

**The Elkins Bill**

Editor Independent: The Elkins bill may very properly be described as a kind of homeopathic remedy applied by the political doctors to the trust disease, in the theory that it could neither harm the trusts nor do good to the people. To prevent rebates is to swell the revenues of the trust.

As to publicity, the uncontradicted statement of a trust, false or true, what good can it do? The Elkins bill is a sort of mild faith cure applied to a disease that is incurable. It is the punishment of guilty trusts, meted out to themselves by themselves. It reminds me of the sly old turtle who was caught napping by a party of American sportsmen and condemned to death. The turtle met his fate philosophically. Only venturing that as he was to furnish the corpse, he be allowed to choose the manner of his taking off. This logical proposition agreed to. The old reptile suggested drowning after the sentence had been carried out. He had the gratitude as he reappeared above the surface of his native element to say, "Thank you, gentlemen."

If Mr. Roosevelt's anti-trust measures were calculated for any other purpose than that of deceiving the people they may be regarded as a failure. Why? Because the trust itself is an incurable disease. The system for which trusts stand is as old as this human race. Older than Joseph's "corner on No. 2 Egyptian corn," or the brickburners' strike at Babel. It is not only as old as sin, but it is entrenched behind all human laws and statutes. In our own free state and best of constitutions, in the common law of England, in the ukase of the czar, in the firman of the sultan, it is the right of property.

Our socialist friends are wise in their generation when they begin their crusade against capital by an attack on private property, on man's right to do what he will with his own. It is fair to assume that this right will exist just as long as there are two men or two dollars on earth out of which to form a combination. This is why labor organization has kept neck and neck with capital organization, through their whole struggle in the United States. Their mutual charges of tyranny and oppression being, no doubt, equally well founded. As their agreements are generally at the expense of the other fellow, the unorganized public, I confess to an absence of prejudice against either party.

Your plutocrat is an amiable, charitable Christian gentleman. Your proletariat is equally intelligent, plausible and patriotic, equally quick, to see and take advantage of opportunity.

It is the great unorganized scab element of society that suffers under the present system. They are ground fine between the upper millstone, organized capital, and the lower millstone, organized labor.

When President Roosevelt promised to shackle cunning, "bridle trusts," etc., he simply made a lying promise that was impossible of performance. The only hope I can see for the unorganized class is in organization. It is not only possible for the agricultural class to organize, it is practical, it is essential for its own protection. The live stock branch of agriculture have already organized successfully. The farmers in many sections are doing the same in a small way forming joint stock associations, building elevators for the marketing of their own produce.

Experience has shown that even teamsters with no other capital than their whips, can secure their rights. Why cannot the farmers in their three-fold capacity of capitalists, laborers, and consumers do the same? The changed conditions under which we live in this 20th century make such an organization as I have indicated much easier than it would have been a quarter of a century ago. Daily market reports; daily mail through the R. F. D.; rural telephones connecting farms, bring the 20th century farmer as much in touch with the world as the merchant behind his desk.

There is absolutely no help for "the man with the hoe" in politics and politicians, who, by the way, are organized to deceive, and exploit them. In the darkest days of feudal tyranny the free cities of Italy and the Hanseatic league maintained their liberties by a simple organization of the different guilds, and branches of labor. Why cannot the people meet the robber barons of the 20th century in the same way? To depend on a president, congressmen or senators elected and owned body and soul by the trusts, is folly. To depend on courts to enforce laws made by trust legislatures is still greater folly. To adopt

the methods of the trusts to fight the common enemy with his own weapons is the only wisdom.

OLD STALWART.

Milford, Neb.

**Fact and Fiction**

As a specimen of fact and fiction, or truth and error, the following editorial from the Omaha Bee of June 1 is hard to beat. It is a fact that the fusionists in some measure failed to perform as they promised—but this was insignificant as compared to the failure to redeem pledges made by the republican party. Timidity was the prime factor in bringing about fusion defeat—the fear to do this or that because it would bring down the criticisms of the opposition. The fusion legislature was afraid to limit the clerk of the supreme court to the salary named in the constitution—because it might look like a partisan attack on the republican clerk. The fusion regents were afraid to remove Dean Reese of the university law school after he had thrown down the partisan gauntlet and made the race for supreme judge, all the while drawing his \$3,000 a year from the state. The fusion judges are afraid to go upon the stump, because some republican might think it "undignified"—and so on all along the line. Timidity beat the populists in Kansas; it has done so in Nebraska. Starting out with a radical platform and winning, the officers-elect have tried too hard to be ultra-conservative. The Bee says:

**AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.**

Populism in Nebraska, as in nearly all the states of the west, had its crigin in the popular discontent with railroad domination and extortionate transportation rates. This sentiment first took definite shape in the organization of the farmers alliance and finally culminated in the people's independent party that held its national convention at Omaha in 1892 and promulgated its principles in the Omaha platform.

The new party in its declaration of independence denounced the existing old parties as degenerate and incompetent to cope with the great problems of the hour, but instead of centering upon the paramount issue of anti-monopoly, it scattered its fire over a wide field and committed itself to visionary schemes of reform that were in conflict with the natural laws of industrial evolution. While the rank and file of western populists were greenbackers and did not believe in metallic currency, they temporarily abjured their flat faith and joined with the bullionaires of the mining states in the clamor for the free and unlimited coinage of silver. The railroad issue was thus sidetracked and free silver made the battle cry.

With the same facility of conversion the people's independent party was switched by fusion from its original third party independence to become an adjunct of democracy. The party that had been denounced in 1892 as the spawn of Tammany corruption became the right wing of the reform army in 1896. In that memorable presidential campaign Nebraska was the storm center and populism triumphed under the flag of democracy. Not because Nebraska had been converted to free silver, but as the sequence of calamity in the shape of business depression and two successive years of drouth. With the return of prosperity and the explosion of the silver delusion, the only thing that held democrats and populists together was the appetite for a division of the spoils. When the state house and the majority of the county court houses were reoccupied by republicans the cohesive power of fusion gradually diminished and the leaders of the dislodged parties charged each other with the responsibility for defeat.

And now the allied forces of reform find themselves at the parting of the ways. Ex-Governor Poynter, who may be considered one of the populist wheel-horses, has served formal notice upon the Nebraska democracy that the people's independent party will henceforth travel in the middle of the road without entangling alliances. Governor Poynter admits ruefully that the impending reorganization of the democratic party will compel populists to abandon the coalition which has proved such a disappointment. "The time is now ripe," says Mr. Poynter, "to line up the populist forces on the principles of the Omaha platform for the fray of 1904. Whatever disintegration has happened to our ranks has been caused by our union with the democratic party. Independent action will in a large measure recover these scattered forces."

What Governor Poynter says concerning the disastrous effects of fusion on the populists is a reflex of what democratic leaders have been saying to their followers concerning

its effect upon the fortunes of the Nebraska democracy. The truth is that the disintegration of the reform forces is largely due to the failure of the fusionists to perform as they promised when they were in power, as well as to the popular conviction that the republican party under Theodore Roosevelt will grapple with the monopolies and trusts more effectively than would the democracy whether reorganized or disorganized.

**Range Fences**

Editor Independent: I wish to discuss the range fence question with the associate editor. My life, thirty-six years, has been spent on the public domain, not as cattleman, but sometimes as homesteader, on my father's homestead and on my own, but mostly as surveyor; sometimes as deputy United States land surveyor and as deputy United States mineral surveyor. The range fence does not always denote hostility towards the settler, but often greater safety for the settler's stray cattle or horses.

Because it has been made an instrument of warfare upon the smaller cattlemen and homesteaders does not imply that it always is or usually is. Every case must have its own merits or demerits. There is no doubt but that men often combine to hold government land away from would-be settlers, but the range fence is not an aid to such devilish design; it is rather a hindrance. For instance, if a settler gets up in the morning on a fenced range and finds his stock gone or killed he at once suspiciously the owners of the range fence that surrounds him and every neighbor and settler who hears his disaster will second his suspicions. I cannot explain the causes of the downfall of the big cattle companies who stoop to directly injure a poor man, but I know that a cattle company cannot long exist in the face of a cordial dislike among its neighbors, especially if those neighbors are all poor men.

The open range is the farmers' worst form of gambling; he raises a few calves on his farm, puts them out on the range in the spring and gets them back fat in the fall. This is the first year, or while he has but one or two. Afterward when he has ten, twenty, or more, he usually misses all the velvet and then to make his loss more complete spends time and money hunting the lost ones. Permission to build range fences, if it could be properly controlled, would be a benefit to the small farmer who lives adjacent to arid pastures.

You certainly do not have a knowledge of all the facts when you attribute the greater part of aridness to grazing animals introduced by white men. Because oats, corn, etc., may have made a grand crop at some time and some place in the arid west does not even suggest that it always would or that it usually would produce a crop.

I have been where no cattle or sheep ever ranged, on the Navajo reservation, and where few ponies ever ranged, and the vegetation was very much the same as in localities where it had been more closely grazed. It does not injure most grass to be grazed, but rather aids in distributing seed and starting the seed to grow, because most grass seed will pass through the alimentary canal of grazing animals without injury. Cattlemen are producers and as such are the prey as other producers are of the speculator and the trust. Don't lend your voice to breed hate among the men who are doing something for us all; rather help to join all producers in a holy alliance that we may meet a common foe and vanquish him—the transportation monopoly.

E. E. CAMPBELL.

Cisco, Utah.

(The associate editor has no recollection of taking any stand on the range fence question. It is a subject he is not familiar with. Doubtless Mr. Campbell refers to some communication which appeared in The Independent.—Associate Editor.)

**Price Went up Next Day**

We hope the state of Nebraska will not sell itself for a few thousand dollars. The Rockefeller donation to the university, if accepted, will put Chancellor Andrews in an embarrassing position and probably make the people of Nebraska pay an increased price for oil. No good can come to the university through money obtained as Rockefeller has obtained his, and the good people of Nebraska will do well to place the stamp of condemnation on such accumulations.—George W. Acker, in Toledo (O.) Independent.

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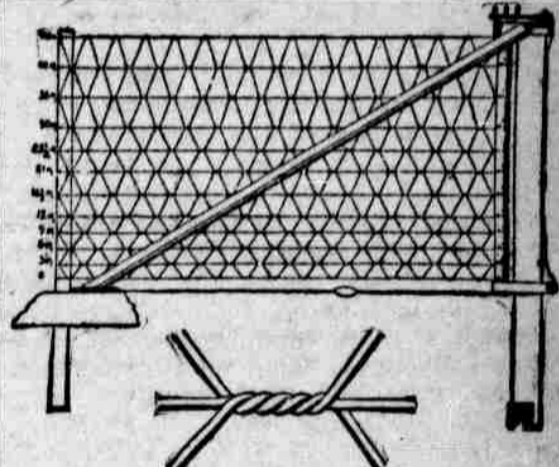
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The Chicago board of health calls attention to the fact that the present high cost of living will make it impossible for thousands of mothers to buy ice during the coming summer and it looks for a large increase in the death rate among infants on account of sour milk. The trusts continue the slaughter of the innocents without any compunctions at all. If the magnates are able to accumulate millions that is taken as full restitution for the murder of nursing babies. The full dinner pail does not include ice to cool the baby's milk and keep it sweet. Vote 'er straight.

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