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"THE BEST AND ONLY POLICY"

George Harvey, editor of Harper's Weekly, reputed to be owned by John Pierpont Morgan, made an interesting answer to the New York World's query, "What is the best principle and what the best policy to give the democratic party new life?" Here is Mr. Harvey's answer:

To the Editor of the World: The best principle: The constitution. The next best: Tariff for revenue only. The best and only policy: Beat Bryan. GEORGE HARVEY.

New York, March 10.

UNDER THE GUARANTEE SYSTEM

A reader of The Commoner sends in an item in regard to an Iowa bank which failed. The amount on deposit was about \$200,000, of which \$7,000 belonged to the county. The county had security and as soon as the failure was known, the county compelled the bondsmen to make good the deposit, but the individual depositors, not having any protection, lost a considerable part of their deposits.

Under the guarantee system all of the depositors would have been paid in full and the community would not have suffered from embarrassment.

A PERTINENT QUESTION

The New York World prints under the headline, "Three Questions for Mr. Bryan," the following editorial:

"The Nebraska convention having adopted Mr. Bryan's platform and indorsed Mr. Bryan for president, the World repeats the three questions which Mr. Bryan has not yet answered:

"What states did you lose in 1896 which you could carry in 1908?"

"What electoral votes did you lose in 1900 which you could win in 1908?"

"What elements of dissatisfaction and discontent did you fail to arouse then which you could successfully appeal to now?"

It would be much more to the point if the New York World would answer, for the benefit of its readers, the single question: "What is the extent of the financial interest held by Joseph Pulitzer, owner of the World, in railroad companies and in great corporations commonly known as trusts?"

The answer to this question might uncover the special interests for which the New York World speaks.



"I WONDER IF I HAVE NOT BEEN FOLLOWING IT LONG ENOUGH?"

The Railroads and the People

The events of the past three years have given to the railroad question a prominence which it has not enjoyed for some twenty years. In the seventies the Granger cases occupied the attention of the courts, and they arose from the enforcement of certain laws enacted by the various states. During the period of railroad development the iron horse rode over everything. Every section wanted a railroad, and no questions were asked. In many states bonds were issued in aid of railroads, and all sorts of frauds were perpetrated on unsuspecting communities. The abuses of the taxing power became so flagrant that a number of the states adopted constitutional provisions prohibiting the vote of aid to railroads—Illinois inserted such a provision in her constitution of 1870.

The Granger cases, as they were called, established the right of the states to regulate the railroads so far as local rates and local operation were concerned. The movement in favor of railroad regulation did not spend its force until in 1887 it secured the enactment of a federal statute establishing an interstate commerce commission, and conferring upon it certain powers. Then followed nine years of litigation, during which the railroads were contesting each point, as they had contested each point in the states, and at the end of the time the interstate commerce act was so weakened by judicial construction and interpretation as to be of little practical value. The next ten years were spent in an effort to amend the act and enlarge the scope of the interstate commerce commission, but the railroad lobby at Washington was so powerful that all attempts at legislation were blocked. Individuals and cities complained of

discriminations, and rates were complained of, but the railroads used their absolute power to prevent legislative relief.

They even went so far as to secure the passage of a bill repealing the criminal provision of the interstate commerce act. This is known as the Elkins act. As it was necessary to have some plausible excuse the bill was introduced as an anti-rebate bill, but the repealing clause was its most important feature. Some of the railroads were being compelled by the trusts to give rebates, and it was known at the time that several of the large railway systems were back of the bill. Secretary Taft has recently referred to the Elkins act as an act which was satisfactory to the railroads.

During the eighties and nineties there were attempts at rate reduction in several states, but these measures were all opposed by the railroads, and when enacted were nearly all suspended by the federal courts. In Nebraska a maximum rate law was enacted in 1891; the vote was close in the legislature, and the railroads, in the hope of defeating the measure, took one member out of the state on a special train, and he has never returned. In spite of this bold attempt to control the legislature the bill passed, and was promptly held up by the federal court. The case reached the United States supreme court in the course of a few years, and was argued in the spring of 1897. The decision, which was rendered after considerable deliberation, sustained the injunction, but left the way open for a modification of the decree if conditions changed. Unfortunately, the opinion laid down no rule for the determination of a reasonable rate, and state legislatures and state com-