

A PEOPLES RAILWAY.

The Work of the North and South Railroad Convention Ended.

TO MEET AGAIN IN TOPEKA, KAS.

Resolutions and Plans Adopted and an Executive Committee Chosen—Senator Allen's Good Work.

The Last Day.

The great railroad convention is over. The preliminary steps are taken for the construction of a railway from the Dakotas to the Gulf. True no final action has been taken; but the work as far as it has gone was very satisfactory to the friends of the proposed road.

A FEW CORRECTIONS. Because of shortness of time THE ALLIANCE-INDEPENDENT last week was compelled to take the regular press reports of the first day's proceedings of the convention. In these occurred one or two errors which we hasten to correct. The first was in relation to Senator Stewart, who was author of the resolution, passed by the late legislature, calling the convention together. Senator Stewart's address was one of the finest of the entire convention. It is true that he enunciated some pretty strong populist doctrines, and was cheered to the echo in so doing. He gave a strong, able, masterly talk, setting forth clearly the demand of the people for such a road, a demand that could not much longer be ignored.

The other error was concerning Milton Parks, of Texas. The press reports stated that he was a strong democrat. Well, perhaps he is a democrat of the Jeffersonian stamp, but he is in reality a populist and is editor of the leading populist paper of Texas, the Southern Mercury.

THURSDAY'S SESSION.

At 9:30 Thursday morning chairman called the convention to order. A few new delegates had come in during the night and the states were more fully represented. The report of the committee on resolutions was called for and was read by Judge Doster of Kansas. It was as follows:

"We, the delegates appointed by the governors of our respective states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma Territory, assembled upon the invitation of and in accordance with a resolution of the legislature of the state of Nebraska at its recent session to consider the feasibility of a north and south railway through our states, to be owned and operated by the people of such states, and to extend from a point on the line of the British possessions on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south, do hereby express our hearty and entire approval of the project of such state owned and interstate railway, and do commend it to the favorable consideration and action of the people of our respective states.

We are moved so to do by considerations of the following character: The territory through which such road is proposed is an agricultural and stock raising region, the richest in fertility and the largest in extent on the globe, the development of the resources of which has barely begun. Hitherto and at this time the seaboard market for the products of this vast empire are the distant ports of the Atlantic ocean, to reach which requires 1,500 miles of transportation by rail, the charges for which so nearly consume the entire value of the product as to leave no adequate reward either to the laborer who has produced it or the buyer who has shipped it.

So far as these charges are legitimate and fair to be made, their burden can be materially lessened by shortening the distance to ocean market. The shorter distance is gained by reaching the ports of the Mexican gulf, and once there the lessened distance by ocean route to the growing markets of South American states and to others through the soon to be completed Nicaragua canal and Panama ship railway, as well as to those of Europe, place this favored region almost in command of the world's markets, so far as the North American products are concerned.

But, independently of considerations like these, a railway route to be owned by the people and operated for the people is an industrial necessity, and is demanded, not only by the logic of current events, but by the intelligent sentiment of the country. Neither state nor federal control of railways has proved effectual. The railway companies will not be controlled. There is not one in the land but is capitalized in fictitious mortgage bonds watered stock far beyond the cost of its construction. Upon this false compilation, rates, both of passenger travel and freight shipment, are based, thus requiring the necessitous patrons of its lines to pay interest upon what was never bought.

Legislative control or control through legislative created commissioners has wholly failed, largely because of the artifices and devices of the courts, by which the will of the people has been defeated, the most recent of which is the series of decisions by the supreme court of the United States to the effect that the reasonableness of freight schedules and passenger rates is a question not for the legislatures but for the courts.

Because of these and many other cogent reasons we demand that our respective states assume their prerogative of providing public highways for their people and join with each other in the construction of this proposed interstate north and south railway, and we further demand of the general government a grant of lands in aid of this people's railway out of such remaining

portion of the public domain as lies contiguous to the proposed line, such as has always been accorded to private companies for like purpose for the mere asking of the same."

These resolutions were adopted with but two dissenting votes.

THE PLAN.

Alonzo Wardell of South Dakota then read a lengthy and very able paper setting forth the advantages of such a road and a plan upon which it might be built. He proposed that the road be built from some point on the gulf, say at Velasco, or Galveston, Texas, northward through Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and the two Dakotas to the Canadian line, the road to be double track as far north as Topeka, Kan., one line thence branching off through Missouri and Iowa northward to some point in Minnesota. He proposed that this convention appoint a committee to circulate literature and go through the preliminary survey. He thought road might be built by getting loans from the idle school funds which were large in all the states named, each state to bear the expense of the construction of such road within its own borders, such funds to be finally paid back from the earnings of the road. Provided, that the states themselves should own the road; that it should never revert to private or corporate ownership; but that it might be purchased at par at some future time by the United States government.

The paper went on to show the ease of the construction of such a road; that it could be built through its entire length over an unbroken prairie, therefore at a very small cost, probably not to exceed \$12,000 per mile. It would make an immense saving to the people, because it would have to issue no dividends or watered stock; no salaries of high officials to pay; no railroad attorneys or lobbyists to hire; no legislatures, courts or executives to buy.

A DISCUSSION.

A range followed the reading of this paper, many delegates opposing the features of the plan contained in it. Others objected that the constitutions of the states would not permit any such construction. The committee was getting into a decided tangle. Some clear headed man was needed to straighten it out. Such a one was at hand. It was Nebraska's new senator.

Senator Allen suggested that the plan which he understood had been considered by the committee be reconsidered for the purpose of reducing it to a practical proposition. To an objection that had been made that the constitution of the states would prohibit them building and operating a railroad he said that there was nothing in the constitution of the state of Nebraska which prevented a state from owning a railroad. It was the right of eminent domain lodged in the sovereignty of the state. There was not even a judicial decision, nor authority in the constitution of any state or the United States to prevent a state building and operating works of public improvement. He considered the paper read by Mr. Wardell as an essay and not as an argument in favor of the construction of a line of railroad such as this convention proposed. He thought it best to refer it to the committee on resolutions, with instructions that they submit a plain, business proposition for the consideration of the convention, and on motion it was so ordered.

A PLAN ADOPTED.

In pursuance of this motion, at the afternoon session the following resolution was adopted:

"Resolved, That to initiate co-operation between the people of the different states and territories that a committee of three from each state and territory interested be appointed by this convention and instructed to take the necessary steps to disseminate information upon this subject; secure funds from interested localities for the making of preliminary surveys and to defray expenses incident to the promotion of the enterprise with directions to call a convention of the states and territories interested not later than January 1, 1894, to finally and fully formulate plans for the organization and execution of said enterprise."

In accordance with this resolution the following was appointed as an EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Nebraska—Max Meyer of Omaha, C. C. McNish of Wisner, and H. G. Stewart of Crawford.

Kansas—Frank Doster of Marion, D. E. Ballard of Ballard Falls, and B. S. Henderson of Winfield.

North Dakota—Lieutenant Governor Wallace of Hope, A. Stottson of Wahpeton, and Walter Muir of Hunter.

South Dakota—H. L. Loucks of Huron, Lieutenant Governor Herried of Leola, and A. N. Van Osdal of Yankton.

Texas—R. J. Sledge of Kyle, C. A. Edwards of Velasco, and Harry Tracy of Dallas.

Iowa—Henry Wallace of Des Moines, Daniel Campbell of Monona and H. D. Crawford of Ottumwa.

Oklahoma—Robert McReynolds of Guthrie.

ADDITIONAL PLANS.

"The following was presented by Willis S. Hand of Kearney, and ordered printed and referred to the committee, for the construction of the railroad: First—All the expense of the construction and equipment of said railroad should be raised by taxation in said states and territories, each state and territory to pay cost of construction and equipment of that part of the road within its boundaries. Second—State bonds should be issued for the purpose of providing the ready cash, said bonds to run from five to twenty-five years at the option of the state, and to be paid by taxes levied to meet them as they fall due. Third—Said railroad should be constructed centrally across said states.

Fourth—A joint commission should be appointed by this convention, consisting of three from each of said states and territories, who should organize by corporation or otherwise, for the purpose of promoting such enterprise by the dissemination of information and enlisting the co-operation of said states as above indicated, and if possible to raise the money in advance of taxation to procure a preliminary survey of a route for said railroad to be made.

Fifth—Said joint association, when incorporated without capital stock under the laws of the said several states, should as agents of said states be vested with the title to said railroad and all property and franchises con-

nected therewith, and should operate the same as agents of said states under regulations prescribed by the legislatures thereof.

The following plan was submitted by Charles E. Edwards of Velasco, Tex.: Let each state instead of leasing its contracts to contractors or plantation owners, and thereby competing with free, honest labor, employ such convicts in the construction of such interstate road. The rails and equipment of such road to be paid for by money borrowed by the state from its school fund, thereby securing an excellent investment for such fund. Let the road be built from Velasco on the Brazos valley, through the central portion of each state and territory to the Canada line. In this way each state owns and operates the line traversing the territory within its boundaries, and action can be taken without the delay incident upon the necessary change in state constitutions before bonds could be issued and the people taxed for this purpose." The convention then adjourned for the afternoon.

WILL MEET AT TOPEKA.

At the evening session, the final work of the convention was performed. On motion of Senator Allen, the committee, were "to have full power to act during the adjournment of the convention in gathering statistics, disseminating information, collecting funds, opening headquarters, performing all duties contemplated in said resolution, excepting the selection of delegates, and that said committee organize immediately after the adjournment of the convention."

On motion of Senator Allen a resolution was adopted declaring all seats of delegates appointed to this convention not present vacant, that the committees of the respective states named during the afternoon be known as the executive committee, and have the power of filling the vacancies. On motion of ex-state Senator Stewart of Nebraska it was determined that when this convention adjourned it be to reconvene at Topeka, Kansas, on the first Tuesday in December, 1893.

The chairman was authorized to appoint an assistant secretary, resident at Topeka. A resolution was also adopted making the chairman and secretary of the convention similar officers of the executive committee.

The convention then adjourned. On Friday morning the executive committee met and organized and prepared to push the work before them forward to completion.

THE COMING BATTLE.

Leading Silver Men Give Their Opinions on the Effect of the Closing of the Indian Mints.

Gen J. B. Weaver: The closing of the mints to free coinage in India precipitates a political crisis in America. It is a bold stroke on the part of Britain to strengthen her financial domination over the world and to kill off the silver movement in the United States. Think of Britain and her world wide robbery of mankind. Now let the people rise a second time and throw off the British yoke, and establish an independent system of their own. Let us have a new declaration of independence, coin up our metals just when we please without asking further consent from crowned heads. Let us crush out the last vestige of this criminal conspiracy in the United States.

We must at once choose between freedom and enforced European serfdom. Let us out the cords which bind us to this body of death. Gen. A. J. Warner: "What England failed to secure in 1776 and 1812 by force of arms, she will achieve by gold in 1893 and henceforward, should monometallism succeed, then will follow an era of distress, panic, famine and desolation. Values will shrink to nothing. Our factories, furnaces and workshops will shut down and thousands of comfortable homes now occupied by our mechanics and citizens will become tenements. Farmers will have no fair markets for their products and agriculture must largely fail as an occupation. England will continue to stimulate the production of wheat and cotton in her Indian possessions and endeavor to free herself from dependence, either in whole or in part, of the United States for supplies of wheat or cotton.

Senator Peffer: "The Sherman law will be repealed the first thing. The effect of this will be to destroy both of the old parties and build up the new ones. That will be followed by a new alignment of parties. Some new organizations are soon to come into existence. The people's party is but the preliminary make-up of the new one which is to assume control. The new organization is to be composed of the people's party mostly, and it will receive many recruits from both of the other larger organizations, which are now closing their careers."

E. R. Holden, of Denver: "Inside of sixty days 150,000 men will be out of employment. Five hundred thousand people will be entering the verge of starvation. We will repudiate all our bonds and obligations due in the east, as we have no money to even pay the interest. It will bring about a new declaration of independence and the establishment of a western empire."

Richard P. Bland: "The demonization of silver is a conspiracy between the banking institutions of England and the eastern portion of the United States and the suspension of silver coinage in India is a part of this conspiracy to bulldoze the congress of the United States into the adoption of the single gold standard. I do not believe they will succeed. A city as outlined by Bellamy, in "Looking Backward" is being projected in the legislature of the state with an authorized capital of \$10,000,000. A large tract of land has already been purchased. They expect to get all the power they need from the Niagara Falls. We do not think it will be a success. The world is not educated up to the point of allowing the people to have any enjoyment in this life except the few money lords who run things to suit themselves. About the time they get to running some court will get off some decision and knock the whole thing out of a man's industrial Union."

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