

The Commoner.

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MISTAKES OF 1896

In a speech delivered at Austin, Texas, January 27, Senator Bailey—as reported in the Houston Post—said:

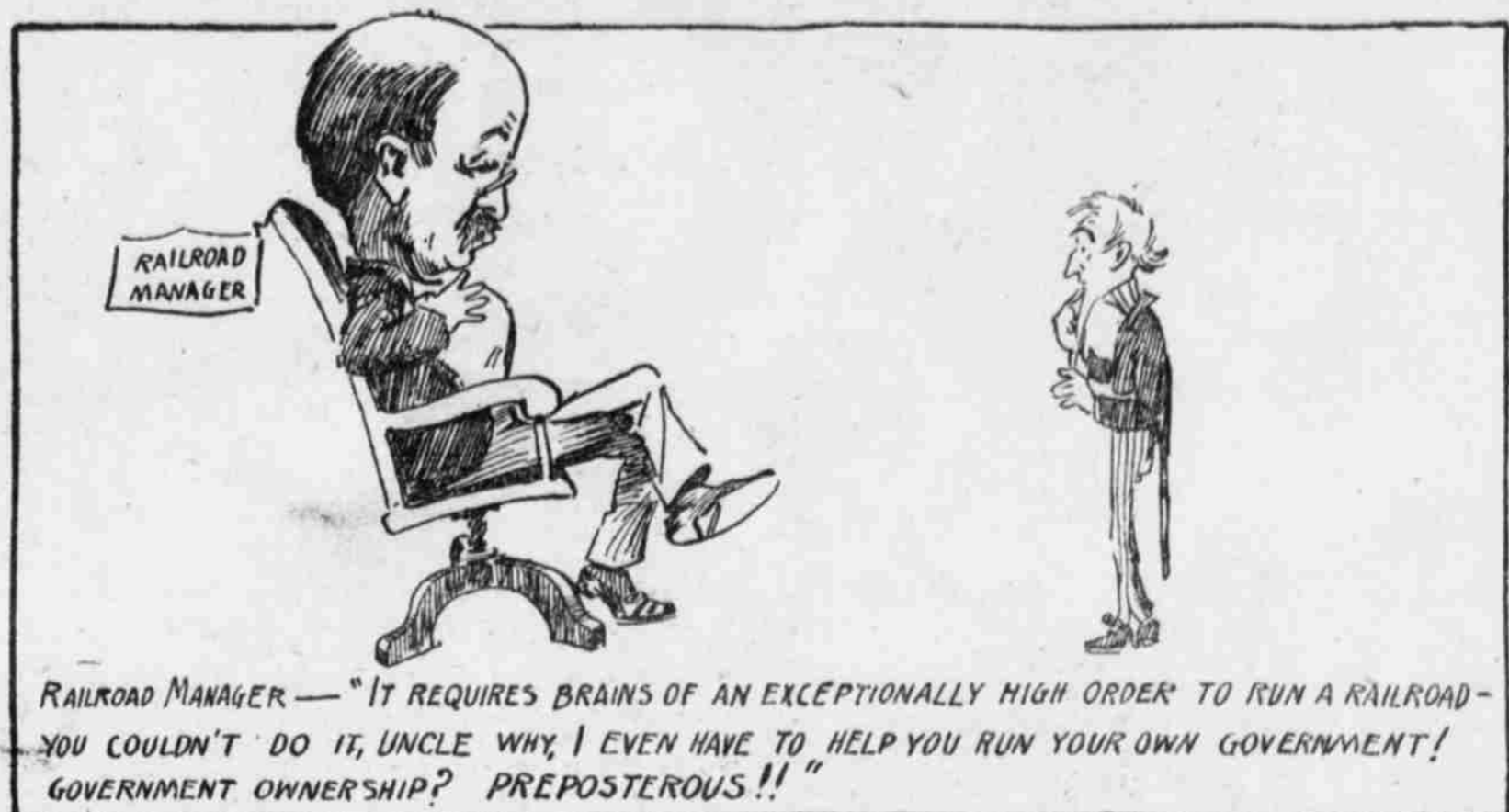
"We made one mistake in 1896. I did not help to make it myself. I did not make a calamity campaign and I hope we will never have another one. Let us make our campaigns on governmental principles, because thus only can we fulfill the expectations of the people. If we make a campaign upon the success of the season, or the abundance of the crops, then if the seasons fail or the crops diminish we cannot fulfill the expectations of the people. Let us have the courage and the intelligence to stand and tell that all the government can do to promote the prosperity of the people is to make them just and wise and equal laws. Let us pledge them that the democratic party will do that and leave all else of the salvation of the people to themselves."

If Senator Bailey doesn't make any more mistakes than the democratic party made in 1896 he will have made a fine record for sagacity. The Texas senator's description of the 1896 campaign is by no means fair. Indeed it sounds very much like a republican editorial.

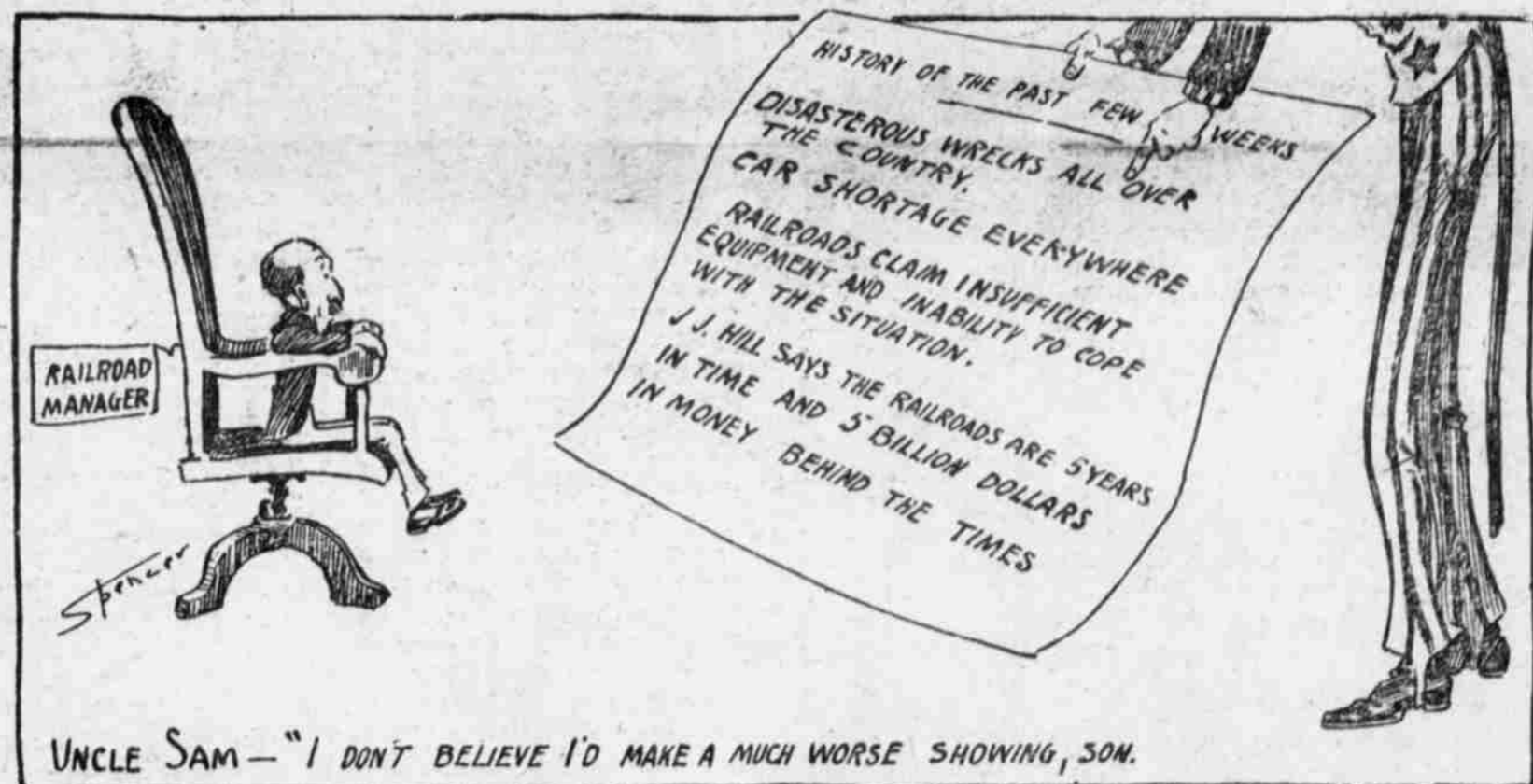
The democrats did not make it "a calamity" campaign; they did not make it "a campaign upon the success or upon the failure of the seasons." They did have the courage and the intelligence to stand for the public interests and to make clear and explicit pledges of what they would do in the event they were entrusted with power.

The day has gone by when the splendid attitude taken and the good work performed by the democratic party in 1896 can be estimated by a sneer; and in proof of this we need but to cite the well established fact that the radicalism of 1896 has become the conservatism of 1907; that the Chicago platform, denounced and laughed at by many, has so grown in favor that a republican president has won his greatest popularity by the adoption of the principles and policies described in that platform. The spirit of that platform has steadily grown in favor with the American people, who, in the opinion of many well informed men throughout the country, are prepared to entrust the democratic party with power whenever the party shall show a willingness to deal frankly with the people and a determination to cut itself loose from all entangling alliances with special interests—from the entangling alliance of a corporation contribution to campaign funds; the entangling alliance of a committee organization composed of men more concerned in the welfare of the trusts than in the public interests; and from the entangling alliance of candidates, who keep the word of promise to the ear only to break it to the hope.

As to Conducting Railroads--No. 1



No. 2



GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE

The heart is the center of life; when its pulsations cease death is at hand. So there is in nations a vital part around which national life is centered. The heart of nations today is to be found in the aspiration, more or less developed among all peoples, for self-government and the effort to enlarge the participation of the people in their government is the controlling purpose of those who are yet denied constitutions and parliaments. As the Orient is more backward than Europe the struggles there against arbitrary power are more noticeable.

The awakening of Japan was cotemporary with the promise of constitutional government. When the power of the Shogun was overthrown and the authority of the emperor restored, a constitution was promised to the people. The Shogun, through his control of the military forces, had gradually usurped the power of the emperor until the latter was a mere figurehead. Those who opposed the opening up of the country to foreign ideas used the treaties made by the Shogun with the foreign powers as an excuse for demanding the retirement of the military government. The emperor, however, was no sooner installed than he opened the door to the outside world and

began to pattern his government after the governments of Europe and America. As soon as the people were taken into partnership in the management of the affairs of state the educational systems of the western world were adopted, freedom of speech and of the press permitted and public assemblies encouraged. From that time there has been a steady growth in the direction of popular government. The Japanese who have studied in America have carried back with them democratic ideas, while those who have pursued their studies in England have learned of the omnipotence of parliament and the value of public discussion. The paramount political question in Japan today is whether the ministry shall be chosen by the emperor from among his personal friends or reflect, as in England and most of the other European countries, the dominant sentiment in parliament. A great deal depends upon the decision of this question and there is no doubt that it will sooner or later be decided on the side of parliament.

To understand the influence of government upon the progress of a people it is only necessary to consider what would happen if the government of Japan should adopt a reactionary policy. If,