

ROOSEVELT, BRYAN, AND THE ICE TRUST *

Detroit, Michigan, Oct. 11.

THE HON. THEODORE ROOSEVELT, TERRE HAUTE,
INDIANA.

My dear Sir: Yesterday and to-day Mr. Bryan is speaking in this State. The pro-Bryan paper publishes this morning, among other things, the following report of his utterances:

“He talked about the trusts in every town he spoke. In six of these towns to-day questions were fired at Bryan by Republicans, who asked him to explain about trusts. He had an answer that made the crowd guy the questioner every time. It was: ‘There is a Republican Governor and a Republican Legislature in New York, and what have they done to throttle the Ice Trust? Answer me that. But then you know the Republican Governor of New York has not time to bother with the Ice Trust, for he is too busy out here telling you about it.’ ”

The same charge was made by Mr. Bryan at length in Nebraska, and all the press of the country had your answer to it, given, I think, in a speech in the same State. Every reader of the papers, too, knows of your action as Governor in respect to the Ice Trust, and I am under the impression also that you recommended the legislation under which such a trust might be reached in New York.

Your friend,

DON M. DICKINSON.

* Correspondence with the Hon. Don M. Dickinson, of Detroit, Mich. *New York Times*, October 15, 1900.

THE HON. DON M. DICKINSON, DETROIT, MICHIGAN.

My Dear Sir: I thank you very much for your letter of the 11th inst. When Mr. Bryan talks as in the quotation contained in your letter he simply says what he either knows or ought to know to be without the slightest foundation in fact. He made a similar statement in Nebraska. I then answered him, and asked him, in return, whether he would pay the obligations of the Government in gold or in silver if elected. He never answered my question, but, as my statement was printed broadcast, he must have seen it, and therefore he must know that there is no warrant in fact for the statement as to the Ice Trust.

In my message to the New York Legislature I recommended certain action about trusts. The Legislature did not act along the line I suggested, but it did pass a very stringent anti-trust bill, introduced by a Democrat, and I signed it. The Attorney General is now proceeding against the Ice Trust under this bill. Mr. Croker and his fellow-stockholders in the Ice Trust through their attorneys are fighting us on technical legal points through every stage of the proceedings.

Now, as I say, Mr. Bryan knows all this from my previous answer. He knows perfectly well that I cannot "suppress the Ice Trust" in any manner save by due process of law and that the Attorney General is proceeding against it under the law and is being hampered by the delays inevitable in attacking a corporation well defended by able lawyers, retained, as is natural, when the corporation contains stockholders as wealthy as Mr. Croker and his associates. Mr. Bryan knows that where the Attorney General is undertaking these proceedings I have absolutely nothing to do with them. He therefore knows that I have taken every step that can be pos-

sibly taken in the matter. Under these circumstances, it is unnecessary for me to comment upon his continual repetition of a statement which he must know has not the slightest foundation in fact.

Whether the Ice Trust can legally be dissolved is a question which must be settled by the courts, and similarly it is a question to be settled in accordance with law whether or not any of the Tammany leaders who hold stock in it are amenable under the law. The trust itself is certainly one that can be said to be a bad trust, dealing as it does in an article of necessity for the poor of New York. I have no doubt, however, that most of the stockholders have invested in it simply as they would invest in any other corporation. The striking point is that among the heaviest of these investors appear the Tammany Bryanite leaders, who in conjunction with Mr. Bryan, are loudest in denouncing trusts. Hypocrisy could be carried no further than it has been carried by these men and their defenders. In the Tammany State Convention in New York they actually denounced the Ice Trust in their political capacity, while in their private capacity they were stockholders in it, and, through their counsel, were doing everything to prevent its dissolution by the Attorney General.

Mr. Bryan is now going to New York to be the political guest of Mr. Croker, the Ice Trust beneficiary. He is going there to try to help Mr. Croker get control of the State of New York, and bring it down to the level of infamy to which Tammany government has reduced the City of New York. Again it seems to me that this needs no further comment than is implied in the statement of the facts.

With hearty thanks for your kindness I am, faithfully
yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.