

Federal and State Ownership

Writing in the San Antonio (Texas) Express, Hon. E. G. Senter says:

"Mr. Bryan's late declaration in his speech at New York in favor of federal ownership of trunk lines of railway and state ownership of branch lines has been generally discussed by the press as though it were an original proposition in this country conceived by Mr. Bryan as the result of his travels in foreign lands.

"The fact is that it is merely a revival of views which were broadly entertained and discussed when railroad building was in its infancy in this country. There were many men of high standing in national councils who regarded railroads in the same light as public roads and advocated the adoption of the same policy with respect to each. One of these was John C. Calhoun, whose title to the name of statesman is now generally conceded, even by those who have been wont to revile him. In 1835 he advocated the construction by Georgia and South Carolina jointly, of a system of railway designed to give them transportation independence. These states received from the federal treasury, as their share of surplus revenues which had accumulated there, about \$3,500,000 and Mr. Calhoun advised that it should be appropriated as stated, concluding with these words:

"To make this great fund available for so important an object, the

legislatures of the states interested ought to move forthwith. I hope Georgia will take the lead. The action of no other states could have half the influence."

"In Texas, Governor E. M. Pease, vigorously advocated the construction of railroads by the state, and one of the first proposals by Governor Hogg which started the fight that culminated in the bitter campaign of 1892 was that the accumulation of the permanent school fund should be loaned to the state for the construction of a state railroad from Red River to the gulf.

"These incidents are not recalled in support of Mr. Bryan's policy, to which the writer is far from being committed, but to rebut the contention that he is an iconoclast. The truth is that he is singularly attached to precedent, and most of the things he advocates for this country have received the sanction of long approval and adoption in Europe. It does not follow, by any means, that what may be good for England, or France, or Germany would be good for America, but it is nonsense—not to use a harsher word—to attempt to discredit a public man as a dangerous radical and an enemy of private property for the advocacy of policies which have the cordial support of such rulers as the emperor of Germany and the King of the Belgians. It is unfortunately true that we have too many writers in this country who know nothing about the institutions of this or any other land, but judge it to be the acme of smartness to rail at every public man who ventures to propose any change, and whose sole claim to a hearing is that they pretend apostleship for things that are. They might justly be called the swashbucklers of the present. The hog that wallows in the mud and disdains to move an inch for the comfort of the shade is their truest prototype.

"The discussion of state ownership as an economic problem is coming, and those will render best service in the negative who furnish the best economic reasons against it. To scoff at Mr. Bryan is no reply to a Bismarckian policy. Indeed, the strongest objection that the intelligent mind can find to state ownership is not that it spells radicalism, but that it is today so closely interwoven with the institutions of monarchism, that it has, apparently, become one of its strongest props."

LINCOLN'S FAMOUS PHRASE

In his world-famous "Gettysburg speech" Lincoln declared that the men whose monument they were then dedicating had died in order that "government of the people, by the people and for the people should not perish from the earth."

Like lightning the phrase electrified the nation, and from that day to this it has remained the most celebrated saying in the most celebrated speech of modern times.

But fame always has to pay a big price for itself, and repeatedly since Lincoln's brief, but immortal, address was delivered it has been intimated that the martyred president was a plagiarist, having taken from another the most striking phrase in his speech without making any acknowledgment of the fact.

To these intimations have come the counter claims that Lincoln's celebrated phrase was strictly original with himself, and that to Lincoln alone belongs the honor and glory of having coined it.

About the fact that the phrase in dispute was in existence long before

Lincoln spoke it at Gettysburg there is no room for doubt.

Five centuries and a half before the day of the martyr president there lived in old England one of the staunchest democrats that the race has ever produced. The name of that old democrat was John Wickliffe, the celebrated theologian.

Now, in the preface to Wickliffe's translation of the Scriptures—1324—may be found these words: "This Bible is for the government of the people, by the people and for the people," which is identical, word for word, with the famous expression from Lincoln.

In the year 1830, at a public meeting held at Olten, Switzerland, a speaker named Schinz, in the course of his address, used this language: "All the governments of Switzerland must acknowledge that they are simply from the people, by the people and for the people."

In an address before the Anti-Slavery Society of New England, Theodore Parker, the celebrated Unitarian divine, on May 29, 1850, used these words: "Democracy is a government of all the people, by all the people, and, of course, for all the people."

To go a great deal further back than we have yet gone, we find a Greek demagogue, of the age of Pericles, Cleon by name, saying, about the year 420 B. C.: "Men of Athens, I am in favor of the democracy that shall be democratic, that shall give us the rule which shall be of the people, by the people and for the people."

The similarity between all these phrases is perfect, and it goes without saying that Mr. Lincoln could not, therefore, have originated the famous expression as found in his Gettysburg oration.

It does not by any means follow, however, that Lincoln was a conscious plagiarist. Mr. Lincoln had an inquiring mind, and knew a great many things, but no man can know everything; and it is more than likely that he had never heard of the phrase until his own mind had conceived it.

But even if it was proven that Lincoln had appropriated the phrase, as charged, the fact would militate in no serious way against his fame.

The greatest of the Germans, the immortal Goethe, declared one day to an intimate friend that if everything in his works that he had got from others should be stricken out he would not have a dozen pages left.

The greatest of the great in the fields of literature, philosophy and eloquence have pillaged right and left, and that, too, without stopping to make any acknowledgment of the things appropriated.

If the martyr president appropriated the celebrated phrase in question without going to the trouble of mentioning the person who was kind enough to have helped him to it, he only did what the majority of the kings of thought had done before him.—Thomas B. Gregory, in New York American.

LONGING FOR COUNTRY LIFE

A strange thing is the universal longing of professional men and others who have come to the city and have prospered as they advance in life to get back to the country. It is seldom that they do return, and when they do there is often disappointment and things do not appear as they did long ago. The change is in the man himself, but he thinks it is in the country. Nevertheless, the desire to get back to the old country place to end one's days is very general. Sir Walter Scott refers to it and compares the course of a man through the world to that of the hare which started from her lair and after a long chase and making a large circle ends by returning to the nest from which she started.—Baltimore Sun.

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