

# Freight Rates

Earnings of Nebraska Railroads  
Hon. M. F. Harrington

Editor Independent: One of the most important questions involved in this year's election in Nebraska is the reduction of freight charges. The populist and democratic parties both have pledged themselves in their platforms and through their candidates to reduce the freight rates charged by the railways of the state if given the power to do so. To accomplish this we must have not only the state ticket but a majority in both branches of the legislature. I think most of the people of Nebraska are agreed that freight rates are too high; but in order to put the matter plainly before every voter who may desire to inform himself on the question, this article is written. I believe if the people see clearly the injustice that is being done the producing, laboring and business interests of the state, they will give us the necessary power to enact laws to bring some relief to the public.

When such a suggestion is made we often asked: "What did you folks do when you were in power?" To begin with, we have had control of only three legislatures of 1891, of 1893 and 1897, these and none others. In the legislature of 1891 we passed a bill through both the house and the senate, making a large reduction in freight rates in this state. The bill was vetoed by James E. Boyd then the democratic governor of Nebraska and a gentleman who supported McKinley and Roosevelt four years ago, and who, it is said, will support Parker this year, upon the theory that Roosevelt and Parker are "two peas from the same pod."

After the bill was vetoed it was passed over the veto by the house of representatives but failed to receive the necessary vote in the senate. In that body it received the vote of every populist except Taylor, who had been purchased by the railway companies and had been run out of the state and who has remained out of the state from that day to this. In the legislature of 1893, we passed another bill reducing freight charges and it was approved. This bill was attacked by the railroad companies in the circuit court of the United States and it was held that the reduction was too great. As a matter of fact, I am firmly convinced that if an investigation had been made in that case as to what items had been included in the term "operating expenses" the law would have been upheld. But the republicans had control of the litigation and we are not responsible for their failure to make a just and proper defense of the law. The case finally went to the supreme court of the United States and was long delayed, and it had to be there decided on the record made at the trial by the republicans. The final argument of the case was made in the winter of 1897 and the final decision was not handed down until after the legislature adjourned. The final argument before the supreme court occurred after we had secured control of the state government and C. J. Smyth and William J. Bryan participated in the argument. Mr. Smyth did this as a faithful attorney general and Mr. Bryan did it without any compensation whatever. He did it simply as a reformer who was practicing what he preached.

Since this bill, known as the second Newberry bill, was held non-enforceable, we have never had a legislature in which we had a majority in either branch. But in the legislature of 1901 we had forty-eight out of one hundred members in the house and twenty out of thirty-three members in the senate. A bill was prepared making a substantial reduction in rates and the fusion caucus invited me to make the argument in favor of the bill. I did so and at the close of the argument the six republican members of the committee reported against the bill and the one populist on the committee reported in favor of the bill. Our case was so clear that when our bill came before the house of representatives we got enough republicans to break their party chains to enable us to pass the bill through the house. But it failed in the senate. The railroads had the branding iron set firmly in the senate and the republican majority killed the bill, insofar as our course is concerned it is an open book. We are willing that the world shall know it and we are proud of what we have done.

Will some person name a republican legislature that ever passed a freight reduction bill? Will some person name a republican legislature that ever tried to pass a freight reduction bill? During the more than thirty years that the republicans have had undisputed control of the state will

some person name a single republican state officer who ever urged the passage of a freight reduction bill? Will some person name a single republican member of either branch of the legislature during the last thirty-seven years since Nebraska came into the Union, who ever even introduced a bill for the reduction of freight rates in the state? Will some person name a single republican leader in Nebraska who ever went before a legislature or a committee thereof and made an argument in favor of a freight reduction bill? Don't all speak at once.

## ROBBERY ON THE RAILED HIGHWAYS

The railroad rate question is so important and comprehensive that any one feature of it is sufficient for an article of this kind. For the purpose of this article I take the Union Pacific railroad and I include both the main line and all branch lines. The total value of that railroad property is shown by the statement filed by it with the state board of equalization this year and a certified copy of which statement I have obtained from the auditor's office. It shows that the real value of the Union Pacific in Nebraska including branch lines and including its rolling stock and terminals and all other property owned by it in Nebraska is \$17,731,364.00. Last spring the Union Pacific did not file a statement of its Nebraska earnings but contented itself with giving the earnings of the entire system. But everyone knows they were greatly in excess of what they were the year before. A year ago last spring the Union Pacific did file with the auditor a statement of both its gross and net earnings in Nebraska. I have likewise a certified copy of this report. This report shows that the net earnings of the Union Pacific in Nebraska for one year amounted to \$5,271,138.01. This is the amount of money earned by this railroad company after paying all wages of all its men and after paying for coal and repairs, and salaries of attorneys and doctors and lobbyists and after inquiring their contribution to the republica campaign fund and other expenses, whether legal or illegal.

What does this profit mean? Here is a property in which is invested a little over nineteen millions of dollars and yet it earns profits for its owners of more than five million dollars a year. It means that the Union Pacific railroad property in Nebraska has earned for its owners after paying all expenses more than two per cent a month on every dollar invested in the property. These are the plain figures; these are the unvarnished facts. The Union Pacific is charging the farmers, stock men, professional men, business men and the laboring people

of the state freight rates and passenger rates high enough to maintain the property and equip it and repair it and improve it and pay all wages and other expenses and furnish corruption funds and still pay the owners of the property more than two per cent a month on the entire investment in the road, both the main lines and branch lines.

Where is there a business house in Nebraska that realizes two per cent a month above all wages and expenses on the capital invested? Where is there a farmer or cattle man in the state that makes any such money? And who pays this two per cent a month to the Union Pacific railroad on the entire investment in its property? It is the people who patronize the railroad. It is not the pass grabbers who ride deadhead like North Carolina niggers. It is the farmers, the stockmen, the businessmen and the laboring class of the state who have to pay either directly or indirectly the exorbitant freight charges and passenger rates which enables this railroad company to pay this enormous rate of interest upon its investment.

How has this Union Pacific railroad managed to levy this extortionate toll upon the people of Nebraska and upon their business? They do it through political supremacy. They contribute to campaign funds. They manipulate party nominations and help elect republican tickets. They have in the state scores of railway attorneys who do their bidding at every turn. They have a large number of doctors who receive from them some business and plenty of free passes. They have political armies ranging from twenty-five to upwards in every county and this army gets annual and trip passes for themselves, their families and their political heclers.

These railroad attorneys, these railroad doctors, these railroad political

# THE OLD FOLKS AT HOME Are Never Without Peruna in the House for Catarrhal Diseases.



W. D. WATSON, Clovis, Fresno County, Cal., writes:

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henchmen are the enemies of Nebraska. They are enemies of the government of the state; they make free government impossible; they destroy popular rule. They are guilty of treason to the commonwealth. It is through this corporation-owned, political machine that the Union Pacific and other railroads maintain power to plunder the people by charging exorbitant rates. The railroads of Nebraska are not owned within the state. While the Union Pacific in Nebraska is worth only about nineteen millions of dollars, yet as a matter of fact it is paying dividends on bonds and stocks amounting to about six times its actual worth. This excess above its real value is commonly called by financiers "watered bonds" and "watered stocks." These millions that are dishonestly taken from the people of Nebraska make the people poorer and make the holders of these watered bonds and stocks in New York and London, that much richer. It is a dishonest transfer of wealth produced by sweat and toil in Nebraska to holders of watered bonds and watered stocks in financial centers.

It is a transfer unjustly of our money to the fraudulent owners of fictitious securities who despise us and who laugh in their sleeves at how simple we are to bear these extortions. How shall we describe the men who live in Nebraska and who keep up and maintain the system that is thus fleecing our own people? They are with us but they are not of us. Their sympathies and interests are with the scheming manipulators of watered bonds and watered stocks. We ought to call them—let me be first to apply the name—The Foreign Garrison in Nebraska.

The foreign garrison in Nebraska are now moving heaven and earth to elect Mickey and a majority in both branches of the legislature. It is high

time that those who live in Nebraska and whose interests are in Nebraska should join together and throw the foreign garrison overboard.

M. F. HARRINGTON.

## Texas Watson and Tibbles Club

Editor Independent: We have organized a Watson club here and our people seem to be very enthusiastic. Our county will be thoroughly organized in a few days.

Being a native Texan of 43 years standing and my business being of such a nature that I have to travel a great deal over the state, I am in a position to be pretty well up on the political situation. My candid opinion is with a united effort on the part of the populists, Texas will poll the largest vote for Watson that has ever been polled by them in this state. Let me beg our people to read our papers; keep posted on the political situation, and there will be no trouble to win out.

J. H. SURLS, Secretary,  
State Populist Convention  
Putnam, Texas.

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