

that the present law is deficient. It does not prevent discriminations, rebating and other illegal and unjust practices. We have the act of February 19, 1903; we have violations of the law in every conceivable way; but we have not an efficient remedy.

The next question is: Will the conferring of the rate-making power on the interstate commerce commission afford a better remedy? Yes, if no strings are attached to it. No one advocates the policy of tearing down all the railroads have built up in the way of making classifications and tariffs and building the whole structure anew. Those who desire real, effective and just rate regulation would confer upon the present commission or some other administrative body the power to reduce unreasonably high rates, raise unreasonably low rates, and equalize discriminative rates. The idea that rate regulation only contemplates the reduction of rates is erroneous. More injury is inflicted upon the business interests and the people in general who pay full tariff rates while others are given illegally reduced rates, than is suffered by unreasonably high rates. We want a square deal. No

law can compel a railroad to accept rates so low that it can not exist; but the railroad can compel one to pay full tariff rates while it charges another less than tariff rates. Those paying full rates labor under a double disadvantage. They are not only discriminated against, but are made to pay higher rates than they would were all made to pay alike. The impression that the result of cut rates and rebates fall only upon the carrier is erroneous. Those who pay full rates largely make up for every allowance made to those who do not.

HOW TO PREVENT REBATES

That the power to reduce, raise or equalize rates, would not prevent the giving of rebates and otherwise secretly and illegally cutting rates, is admitted. The rate-making power will not correct abuses of that character. But if congress will embody in the law a provision that any voluntary reduction of rates, without permission from the interstate commerce commission, will result in the establishment of that rate as a public rate for one year, there would be very little, if any, rate cutting done. This

provision should cover any rate reduced below the published tariff rate, either by rebates, under classification, false billing, terminal charges or any other method declared unlawful, and also rates cut openly in rate wars. The lowest rate illegally made by the carrier to be taken as the maximum of what it may with propriety claim from the public. No railroad can object to having its own rate standard used in making rates. If it accepts rates that are lower than those quoted in the published tariffs, whether by direct violation of the law, or by devices that evade its provisions, it is estopped from invoking the aid of the courts to declare them destructive of property rights. If this kind of a penalty is prescribed for illegal rates, and making it a penal offense to collect more than the maximum legal rate, which would be the lowest illegal rate known, the secret rate would hardly be resorted to. A law conferring the rate-making power as indicated would solve the question, and the square deal would become a living reality. Under existing law railroads have a complete remedy against injustice. The people have no remedy. That is not a square deal.

TEXAS AND THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

Texas stands sixth in the number of primary pledges returned to The Commoner office.

The Commoner thanks those Texas democrats who have so faithfully co-operated along the lines of the primary pledge plan, and urges them to renewed activity.

Every Texas reader of The Commoner is requested to ask every Texas democrat of his acquaintance to sign the primary pledge, and then call upon his neighbor to do likewise.

If a number of democrats in every Texas county would organize for the purpose of circulating the primary pledge form in every precinct obtaining the signature of every democrat who is willing to discharge his duty to his party, the field would be covered in a short time and the result would be advantageous to Texas and to democracy generally.

This work of organization is not to terminate with the signing of the pledge. The interest of democrats once aroused is to be maintained, clubs are to be organized in every county of the state and in every precinct of the county, these clubs having for their purpose the promulgation of democratic principles.

The Commoner hopes to soon hear good reports from the Texas democracy with respect to the primary pledge plan.

As this copy of The Commoner may be read by some one not familiar with the details of the primary pledge plan, it is necessary to say that, according to the terms of this plan every democrat is asked to pledge himself to attend all of the primaries of his party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to secure a clear honest and straight-forward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak. Those desiring to be enrolled can either write to The Commoner approving the object of the organization and asking to have their names entered on the roll, or they can fill out and mail the blank pledge, which is printed on this page.

Extracts from letters received at The Commoner office follow:

George M. Henault, Seat Pleasant, Md.—Enclosed find 35 signatures to the primary pledge.

W. S. Adams, Fall River, Wis.—I send you 15 primary pledges.

A. J. Williams, Magnet, Neb.—I send you 16 primary pledges.

M. L. Norton, Benkleman, Neb.—Enclosed find 14 signatures to the primary pledge. I should have secured more, but did not have the time.

A. J. Pardue, Pleasant View, Tenn.—Enclosed find 18 signatures to the primary pledge.

W. H. Allen, Davis, I. T.—I send you eight primary pledge signatures.

Walker Scales, Knoxville, Tenn.—Enclosed find 35 signatures to the primary pledge.

G. W. Williams, Dresden, Mo.—I send names of six good democrats signed to the primary pledge. I hope the plan will succeed.

N. Parker, Coin, Ia.—I send primary pledge. I am 76 years old. Was born in Ohio, have always been a democrat and expect to remain so. I heartily endorse the pledge.

William H. Wright, New Orleans, La.—Enclose my primary pledge. Am glad to see so

many doing the same. The Commoner is doing great work and should be encouraged. I have been a reader and subscriber the past two years.

David H. Moran, Coal Valley, Ill.—I am willing to render to the democratic cause any support I am able to give.

J. C. Barker, Wainville, W. Va.—Enclosed find list of subscribers to The Commoner and money to pay for same. I have secured 33 signatures to the primary pledge, and will get more if you will send me more blanks. I herewith send what pledges I have, and will send more later. All these signers are good Jeffersonian democrats. I wish you and your excellent paper success.

V. H. Nash, Addison, Me.—I send you primary pledge. You may count on my support.

S. L. Ferguson, Appomattox, Va.—I herewith enclose my primary pledge.

L. A. Jennings, Silver Creek, N. Y.—My three score and ten years, visit me with restrictions, which I suppose should be borne with patience, but it is difficult to be patient, while measuring the corruption which, probably, surrounds us by that that has already been developed. I am a stranger here, in a locality that has for many decades, been overwhelmingly republican, but Judge Hooker and his confederates have alienated the affections of many republicans from their party and we are hoping for a revival of decency that will give democracy some hope that better days are near at hand. As soon as time and health will permit, I will do the best I can to help the party, and the best method will be by enlarging the circulation of The Commoner. If the cohorts of Hooker go down in defeat next Tuesday, it will be an auspicious time to appeal to citizens to take council of a publication that will warn them against future disasters. Mr. Bryan's great works in behalf of the principles of democracy ought to be seconded by every

one that has a drop of patriotism in his body. He is appreciated by a multitude but there is room for more. If The Commoner were read in every household and at every fireside, we would not need to sit up on election night until the dawn of another morning to know how the election had gone. I enclose primary pledge signed by myself and son.

Dr. A. R. Rogers, Woodward, Ia.—Enclosed find application for a seat in the 1908 band wagon. I would suggest the following pledge for our friends the republicans: "I promise to leave the declaration of my party's principles to the insurance companies and other defenders of the national honor and to vote blindly for whoever they may nominate for president whether it be Taft, Shaw, Foraker, Root, Addicks or Penrose that the G. O. P. may not perish from the earth." God speed the true democracy, God speed Bryan and Folk and Johnson and Douglas and Garvin. Ten million true democrats will follow them to victory in 1908 inspired by the slogan "back to the people."

Mrs. S. E. Rudder, So. Bend, Wash.—Mr. Rudder thinks he signed and returned to you the primary pledge, but if you have not received it he will send another, for he does not want to miss the opportunity.

Adolph T. Frerichs, Coleridge, Neb.—Enclosed find 10 signatures to the primary pledge.

John W. Killough, Vandale, Ark.—Enclosed I send you primary pledge. I will use my best endeavors to carry it out. Send me about one dozen copies of The Commoner, and I will distribute them among the people and try to get subscribers, as I regard The Commoner as one of the best educators among the people of this country.

F. M. Scott, Pleasant Plains, Ill.—I wish you to send me 25 primary pledges. I will try to get them signed. Right must, and will, prevail.

THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

I promise to attend all the primaries of my party to be held between now and the next Democratic National Conyention, 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, Nebraska.