

the death knell to special privileges granted favored patrons.

Every year since the supreme court declared that congress had failed to invest the interstate commerce commission with authority to afford practical relief to shippers, the commission, in accordance with the provisions of the statute requiring it to suggest necessary amendments to congress, has recommended the passage of a law that would remedy the evils complained of.

To illustrate the impotency of the law and to show the contempt in which it is held by the shippers of the country, I quote from a statement made by Interstate Commerce Commissioner Charles A. Prouty, before the senate committee on interstate commerce last winter: "I hold in my hand a paper received this morning, published in the interests of the railroads of New York, in which it is said that the present condition of east-bound rates from Chicago to New York is outrageous; that all traffic practically is being moved upon something less than the published rate, and under contracts with the great shippers in Chicago. What does the man in Chicago do who is thus driven out of business? Does he apply to the interstate commerce commission? Past experience shows him that is useless. This paper indicates his opinion, and it contains a letter to J. Pierpont Morgan from a committee of grain shippers, asking him that his railroads observe a statute of the United States. I submit that the United States should see to it that its statutes are observed and that shippers of the United States should not be compelled to apply to J. Pierpont Morgan, or any other individual, to intercede with his railroad properties to secure the observance of this statute."

Just think of the small shippers of the country appealing to J. Pierpont Morgan, the man who has done more to create trusts than any one living, which trusts receive the direct benefit from the rebates, imploring him to compel the railroads to comply with a statute of the United States, when congress has full power under the interstate commerce clause of the constitution to confer authority upon the commission and the courts to right the wrongs from which the people suffer.

What makes the rate discriminations so much more disastrous to the small dealer than the action of the ordinary trust is that, no matter how venal may be the latter, yet it generally demands tribute of all alike, but the railroad trust grants its favors to the powerful few, laying its mailed hand upon the small unprotected shipper to make good its losses.

This is the injustice that saps the very foundation upon which commerce rests. It is as inevitable as the law of gravity that its unrestrained continuance means the passing away of the small shipper.

Illustrate it by a concrete example. Suppose it costs 80 cents to manufacture a given article in New York and the published railroad rate is forty cents on that article from New York to Chicago. Suppose it costs the trust and the small dealer identically the same amount to manufacture it, but

the trust receives from the railroad a rebate of twenty cents when it ships the article to Chicago. Is it conceivable that the small dealer can long exist under such conditions? This is what is occurring today and every day. The small dealer no longer ships. It is more than he can do to hold his own in his immediate neighborhood against the distant foreign trust, with its favored rates.

These great combinations and trusts care nothing about adverse legislation to prevent their combining as long as they are left a free hand to secure rebates. They will reorganize and recombine to come within the terms of any law that can be placed upon the statute books, as they are doing every day, but when congress strikes at the rebate, it inflicts a mortal injury. The small producer or manufacturer should always be ready and willing to compete with the trust in meeting the advantages which may arise from economy in production, etc., because his close contact with the consumer will more than outweigh the advantages the trust may have, arising from that source, but he can not and he should not be compelled to meet the unfair, unjust and unlawful advantages which the trust secures from our public transportation facilities. As against this, he will inevitably go to the wall. From it there is no escape. Mr. A. B. Stickney, in his work above referred to illustrates this when he says: "A guaranteed rate of transportation of even so small a sum as one quarter of a cent per bushel less than any other middleman can get will give the man possessing it a monopoly of the business of handling the corn in the district covered by the guarantee."

The general public is not aware that the manufacturer located in Liverpool, England, can ship his goods via New Orleans, La., to San Francisco, California, for less money than can the American manufacturer of a like article located in New Orleans, and the same is true in shipping from Liverpool via New York to Pittsburg, Pa.

For these and other discriminations, there is no remedy under existing laws and for relief the people must look to the democratic party, for the republicans, the railroads and the trusts are all dominated by the same influences and no relief will ever be had at their hands.

It is a fact that can not be contradicted that today any interstate railroad may charge whatever rate it sees fit and there is no tribunal in the United States that can grant any relief either for past extortions or for future demands. Under existing laws neither the interstate commerce commission nor any court can prescribe

what shall be the rate for the future; that is a matter that congress has left entirely and absolutely to the discretion of the railroads. To substantiate this assertion, see the case of I. C. C. vs. C. N. O. & T. P. Ry. Co., 167 U. S., 479. Section 6 of such statute expressly recognizes the right of the carrier to establish, increase or reduce rates, on condition of publishing and filing them with the commission.

The interstate commerce commission has no power to prescribe a tariff or rates which shall control in the future.

Milton H. Smith, president of the Louisville & Nashville railroad, in testifying before the interstate commerce commission, when asked if a shipper living on his road would not have to pay the rate demanded by the railroad, said if the shipper does not like the rate "He can walk as he did before he had railroads, as thousands now do who have no railroads."

This is what the shipper does today, pays the rate demanded by the railroad or walks, or in the case of the small producer sells his goods at home or goes out of business, and this he will continue to do, until congress sees fit to exercise its power under the constitution "to regulate commerce."

It remains to be seen how long the trusts of the country can divert public attention from the breeder of great combinations--the discriminating railroad rates--which congress can destroy by direct legislation, or by giving the power to do so to the interstate commerce commission.

PRIMARY PLEDGE PLAN

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am in favor of the Chicago and Kansas City platforms.

W. G. Pardonner, Wapakoneta, O.—Having been an active democrat ever since 1896 and working continuously every day since, I did not think it necessary to send in an endorsement of the plan. But as many of my friends have asked me why my name was not published with the many that have appeared in The Commoner, I concluded that I should fill out a blank, and I will give all the influence possible to the good work. In 1793 the third continental congress in New York City passed a law that no man who held an interest in a bank should be a member of congress. There were only three banks in the United States at that time. Our forefathers understood that the bankers would prove a menace to the people. I never heard of that law being repealed. In 1869, when the credit strengthening act was passed there were 189 bankers in congress, and among the rest there was not one

laboring man or farmer. Every one of them were lawyers, so they have made laws for bankers and corporations. If the common people want any laws they must elect men who associate with them and know their necessities. I cannot understand why the ministers as a rule preach for the betterment of mankind spiritually and vote and preach against mankind temporarily in this life. In my opinion all preachers ought to preach for the betterment of mankind on earth, and then we will be fitted for the hereafter. "He that is born of two talents, more is expected of him than he that is born of one. He that is born of five talents, even more is expected," thus saith the Lord. Those that understand the situation as it exists and as it existed in 1896 will be held responsible for their influence and votes. I bid God speed to true democracy, to The Commoner and its editor.

Andrew Dean, Holly, W. Va.—Enclosed find twenty names of good democrats signed to the primary pledge. They will attend all the democratic primaries. Send them copies of The Commoner also.

John Hushion, St. Clara, W. Va.—I heartily endorse the primary pledge plan. It is an old saying out here that the third time is the charm. I have voted twice for a democratic candidate for the presidency, and if I can get to vote for a democrat in 1908 I think I can land him in the White House.

Chas. B. Bethol, Coshocton, Ohio.—I send you primary pledge with twenty signatures.

Lewis Clementson, Troy, Kans.—I send you six pledges, also five subscriptions to The Commoner.

Andrew J. Crunk, Nashville, Tenn.—Enclosed you will find my primary pledge. I was born a democrat, rocked in a democratic cradle, and I believe in equal rights to all and special privileges to none. If a white man don't adhere to those principles he is a black cat in my eyes. You are on the top round. Give it to them in hot shots.

J. W. Cunningham, Sullivan, Ind.—Herein you will find pledge signed by myself and two others. I think it is a good plan.

L. F. Smith, 5431 Cottage Grove, Chicago.—I heartily endorse the plan. Many of us have felt the need of some such plan to arouse the people to the dangers that threaten the future of our government. I have been a voter for forty-seven years. Part of that time, like thousands of others, I thought that party leaders were all honest and would not sell out to dishonest schemers who wanted a democrat elected for revenue only. The time has come, and should have come

THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

I promise to attend all the primaries of my party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to use my influence to secure a clear, honest and straightforward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak.

Signed.....

Street..... Postoffice..... State.....

County..... Voting precinct or ward.....

Fill out blanks and mail to Commoner Office, Lincoln, Neb.