

strength lies in the fact that you have a large majority of the voters of all parties with you.

Pass over the railroad representatives and appeal to the people. Compel the opponents of railroad legislation to meet the issue in the open. There is no logical or even plausible argument against the legislation which you recommend. A railroad corporation is a creature of law; it has no rights except those conferred upon it by the people. It is inconceivable that the people should create a corporation without reserving the right to so control it as to make it subserve the public interest. The right of the people, acting through organized government, to control according to their own pleasure every corporation created by them must be conceded and the necessity for the exercise of that control is clearly demonstrated. Extortion in rates, unfairness, discrimination against persons, discrimination against places, midnight tariffs and rebates galore—all these iniquities have resulted from lack of regulation. They are intolerable and must be stopped. Will you use the great influence of your high office to

secure the regulation now, or will you leave the honor to a successor?

They will tell you that effective rate legislation will disturb the harmony of your party. You can answer that a refusal to respond to the just demands of the public means not harmony but political death.

The democrats, if they had no higher purpose than to secure control of the offices, might wish you to lead the railroad element of your party, but they are citizens first and democrats afterward. They are more interested in securing needed reforms than they are in securing credit for the reforms. If, as I think probable, it is found necessary to change the method of electing senators before that body is brought into sympathy with the masses you will find enthusiastic support in the advocacy of this reform. Four times the house of representatives has by an almost unanimous vote declared in favor of the election of senators by direct vote, twice when the house was democratic and twice when it was republican.

If in your fight you deem it wise to attack the trusts you will find that they have few friends—none worth cultivating. If you are willing to help reduce the tariff where it shelters a trust you will find the democrats ready to aid you, and with them an increasing number of republicans. If, encouraged by the success of your efforts in the anthracite coal strike you decide to urge the establishment of a permanent board for the arbitration of differences between labor and capital, you will find a growing force behind you.

Stand by your guns! You have developed a reform element in the republican party; you must lead it or suffer the humiliation of seeing the leadership pass to someone else.

Your words have excited great expectations which must be met, for you will be measured by your own words. The Commoner commended your message of last December and will lend you any influence it may have so long as you advocate reforms. Go forward, you owe it to yourself, you owe it to your party and, more than all, you owe it to your country.

W. J. BRYAN.

VALIANT DEFENDERS OF THE NATIONAL HONOR

"We must guard the nation's honor when assailed by any foe,

We must keep it safe whatever ill befall;
We must use our best endeavor to preserve it clean forever,"

Said Depew, Hyde, Alexander and McCall.
So with tears their eyes bedimmed and their honest hearts aglow

For the widows and the orphans in their care,
They gave forth the declaration they would save their well loved nation—

But you see they didn't do things on the square.

For the widows and the orphans they made many touching pleas,

Saying, "Hands off; we will guard them day and night!"

But a search is now revealing some gigantic games of stealing

By these trusted devotees of truth and right.

While of honor and of widows and of orphans they did talk

It transpires they worked with crooked turns and twists.

And while "honor" safely guarding their own pockets were rewarding,
Shoving hands into trust money past the wrists.

"Do not sully our fair credit by repudiation's route!

Do not let the nation's honor be debased,"
Cried this precious lot of hooters who of trust funds were the looters,

"We must never let our nation be disgraced."
How they talked of "honest money," how of "honor" they did cry,

But remembered dirty schemes they worked the while.

For corrupt and rotten revel this gang seems to have the devil

Beaten seven furlongs in a single mile.

What a precious lot who guarded our great nation from all harm!

A sweet-scented bunch of grafters, to be sure,
Rotten stocks were syndicated, rotten bond deals well inflated,

By these men whose motives were so clean and pure.

Judges bought and sold like cattle, legislatures were debauched,

Loot and graft and dirty deals on every hand,
And it must not be forgotten that these men with schemes so rotten

Are the men who posed as saviors of the land.

Nerve sublime and cheek gigantic had this bunch who stood on guard

Over "widows," "orphans," "honor," night and day,

Shouting "honor," "honest money,"—don't it now seem awful funny

When you learn the crooked schemes the bunch did play?

Satan standing forth rebuking those who weakly yield to sin

Cuts a better figure than these posing patriots do,

And next time we seek defenders we'll not choose such double-enders

As McCall, Hyde, Alexander and Depew.
WILL M. MAUPIN.

TELL THEM TO PUT IT BACK, MR. PRESIDENT

The disclosures made before the New York legislative committee has directed attention to the evils of contributions to political campaign funds by great corporations. In the case of these insurance companies the money contributed properly belonged to the policyholders, and while many of these policyholders were working in behalf of the democratic ticket they were contributing in the form of insurance premiums to the success of the party which they hoped to defeat.

In such cases a wrong is perpetrated upon the policyholders, but in those cases, as in all other cases where corporations contribute to political funds, the offense is against popular government. While no attempt on the part of republican leaders has been seriously made to deny that these great corporations contributed to republican campaign funds, it has been suggested that the contributions were given without any promise, expressed or implied. Of course such a defense is merely a subterfuge. Everybody knows that the corporations do not contribute money except for "business" purposes, and when a corporation contributes money as a matter of "business" it means that it is either paying for some favor already received or purchasing a favor for future delivery.

It has been shown that the New York Life Insurance company contributed somewhere in the neighborhood of \$50,000 to the republican campaign fund in each of the last three national campaigns. It is safe to say that every other great insurance company made similar contributions. Because his party was the beneficiary of these funds, President Roosevelt should be quick to act upon the suggestion provided in disclosures made before the New York legislative committee.

President Roosevelt would do well to suggest to the republican national committee the advisability of returning the money paid by these insurance companies, for the use and benefit of the policyholders to whom it belongs.

It would be gratifying to the American people generally if the president in his forthcoming

message would present a measure for the purification of politics. One of the best methods in this work of purification is to begin with the campaign fund. In some of the states congressmen are compelled to file a signed and itemized account of their campaign expenditures, but this should be made a national requirement, and the law should be so stringent as to require the filing of the statement whether the money was spent by the candidate himself, by the officers of his committee or by anyone else with his knowledge or the knowledge of the committee. The law ought also to apply to the election of senators, for senatorial contests have sometimes involved the spending of enormous sums. And it is even more necessary that the law should apply to presidential contests. The president has a veto power, which, in addition to the influence that his office naturally exerts and in addition to the interest exerted through patronage, enables him to block the passage of a measure until two-thirds of both houses support it. It is a well-known fact that the great corporate interests rely upon the senate to protect them from hostile legislation. It has now been proved, as it has long been suspected, that they have contributed large sums to influence presidential elections.

Votes can not be bought unless there is money with which to buy them, and money will not be subscribed to buy votes if it must be subscribed in the open and the corporation's interest in the result be known to the public. What argument can be made against the publication in advance of the election of the money subscribed for the campaign. What right has a party which appeals to the public to conceal from the public the purpose of its victory? And how can the purpose of a victory be better determined than by an examination of the campaign contributions? Does any one doubt that the publication of the large contributions made in 1896, 1900 or 1904 would have had an influence upon the result of the election? Not only ought the larger contributions to be made public before the election for the information of the public, but it would be well to

require a publication of the principal expenditures of the committees.

The use of enormous campaign funds collected from the trusts and great insurance companies can not be continued without danger to the country. Is it not time to put a stop to it? If the president will take cognizance of this important subject in his forthcoming message he will win the approbation of the men of all political parties who have grown weary of corporate domination in political affairs. If the president does not act the democrats in congress should frame such a measure and secure its passage or put upon the republicans the responsibility of defeating it.

NEBRASKA DEMOCRACY

Judge W. G. Hastings, nominated by the Nebraska democratic convention to be judge of the supreme court, stands high as a lawyer and a man. Those who know Judge Hastings well will have no hesitancy in saying that if elected he will prove himself to be in every way worthy of the great honor conferred upon him.

Messrs. Cole and Lightner, the nominees for regents, are highly spoken of by their neighbors. They are deeply interested in popular education, and it is safe to say that if elected to the board of regents they will exert every effort to advance the best interests of the great institution committed to their care.

The platform adopted by the convention is clear and explicit. It will be found in another column of this issue, and speaks for itself.

THAT "HURRY UP CALL"

Many republican editors and leaders sneered when Thomas W. Lawson said that during the closing hours of the 1896 campaign a "hurry up call" for \$5,000,000 was made in behalf of the republican ticket, and promptly responded to. The news columns of all papers reporting the insurance inquiry at New York provide corroborative testimony for Mr. Lawson's charge.