makes no difference how slight and ineffectual the proposed remedy may be. If it is in the wrong direction it can but intensify the disease; if in the right, it will promote a cure.

The disease in this case, of which trusts are the surface eruptions, is strangulated competition. A remedy which ignores the strangulation and proposes a new, even though moderate kind of constriction, is not a remedy.

But the Commoner objects that those who are hostile to Mr. Bryan's remedy for the trust evil "do not propose any remedy which is complete or which has a prospect of a speedy trial." This is true of many objectors. They do not propose a remedy, because they don't want a cure. They are among the microbes; and the disease that is deadly to the patient is the very life of the microbe.

But it is not a sufficient answer to those who do want a cure, that what they propose is neither complete nor capable of securing a speedy trial. A speedy trial is the last thing to be desired for a remedy that will intensify the disease; and a complete remedy is, as the Commoner itself will admit, impossible "until the people are willing to accept it;" for a complete remedy must be radical, it must go to the root and remove the cause of the trust disease.

The first thing necessary is to distinguish the cause. Mr. Bryan makes no claim to having done this. It is to be feared that he has not tried. Yet no one can, without distinguishing the cause, intelligently propose a remedy. Diagnosis precedes treatment.

Our suggestion is that monopoly (not mere charters of incorporation, not watered stock which is an effect and not a cause, not the trust in its legal characteristics merely, but primary monopoly) be abolished; that legal obstructions to nature's storehouse, legal obstructions to the right to make goods, legal obstructions to the right to sell goods, legal obstruc-

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-