

The Press on the Roosevelt-Chandler Episode

Every newspaper has, of course, something to say upon the sensational developments at the national capitol, with respect to railway rate legislation. The following are extracts from some of the newspapers, and these may be accepted as fairly representative of the general tone:

The Houston, Texas, Post (Democrat) says that the controversy "puts the president in a very sorry light before fair minded men of intelligence, and is calculated to shake the public confidence of the president's soundness of character." Referring to Mr. Roosevelt the Post says: "He has made a mess of the rate bill by surrendering to the enemy when he might have won a great victory, and he has put himself in a worse light by challenging the veracity of one of his best friends when every material circumstance points unerringly that his friend told nothing but the truth."

The New York World says: "A president of the United States is ex officio a person of unimpeachable veracity. When an issue of fact arises between him and another person the presumption must always be that the other person misunderstood what the president said. A president of the United States is also above political trickery. When it would seem that he had deliberately betrayed certain of his followers the presumption must always be that they took too much for granted. Probably the disinterested enthusiasm of the democratic senators led them to believe that when Mr. Roosevelt solicited their support he was in closer sympathy with their ideas of rate regulation than he actually was. They thought he preferred the kind of rate bill he seemed to want, passed with the aid of Democratic votes, to the kind of rate bill he seemed to want, passed entirely by Republican votes. They believed he was working for a rate regulation bill instead of some sort of tinkered-up measure that would help the Republicans in the fall campaign. The Democrats now charge that they have been tricked by Mr. Roosevelt. If anybody but Mr. Roosevelt had dealt the cards we might agree with them that the presence of six aces in the deck was a suspicious circumstance, but, as we have already said, a president of the United States is incapable of political thimblerrigging. It must have been 'a square deal' even if the cards came from the bottom of the pack."

The Kansas City Journal, a republican paper that has strongly leaned to the railroad side of the question, and has been disposed to criticize Mr. Roosevelt's advocacy of railroad legislation, denounces former Senator Chandler as a man "eaten up with disappointed ambition." The Journal says: "At the same time, President Roosevelt may well learn a lesson from this incident, which will teach him to be more careful in future about turning his back upon honored members of his own party and seeking the support of outsiders and political enemies for his measures."

The Joplin, Mo., Globe (Democrat) says: "But Roosevelt has weakened. He has gone over to the camp of the senators who are notoriously representative of the powers with whom the president has been pleased to appear as opposing. He has disappointed his Democratic supporters in the senate upon whom he relied, when there was no one else upon whom to place reliance, and he has disappointed the rank and file of citizens who have taken his square deal contentions for sincere convictions. Roosevelt, as he stands today, is an advocate of the unconditional right until it comes to a show-down, when he weakens badly and inexcusably."

The New York American (Democrat) says: "Nobody in his senses, we take it, will suppose that Senator Tillman told anything but what he believed to be the truth when on Saturday he recounted to the senate how President Roosevelt, through ex-Senator Chandler, negotiated for Democratic support of a real rate bill, criticised Republican railroad senators by name, and then himself went over to them and the cause of the corporations."

The New Orleans Times-Democrat (Democrat) says: "For some reason the opinion is growing that for a man in exalted official position to deny a thing is final, but ex-Senator Chandler will not be content to accept that view of the matter. He is quite capable of defending any position he may occupy, and in the instant case the surrounding facts seem to be with the ex-Senator. There is the manuscript of the attorney general, for example, which was read in the senate and which is in the possession of the South Carolinian. There is the record of the rate bill before the senate and the president's various utterances on that subject. The fact that Mr. Moody, the

secretary of the president, entered into the 'conspiracy' will indicate to the impartial mind that he did so with the consent and at the request of the president."

The Evening Wisconsin (Republican) published at Milwaukee, says: "The object of this precious farrago is to produce a coolness between republican leaders that will tend to disrupt the republican party. The probability is that there is some foundation of truth for what Chandler reports, but that he has not fully and accurately reported the president's talk, and that the effect of his statement is to convey a wrong and injurious impression. While the democratic coterie is making faces, the republicans will go ahead and make a rate bill. That is what the country wants."

The Pittsburg Dispatch (Democrat) says: "But Mr. Tillman finds it a good rule in politics, as in business, to take nothing for granted. He is, therefore, now able to produce the documents giving Mr. Chandler's report of the president's advice sent to Tillman. Mr. Chandler permits negotiations published at the time the exhibit is this publication, thus corroborating the statements and as they agree with the news of the impressive. Where Mr. Aldrich is likely to find his joke turned upon himself is in the exposure of senatorial manipulation uncovered in the muddle. In view of Tillman's disclosures there can be no hope that the senators who have misled the president can deceive the country by the same maneuvers."

The Buffalo, N. Y., Evening News (Republican) says: "Wrath prevails in democratic senatorial circles in Washington over the rate bill. A question of veracity is raised between the president and ex-Senator Chandler, as an incident to the controversy, though there is nothing to that aspect of the case for the reason that in any issue of that kind 'Bill' Chandler has not a ghost of a show to be credited even though he has written down a volume of what he remembers of conversations with the executive. Every effort is made to magnify the dispute over the position of the president on the rate bill because the Tillman leadership has become a farce and the senate has resumed its sanity along with republican charge of the bill."

The Philadelphia Public Ledger (Republican) says: "The democrats have served their purpose; they were used as a stalking horse; they have been outgeneraled, robbed of an issue and of credit for the enactment of a tremendous piece of legislation. Naturally they are angry, but they were playing politics and the president of the United States can play politics a little better than the democratic senators or the republican senators."

The Topeka Capital (Republican) says: "A Kansas man brings back word from Washington that the correspondents laugh in their sleeves at Roosevelt. The Roosevelt belt is said to lie, now, west of the Mississippi. Still very few people are big enough to 'give the laugh' to the man who, whatever other things he has done, put an end to the Russo-Jap war and brought six years of peace in the anthracite coal regions."

The Kansas City Post (Democrat) says: "His friends posed him as a man of iron with a backbone of toughest fibre. And so he is when the waters are smooth, and sailing easy."

The Topeka, Kans., Herald (Republican) says: "The democrats in the senate like Bailey and Tillman, have been very enthusiastic supporters and admirers of President Roosevelt so long as he was pursuing a course that meant humiliation and loss of prestige to his own party. But they very promptly changed their tune when he gave his sanction to the policy of the strong conservative leaders of the republican party which insured the passage of a railroad measure by the republican majority. Now Bailey and Tillman are intimating that the president weakened on the railroad bill. When the whole situation is in plain view, it can be seen that the democratic enthusiasm for railroad legislation has its origin in politics instead of patriotism."

The Minneapolis Journal (Republican) says: "The solid fact is that the country is going to have its aspirations for relief from railroad oppression recognized, and recognized because the president was loyal to the people and the rate bill up to the very point of breaking with the majority of his party in the endeavor to get it."

The Milwaukee Sentinel (Republican) says: "Mr. Bailey and Mr. Tillman may scold and argue till the crack of doom; but they will make no headway with their hopeless theory of Theodore

Roosevelt as an invertebrate animal. The people know better."

The Columbus, Ohio, Press-Post (Democrat) says: "Senator Tillman seems to have obtained possession of 'The Big Stick,' which President Roosevelt has wielded in such a spectacular manner for many months. And another thing, the southern senator seems to have enough witnesses to prove his just claim not only to the possession of the historical implement but also to his right to wield it on one Theodore Roosevelt, president of the United States, who seems inclined to dodge the attacks of the implement, which he has himself used with such evident enjoyment."

The Providence Journal says: "Without accusing Mr. Roosevelt of any conscious insincerity, it must be admitted that he has a habit of talking on all sides of the question—'thinking out loud,' his admirers call it. In this way he gives one man to understand that he agrees with him and then assures another, who holds directly opposite views, that 'there is much reason in his sayings.' This holding with the hare and running with the hound naturally produces embarrassment; and when his inconsistency is brought home to him he takes refuge in angry denials of the opinions attributed to him."

The Boston Post says: "It is very likely that, as Mr. Chandler says, 'the president has acted on impulse,' and every one knows that Mr. Roosevelt is a very impulsive man. As for ex-Senator Chandler it may be said that, while not lacking in fire, he is less likely to say things and forget things in an impulsive manner."

The Philadelphia Press says: "Mr. Chandler tells Mr. Tillman, according to the latter, that the president in conversation reflected on Senators Spooner and Knox as injuring the rate bill by their attitude and amendments. The president says that he did not. What of it anyway? The fact that the president is in full accord with Senators Spooner and Knox at the end shows the real truth. Even if the president had said what Mr. Chandler alleges it would signify nothing. He is to be judged, not by any casual observation made under a possible misapprehension, but by the record."

The Philadelphia Record says: "But a president who insists upon talking a great deal with almost everybody on every subject is certain to be misunderstood and misquoted, and his veracity and good faith will become involved when he plots with senators of all groups for the passage of a bill."

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