

The Public

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EDITORIAL

Bryan and the New York Papers.

It is predicted that after Bryan is nominated at Denver he will not have a single daily newspaper in New York to support his candidacy; that the World, the Times, the Hearst papers, the Brooklyn Eagle, the Sun, and all, will be against him. Well?

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Corrupting Politics.

Franklin Pierce, of New York, struck the nail squarely on the head when at Governor Hughes's investigation of District Attorney Jerome he described the object of Big Business in making campaign contributions from corporation treasuries. "It is not their wish to protect their stockholders," said Mr. Pierce, "but because they wish to be the power behind the government."

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The Emergent Currency Law.

The hand of the Big Business ring is plainly visible in the Vreeland-Aldrich bill, with the enactment of which Congress celebrated its closing hours under the leadership of the patriotic Senator from Rhode Island. Mr. Vreeland naively explained on the floor of the House that only the cloak of the Aldrich bill had been retained, and that it was now a cloak without the body. In his embarrassment, Mr. Vreeland stated the facts "tother end to." This bill is in fact the body of

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the Aldrich bill without its cloak—if it ever had a cloak.

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That fact was brought out plainly enough by Senator La Follette, whose speech was not all "fillibuster" by any means. Doubtless he did try to kill the bill by killing time so as to prevent its coming to a vote. That is the only way in which a minority can defend public rights against a Big Business majority, whose policy it is to act first and discuss afterwards, if they discuss at all. But Mr. La Follette's speech was not a mere time-killing speech. It was a merciless exposure of the plunderous purpose of the measure. In discussing its provisions for the utilization of the bonds of private corporations as a basis for currency, he pointedly asked Mr. Aldrich if railroad bonds were not included. Mr. Aldrich replied that he didn't know. But as the bill is reported in the dispatches, any kind of bonds the Secretary of the Treasury at any time approves may be accepted from any national bank as the basis for bundles of currency guaranteed by the Federal government.

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The only protection is the tax of 10 per cent per annum. But that tax could easily be reduced by amendment; and even without its reduction High Finance knows many ways of turning government credit at 10 per cent into private fortunes. With this law in full working order, and a Republican administration returned to power with corporate campaign funds, the Standard Oil "crowd" would be in clover.

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The New York World and Bryan.

The World began its campaign against Bryan with a false map, which purported to show that Bryan had reduced the Democratic vote. This falsification was soon disposed of, for the record proves that Bryan found the Democratic vote at a very low ebb in 1896, brought there during the Cleveland administration in 1894, and that he raised it, while Parker reduced it to a lower point than ever. That misrepresentation didn't work, and the World tries another. This is a cock-and-bull story, told in double leaded editorial, about Ryan's having bribed Bryan in the Fall of 1904 to support Parker. But every one knows that Bryan announced his intention of supporting Parker as soon as the nomination was made. The World doesn't make a very good liar. Much better would it be to try its 'prentice hand at the truth, and a good beginning might be made by answering Bryan's unanswered question to Mr. Pulitzer, the pro-

prietor of the World. Mr. Bryan has asked what financial securities those are that Mr. Pulitzer owns which makes the World so solicitous to prevent Bryan's getting into an office where he can appoint a Federal attorney general. Mr. Pulitzer hasn't answered; he says its none of Bryan's business. But it might be Bryan's business, don't you see, if Bryan were President.

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The Collins-Comerford Trial.

The acquittal last week of Mr. Collins, Mayor Dunne's chief of police, and of Mr. Comerford, the police attorney under Mayor Dunne, was a foregone conclusion. The trial proved to be the legal farce that every one at all conversant with the situation expected. Incidentally the fitness of Mr. Healy for State's Attorney was brought into view. Whether Mr. Collins and Mr. Comerford had violated the civil service law is not a question which needs now to be considered. There is no reason to believe they had; and if they had, there is abundant reason to believe that they did nothing worse than had been done ever since that law came into force. But even if they had violated this law, the obvious course of procedure for a faithful public prosecutor would have been to prosecute them for that particular offense—for violation of that particular law. But this would not have served certain partisan exigencies. An indictment involving penitentiary possibilities was wanted by the Busse gang, and this is what Mr. Healy procured. He caused Mr. Collins and Mr. Comerford to be indicted, not for violation of the civil service law, the penalty for which is a fine, but for conspiracy to violate that law. The penalty for conspiracy involves liability to a five year term in the penitentiary. The grand-jurymen who demurred, doubtless believed that if the civil service law had been violated, a conviction and fine for violating it would fully serve all public purposes and end the practice. But Mr. Healy insisted. So these men were put to the humiliation, the dangers, the expense, of a trial for their liberty, after months of suspense and worry; and for an act for which, even if they had been guilty, the punishment contemplated by the law they had violated, if they violated any, was only a fine. The circumstances of the trial, which resulted in their acquittal, have left the State's Attorney exposed to suspicions, not altogether unreasonable, of putting his partisanship above official duty.

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The possible unreasonableness of this suspicion