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Another Railroad Plot

The railroads are planning another raid on the country, and their plans are being deliberately laid. The republican national platform has a brief plank which reads as follows:

"The entire transportation system of the country has become essentially national. We, therefore, favor such action by legislation or, if necessary, through an amendment to the constitution of the United States, as will result in placing it under exclusive federal control."

There is the bold demand that the states shall be deprived of all power to regulate, and that congress shall have exclusive control of the railroads of the nation—within the state as well as interstate.

This is what the railroads have been working for for years, but they have never before been brave enough to put their demands in a party platform. The republican party, under its reactionary leadership, now dares to champion this proposition which contemplates the removal of all railroad questions from the state legislatures to the national capital. This will mean that each candidate for congress will have to get the support of the railroads or feel their opposition. It will largely increase railroad activity in national politics.

It so happens (?) that the republican candidate for president fits into this scheme. He vetoed the two cent fare bill passed by a New York legislature while he was governor, and he wrote the supreme court opinion in the "Minnesota rate case."

On another page will be found a Washington dispatch, published in the New York Tribune, referring to this case. One paragraph from that opinion will be sufficient to show the attitude of ex-Justice Hughes. He says:

"The argument that if the state rates are reasonable in and of themselves they can not be objected to, and therefore the whole inquiry is as to their reasonableness, is fallacious. The court determines only whether rates are confiscatory and can not entertain the broader question of their reasonableness; nor can this be determined by any mathematical formula. Public policy of the nation may be to permit carriers a large return. Public policy of a state may be to permit but a small one. In such a conflict national authority controls."

Because the nation may want to allow HIGHER STATE RATES than the state, the republicans think the states should not be allowed to determine these questions. Take the rate-making out of the hands of legislators near home and put it in the hands of legislators far from home—that is the first step; then will follow the transfer of all railroad cases from state courts to federal courts—each move intended to give more freedom to the railroads and to make it more difficult for the people to protect themselves from extortion and injustice.

This is the republican program. Against this the democrats put the safer and more rea-

sonable doctrine that "national remedies shall be ADDED TO, NOT SUBSTITUTED FOR, state remedies."

The position of the democratic party as to control of railroad rates was well stated in the democratic national platform of 1908. It is as follows:

"We assert the right of congress to exercise complete control over interstate commerce and the right of each state to exercise like control over commerce within its borders."

When both state and federal government do their best the people will have no more protection than they need—what will be their fate when they must await the action of congress and the federal court?

The republican plan is the more dangerous because it apparently has the unqualified support of Colonel Roosevelt, but will the real progressives join in this plot against the people?

W. J. BRYAN.

THE OUTLOOK

The contest of 1916 is on, and for four months the parties will be busy circulating literature and appealing to voters. Our party has no walk away; it will not be an overwhelming victory, as in 1912, but the prospects are improving. The democratic record of achievement is impregnable. The republican candidate has not strengthened himself since his resignation—he has lost ground. It remains to be seen whether he can regain it in the speeches he plans to make. "Peace, prosperity and progress" are hard to attack. The President is growing.

IS HUGHES ANOTHER TAFT?

In estimating the value of Mr. Roosevelt's endorsement of Mr. Hughes, it must be remembered that he endorsed Mr. Taft. Does he feel as sure about Mr. Hughes as he did about Mr. Taft? And will he be as brutally frank in acknowledging his mistake, if Mr. Hughes disappoints him as much as Mr. Taft did? The future has great political possibilities if we can judge it by the past.

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The New Revenue Measure

The new revenue measure illustrates in a very emphatic way the difference between the two parties. The democratic party, having decided that more revenue is necessary, seeks to secure it by laying the burden on incomes, inheritances and munition manufacturers, the latter the special beneficiaries of the present war. The republicans would put the burden on consumption, a method of taxation which overburdens the masses.

The exemption of \$3,000 provided in the present law (\$4,000 for married persons) is not lowered, but the basic tax of one per cent is raised to two, and the sur-tax is increased from a maximum of six per cent to ten.

While these rates are only intended to provide for an emergency, they point the way to a source which will always be available in time of need.

The inheritance tax is resorted to for the first time, but it is so equitable that it will at once be accepted by the country and become a permanent part of our financial system. The exemption of estates under \$50,000, confines the tax to those who can easily afford to pay it, and the rate, beginning at one per cent, rises so gradually that it amounts to only 5 per cent on estates above \$450,000.

The objection advanced by some that inheritances should be left for state taxation, has no weight. It is not double taxation for both nation and state to tax the same inheritance, because they tax for different purposes. The same piece of land is taxed by the city, the county and the state, and no one calls it treble taxation; why should it be called double taxation for the state and federal government to tax the same inheritance? And besides, the large estates are usually derived from corporations engaged in interstate commerce. The munitions tax is eminently just, whether it is regarded a tax upon an industry especially benefited by the war or as a rebuke to those who, for their own pecuniary benefit, have tried to frighten this country into an expensive program of preparedness.

The tariff laid on dyestuffs is a protective tariff which, in the opinion of the President, is justified by the fact that the war has cut off importations and American chemists have been urged to experiment with a view to supplying the manufacturers of this country with a necessary material.

The tariff commission pleases a certain element and does no harm. Its tendency is to postpone a change in rates, and that is at present desirable.

W. J. BRYAN.

Talk to any man who belongs to the favor-seeking, privilege-enjoying classes and he will explain to you the importance of returning the republican party to power.