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## NEBRASKA POLITICS

Notes on Progress of the Campaign Against Railroad Domination

There is really but one issue in the present state campaign. It is The People vs. The Railroads—the same old fight which has been going on almost from the very formation of Nebraska territory, and certainly ever since its admission as a state in 1867.

Nebraska is essentially an agricultural state. Practically one-half of all males and females over ten years of age, engaged in "gainful occupations," follow agricultural pursuits; 55.7 per cent of the males engaged in "gainful occupations" are agriculturists. Yet the state government has never been wholly free from railroad control, notwithstanding that only 17.2 per cent of the male population over ten years of age are engaged in "trade and transportation." In 1897 the populists and democrats had control of the administrative and legislative branches of government; but the supreme court was republican. Judge Sullivan's election to the supreme bench in the fall of 1897 was the first bona fide representative of the people as distinguished from the railroads. Both Judge Maxwell and Judge Reese, elected as republicans, had shown restiveness at wearing the railroad yoke—the inheritance of every republican judge—and a disposition to rebel; and the powerful machine ruthlessly destroyed their usefulness to the people as judges.

By the time Judge Holcomb reached the supreme bench (January, 1900), the legislature was again republican. Then the wave of McKinley prosperity carried back the administrative offices to the republicans, and since January, 1901, the people have had no representation in state government except the two judges on the supreme bench.

Upon whatever basis it may be calculated, the railroads of Nebraska have always had more than their share. The Independent has no disposition to deny men engaged in railroading the same political rights other men enjoy. Upon the basis of taxation, the railroads, paying between 16 and 17 per cent of the taxes, would be entitled to about one-sixth of the legislature, one of the administrative officers, and a supreme judge—although the latter would give them one-third of the court.

Upon the basis of "gainful occupations," the railroad share would be about the same—16 to 17 per cent. The farmers would be entitled to 55 per cent; professional men, 4; those in domestic and personal service, 11; and in manufacture and mechanical arts, about 12 or 13. Permitting themselves to be divided politically by all sorts of flimsy "issues," the farmers of Nebraska have allowed other interests to run the state government. The census will tell a story of what this has done for the farmer. Let us make a comparison between agriculture and manufacturing in Nebraska:

The farmers' investment in 1900 was as follows:

Land and buildings.....	\$577,660,020
Implements, etc. ....	24,940,050
Live stock.....	145,349,587

Total .....\$747,950,057

Farm crops for the year 1899 were valued at \$162,696,386, of which \$38,025,530 was fed to live stock, going to make up the 145 millions above and leaving \$124,670,856 as the net farm crops for sale as such and including \$70,227,060 of "animal products." Hence, it becomes apparent that the returns were nearly 17 per cent on the investment—if we assume that the 186,587 persons, male and female, over ten years of age, engaged in agriculture, are NOT entitled to any wages whatever for the energy they expended in producing these farm products!

There was, as a matter of fact, \$7,399,160 paid out for farm labor, but as we are counting the total product and total engaged, no account need be made of this. Assuming that each one of the 186,587 was, on the average, entitled to a dollar a day as wages, and counting 300 days to the year, we must deduct \$55,976,100 as a return in the nature of wages. This leaves us:

Investment .....	\$747,950,057
Net return .....	68,694,756

Or something better than 9 per cent, and not quite ten. But out of this must be deducted taxes, state, county

and school district—by no means an inconsiderable sum.

Turning to the manufacturing industry in Nebraska, we find 49,105 persons, over ten, engaged. Capital, \$71,982,127. The total product was \$143,990,102, from which deduct \$102,982,707 paid out for materials used, leaving \$39,792,395 for wages and profit. There was actually paid out \$11,570,688 in wages—but we will calculate the same as for the farmers, \$300 a year; \$14,731,500 for wages, leaving \$25,060,895 as the return on an investment of 71 millions—more than 34 per cent profit.

A similar state of affairs will be shown upon examination of railroad business in Nebraska.

The crux of the whole matter is that the farmers allow themselves to be hoodwinked by such cries as: "We ought not to do anything to hurt the railroads; they are a good thing; they build up the state," etc. Of course they do. So do the farmers. And it is high

time the farmers did a little looking after their own interests and let the railroads take care of themselves—something they have shown ample capability to do.

With the Ramsey law and the revenue law sure to come up for determination by the courts, do the farmers of Nebraska want these determined by RAILROAD LAWYERS? If so, they will elect Barnes supreme judge and the republican nominees in the various districts. If not, they will elect Sullivan and every populist and democrat running for district judge.

It is a fact that Rosewater never went after the scalp of a republican leader in the state of Nebraska and failed to get it. Just at present he is parading around with the scalp of Chas. P. Mathewson, the Omaha and Winnebago Indian agent, at his belt. Rosewater has followed that trail winter and summer, night and day, for

three years. At last he got his man. Mathewson is no more Indian superintendent and political boss. It is to be hoped that land steals, fake sales at \$250 an acre, and other things that has made Thurston county smell unto high heaven will be things of the past. After Mathewson's scalp is well dried, Rosewater will hang it up alongside that of Tom Majors and several others which he keeps in his wigwam.

All the republicans declare that John N. Baldwin is the most insulting, tyrannical and arbitrary boss that they ever had to serve under. Not long ago Baldwin sent for a somewhat prominent lawyer, took his pass away and gave him such a roast as made the hair stand on the poor lawyer's head. At the end of the castigation the lawyer was told that he could stop his opposition to the nomination of a certain county candidate and advocate that of the other man, or he could pay his way home and never expect to get another case from the road. The lawyer surrendered. He couldn't help himself. His bread and butter depended upon it. In another case a certain editor had been opposing the nomination of a railroad candidate. The editor was yanked up to the snubbing post and given a tongue lashing that he will remember to his dying day. The editor's advertising contracts were taken away from him and he paid his own way home, where he has since been meditating on the power of kings. It is such things as these, and there have been a good many of them of late, that make the republicans say that John N. Baldwin is a "hard boss."

### GREATEST POLITICAL MACHINE

One of the cunningly planned schemes that the railroads are working in this state is to get rid of maintaining a squad of workers that must be paid by the railroads themselves at each county seat to enable them to hold down the state. It is that kind of trickish work with which the farmers have often been deceived. It was planned at the headquarters of the railroads by high-priced lawyers whose training has enabled them to become experts at it. The plan is to have a squad of men paid by the people at each county seat who will keep the railroad machine in good working order the whole year round, a squad of officeholders not elected by the people, but appointed by some willing tool of the corporations. The result will be -600 agents of the railroads in the state, holding offices to which the people never elected them, but whom they will have to pay, besides a boss to look after them and keep them at their work located at each county seat who will draw an annual salary varying from \$250, in the smallest county, to \$2,400 in the larger ones, also paid by the people. This is the scheme that the republicans put through the legislature last year under the direction of the keen railroad lawyers and entitled a revenue law.

That law provides that there shall be only one assessor in each county and he shall appoint a deputy in each precinct. Besides the big boss who will live at the county seat, draw his salary, there will be from 15 to 25 deputies in each county. This body of men, the lawyers thought, would be able to control the politics in nearly every county in the state. They will make an efficient working body superior to any county committee that could be appointed in the old way by the republican leaders, and the jolly part of the business is that the people will pay the bill.

Heretofore the assessors have been elected in each precinct and the assessing was done by a man's neighbor, who knew all about the value of property in his township. This new crowd will come from the county seat, from the lot of fellows who hang around the court house, serve as jurors and gather up any other small crumbs that the court house gang can throw in their way. That is the sort of dose that the last legislature gave the farmers of this state. The railroads will give them another ten times worse if they carry this election.

This scheme is so drastic in its operations that hundreds of republi-

## The Big Fifteenth.

Nebraska Judicial District an Empire in Extent

Three hundred miles from east to west, and sixty miles from north to south, the Fifteenth judicial district of Nebraska is greater in area than any one of eight of the sovereign states of the Union: New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, or Maryland. It contains ten counties having an aggregate area of 18,596 square miles, and the census of 1900 gave the population at 55,327. One county alone (Cherry) has a greater area than Rhode Island, Delaware or Connecticut, and it lacks but seven square miles of being as large as Rhode Island and Connecticut combined. The district itself is bigger than any one of the following combinations: New Hampshire and Vermont; Vermont, New Jersey and Rhode Island; New Hampshire, New Jersey and Delaware; Maryland, Rhode Island and New Jersey; or Massachusetts, Connecticut, Delaware and Rhode Island.

Owing to the sparse population, this district is allowed but two judges of the district court. Holding court twice a year at each county seat gives twenty terms, or ten to each judge. The necessary travel is something which would be appalling to an eastern man. Almost the entire district is traversed by the C. & N. W. railroad and the Burlington crosses the western end.

Before the populists and democrats captured the state government and a majority of the judicial districts, this Fifteenth district was completely under railroad domination (as were most of the districts in which the courts were presided over by republican judges). In the Fifteenth especially the people, being engaged largely in cattle raising, were aroused almost to the point of revolt by the frequency of cattle stealing and the equal frequency with which the thieves escaped punishment. Finally Judge W. H. Westover of Sheridan county, a thorough populist, carried the empire district. Immediately cattle stealing fell below par, for Judge Westover refused to follow the republican precedent of allowing a cattle stealing case to go over if it resulted in a "hung jury." He would order the sheriff to at once call another jury and begin the trial again. For a time he kept the sheriffs busy bringing cattle thieves to the penitentiary—and thus ruined a lucrative business, much to the delight of those who were trying to make a living by raising cattle instead of stealing them.

Four years ago John J. Harrington of Holt county—a brother of Michael F. Harrington, the well known populist leader of Nebraska—was nominated as running mate with Judge Westover, and both were elected without difficulty. This year they have been renominated.

Our preliminary statement as to the size of this district will accentuate the facts brought out in the following clipping from the Holt Co. Independent. There is no other judicial district in the state where a railroad pass will save a judge so much in cost of transportation; hence, no other where the

temptation to accept it is so great; or where it is more clearly a bribe. Judge Harrington is not the only populist or democratic judge who refuses railroad favors—but The Independent has yet to hear of a republican judge who is not fully supplied with these powerful bits of pasteboard. The Holt County Independent says:

"As the years drift along the people are getting to understand better that a railroad pass is a bribe to a public official. The Independent is not one of those thick and thin sheets that asserts that the pass evil is confined entirely to any one political crowd. Unfortunately some fusionists in the state administration did ride on passes, and those who did to that extent weakened the organization. The Omaha Bee recently published a most excellent editorial against the entire pass system. The argument of Editor Rosewater seems to us unanswerable. It ought to be read by everybody. The Lincoln News recently commented on the sworn statements of expenses filed by the candidates for district judges, and, it pleased the Independent to notice that it commended Judge Harrington for being one of the few district judges in the state who had the honesty and manhood to pay his railroad fare and be under no obligations to the corporations. Coming from a hide bound republican newspaper this commendation means something.

"A judge should be absolutely above suspicion. He ought to receive no favors from any corporation. The man who is injured on the railroad, the widow and the children whose husband is killed, the stockman whose cattle are injured through shipment, the merchant whose goods are damaged in the course of transportation, the farmer whose property is burned by fire from the railroad ought to feel and know that when he goes into court the judge is under no obligation to the railroad company.

"But when a judge receives passes from these railroads, which saves him large sums of money in railroad fare, he can hardly be expected to hold the scales of justice evenly balanced and even though he tries to do so, the litigant is bound to feel the chances are against him.

"Through his term as district judge, J. J. Harrington has never accepted a pass from a railroad company; he has always paid his fare; he has paid to the railroads of this district for railroad tickets in the last four years more than \$1,000. By doing this he is able to do equal and exact justice in any case between the citizen and the railroad company. No one has any strings on him; having received no favors he need not grant any; he simply does justice as he sees it. We believe that every man in the district, regardless of politics, believes that Judge Harrington has done right, and we feel quite sure that a very large number of republicans are going to show by their vote that they appreciate the independence of our worthy young judge."