

# EDITORIAL COMMENT

By HERBERT

THE testimony of the witnesses who have appeared before the Senatorial committee inquiring into campaign expenses of recent years makes the pending campaign more a question of political morals than economics. Of course, the high cost of living is the paramount problem to be solved by the electorate on the 5th of November. Under the shelter of a practically prohibitive tariff, monopolies have been looting the public with merciless rapacity, and it is the bounden duty of the party of the people to devise means of relief. But after all the first duty of citizenship is to conserve the public morals.

THE testimony of the contributors to the Roosevelt campaign of 1904 and the Taft campaign of 1908 is both amazing and appalling. That the Roosevelt corruption fund was vastly the larger and the Taft "slush" was largely drawn from members of his own family makes little difference. The fact remains that in both instances predatory corporations and grinding monopolies combined to debauch the electorate to the end that the Republican party might be continued in power and the opportunities for spoliation indefinitely continued. The treasurer of the Republican National committee swore that seventy-three per cent. of the contributions were made by corporations.

CORPORATIONS are not philanthropic. They have neither the inclination nor the right to employ the funds of the shareholders for any purpose not sanctioned by law. The law explicitly forbids the use of corporate funds by officers of the corporation in any manner except to conserve the interests of the corporation. Mr. Morgan, Mr. Gould, Mr. Harriman, Mr. Perkins and Mr. Frick contributed corporate funds to the Roosevelt campaign fund because they understood, as Mr. Archbold of the Standard Oil conspiracy was assured, "it would be appreciated." The right of the Steel trust, given in violation of the law, to absorb the Tennessee Coal and Iron company is conclusive proof of high appreciation.

As Chairman Guthrie has said: "If government is to be free, the power of the people to elect must be sure. If government is to be honest, its source must be pure." Where administrations are chosen by corrupt use of money contributed by corporations and "appreciated" by the beneficiaries, government can be neither free nor pure. This is so palpable that no argument or evidence is required to prove it. No pledge or promise is needed to bind an appreciative recipient of sinister favors to reciprocal action. When Mr. Morgan was contributing \$150,000, a "King's ransom," to the Roosevelt corruption fund he neither exacted nor received a promise from the "blacked maniac" whom he benefited. But he subsequently raked off \$100,000,000 from the Tennessee Iron company transaction, and probably felt that he was fairly recompensed.

PRESIDENT TAFT was equally appreciative of the favors bestowed upon him in 1908. He has made an ostentatious false pretense of prosecuting trusts, but as a matter of fact has simply more firmly entrenched them in



A BULL MOOSE IN THE CHINA SHOP.

By De Mar, in Philadelphia Record.

their citadels of power and converted the prosecutions into a farce "by the so-called dissolutions consented to." He gave the trust magnates no cause of quarrel, though he gave his satellites abundant opportunity to declaim his virtues from the housetops. He was less obliging to Morgan and Perkins than Roosevelt, but they had given him less reason to favor them. Morgan's contribution of \$150,000 in 1904 was cut to a measly \$5,000 in 1908, and Perkins' donation was proportionally curtailed.

THE trust magnates are divided in their allegiance this year. The industrial monopolies are for Roosevelt and the banks, outside of the Morgan group, are for Taft. But both are consistently and insistently against the candidate of the people, Woodrow Wilson. They are united in a purpose to defeat the "government of the people." They are determined that the source of government shall not be pure. They have grown and prospered upon special privileges and are unwilling to relinquish their advantage. The success of Democracy would check the opportunities for graft. It would take nothing from them that they have justly earned. But it would everlastingly deprive them of license to loot and equalize opportunities for thrift and industry to compete with them on a common ground.

THIS is what makes the present campaign a question of civic righteousness rather than an issue in party politics. The people must rule if the Republic is to endure. The government must be honest in order that the people may prosper. Both Roosevelt and Taft pretend that they have altered their views on these important public questions. But they have given no proof of repentance. "A tree is judged by its fruits."