

The Independent.

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MR. BERGE REPLIES

Editor Independent: My attention has just been called to a statement from the auditor's office, in which the republican state administration attempts to account for about one third of the extravagance charged against it for the last four years of state government.

The republicans in these last four years appropriated of the people's money in round numbers \$1,688,000 more than the fusionists did in the four preceding years. Being under no obligation to the republican voters for their nominations and depending on the popularity of Roosevelt in office, the state officials had paid no attention up to this time to the startling exposure of this \$1,688,000 extravagance.

It is to the credit of the republican newspapers that they have generally made no attempt to justify or defend the republican officials. Many of the republican newspapers refuse to squarely endorse their state ticket, and candidly admit that the financial showing as to the expenditures of public money is embarrassing and disappointing. Two years ago the republican voters hesitated when they saw the ticket, which had been announced some days before the republican convention. The voters hesitated, but the republican newspapers assured them that whatever humiliation there was in the announcement of the ticket before the convention by railroad attorneys, would be atoned for in a measure by the business economy that would follow, for the men put up were especially adapted to business.

Now the republican newspapers hesitate, and I do not blame them. Newspapers have but little influence in state affairs when there is government by railroads. Publicity is a safeguard to economy and good government only when the voters are stirred by the publicity to strike the unfaithful official with the ballot, the only sure weapon of defense that the over-taxed citizen can wield.

Now as to the statement from the auditor's office. This statement from the deputy auditor attempts to explain only about one third of the extravagance charged. He leaves over a million dollars unexplained. The charge is that the republicans appropriated one million six hundred and eighty-eight thousand dollars more for their four years than the fusionists did for the preceding four years.

The state officers, after waiting now some six weeks since the charge was made, answer that they can explain one third of it. Now, if the republicans in their four years spent \$600,000, as the deputy auditor says they did, for new buildings and betterments, and if the fusionists spent nothing in their four years for these same necessities, then the republicans would stand credited with \$600,000, leaving only a million dollars unexplained. But if the records show, which they do, that the fusionists in their four years spent over \$500,000 in new buildings and betterments, then this credit, which the auditor's office attempts to show is wiped out and they stand practically where they were before the auditor's statement was made, except that they bring on themselves the additional charge of trying to flim-flam the voters and jockey the taxpayers by a trick in figures.

The deputy auditor as he looked on the record there could see the \$67,000 that the republicans spent in new buildings and betterments at Hastings,

but he could not see the \$79,000 which the fusionists spent in new buildings and betterments at Hastings. He could see the farm that the republicans bought at Beatrice, but he could not see the farm that the fusionists bought at Hastings. He could see the \$5,000 republican barn at the Lincoln insane hospital, but not the \$51,000 that the fusionists spent on new buildings and betterments at the same institution.

This republican official statement in trying to explain to indignant taxpayers an extravagant charge of \$1,688,000 says they spent \$3,500 at Beatrice for a cold storage plant and a kitchen, but he leaves the other half of the truth untold, that the fusionists built four new buildings and made permanent betterments there to the amount of \$55,000. He pleads with the taxpayers to remember that the republicans spent \$43,000 for a chapel building at Peru, but he wants them to forget that the fusionists built a new dormitory for the normal school at Peru. He points out the republican standpipe at Norfolk, but forgets that the people can see three fusion standpipes, one at Hastings, one at Peru, and one at Grand Island.

I have not the full record here, but the fusionists spent something near \$100,000 on new buildings and betterments at the state university. They spent \$100,000 for the Trans-Mississippi exposition. They bought an executive mansion at Lincoln. They built about a dozen new buildings during their four years and the record for new buildings during their four year and the record for new buildings and betterments is so near a stand-off between the two administrations that the explanation from the auditor's office fails to explain. I have taken the position in this campaign that the fusionists ought to be held to strict account in every matter in which they failed to come up to the high ideals which they put forth, but I believe the people will credit the fusionists where they deserve credit and will hold the republicans also to a strict account and not excuse the willful extravagance of public money simply because times are good and because it is a presidential year.

GEORGE W. BERGE.

Summary of Mr. Berge's Reply	
Republican extravagance.....	\$1,688,000
Their Defense	
Permanent improvements.....	\$600,000
Unaccounted for.....	Over \$1,000,000
Offset by	
Permanent improvements under fusion administration.....	\$500,000
For the Trans-Mississippi exposition.....	\$100,000

COWARDLY CANDIDATES

Recently The Independent addressed a communication to each of the candidates for congress in the state of Nebraska on both the fusion and republican tickets, inquiring whether if elected these candidates would pledge the people of their districts not to accept railroad passes or other favors from public service or other corporations.

A communication was also sent to each of the candidates on these tickets for state offices, asking the same question.

The Independent is glad to state that every candidate on the state ticket nominated by the populists and democrats at Lincoln, August 10, has replied in a manly way, unequivocally stating his position upon the pass question. Not only have all these candidates stated their positions very pointedly upon this question, but without exception they have pledged themselves not to accept either passes or other favors from any public service or other corporations. Every one of these candidates has stated that he believed, just what every honest person believes, that these passes are intended to be and are bribes. Everyone of these candidates has said that when a public service corporation grants a pass to a public official it is intended to bribe that official. It is intended to put him under obligation to that corporation. And if he is a man he will be grateful to that corporation.

A former president of the New York Central railroad said that "any public official who accepts a pass from a railroad is a scoundrel. For having so placed himself under obligations to the road, if the time ever comes that he may return that favor through the powers of his office, and he does not do so, he is an ingrate, and every ingrate is a scoundrel. If on the other hand he does return the favor, and officially grants the corporation a favor, then he betrays the confidence of his constituents; is a traitor, thereby, and therefore a scoundrel." Every honest citizen everywhere will concur in the statement of that official. Every honest citizen of Nebraska knows that his statement is correct.

Notwithstanding these facts; notwithstanding that this pass question has been forced into the arena of the campaign in this state, and that every citizen is interested in knowing whether these candidates for office are willing to pledge themselves upon this question, not one of the republican candidates in the state of Nebraska has dared to say what he would do. Not one of them has answered that communication. Not one of them, from the "sanctiferous" Hon. John H. Mickey, otherwise chief magistrate of this offended state, down to Henry M. Eaton, has been man enough to take the people into his confidence upon this question.

Now The Independent is modest enough to admit that none of these candidates was under any obligations to notice its communication. The Independent admits that their sanctified souls could not think of acknowledging

receipt of any communication from this office. The Independent further knows that not one of these officials dares to acknowledge receipt of a communication from this office, because everyone of these candidates is mortgaged to and gagged by the railroads of this state. The Independent knows what this means. It has seen strong men, or what seemed to be strong men, cowed down and crushed under the heels of public service corporations. It could not, therefore, reasonably hope to see a miserable crowd of ordinary corporation stool pigeons, exhibit any courage at all.

But notwithstanding all this modest admission on the part of The Independent, it was to be presumed that these candidates in a sort of "back alley" manner would see to it that their own official organs would somewhat pledge them upon this issue, since the public is so anxious to know about it. It was reasonable to think that these candidates would have had a heart to heart talk with their official spokesmen, their state committee, and let the public have some information upon this question.

To be sure it was not reasonable to think that these candidates would even think of ever taking the public fully into their confidence, for they can not succeed in that way, but it was reasonable to suppose that these craven spirits would have been frightened into the knowledge that to succeed they must get the votes of the people, and that to do so, it was necessary to make some kind of an effort for it. But they did not do so, and they did not, because they are gagged. They have handed over, bag and baggage, their honor and their manhood to predatory corporations that have sought to purchase the great state of Nebraska and the people of this state as cattle on the plains. And the corporations do not seem to have missed their guess. They were true, as they always are, in the pick of their men, they did not buy pigs in sacks. They stood by and saw them put into the sacks before laying down their hands.

Here is the aggregation of candidates who, for reasons best known to themselves, dare not state their position before the people of this state, as to whether they will accept the pass bribe or not:

- John H. Mickey, candidate for governor.
- E. G. McMillan, for lieutenant governor.
- A. Galusha, for secretary of state.
- E. M. Searle, for auditor.
- Norris Brown, for attorney general.
- J. L. McBrien, for superintendent of public instruction.
- Henry M. Eaton, for commissioner of public lands and buildings.
- Peter Mortensen, for treasurer.
- Edmund W. Minshay, for congress.
- Moses P. Kinkaid, for congress.
- Elmer J. Burkett, for congress.
- John J. McCarthy, for congress.
- George W. Norris, for congress.
- John L. Kennedy, for congress.
- Walter B. McNeel, for congress.
- H. H. Mauck, for congress.

Under what obligation are the people of this state to the candidates on the republican ticket, if those candidates do not dare to take the people into their confidence upon this question? Why should anybody vote for this aggregation of cowards, if they fear to pledge themselves that they will not accept this corporation bribe—the free pass? Is not their silence a dangerous confession? Is it not equivalent to admission that these candidates if again entrusted with office, will use that office as a lever to secure from the corporations of this state special favors that all other citizens can not secure? Who doubts this statement for a moment? The candidate who fears or refuses to state his position upon this question is unworthy the support of the people. A self-respecting voter will withhold that support.

Not by their refusal to answer The Independent do they confess their willingness to accept this corporation bribe, but by their failure to pledge themselves; by their silence upon one of the chief issues of this campaign do they confess that if again entrusted with power they will again accept this pass bribe. But will the people trust them?

Railroads or the People! Which?

If you are interested in the people of Nebraska regaining control of the state, there is but one way to accomplish your desire. That is in voting the following ticket:

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|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Governor | George W. Berge |
| Lieut. Governor | Dr. A. Townsend |
| Secretary of State | R. E. Watzke |
| Auditor | J. S. Canaday |
| Treasurer | John M. Osborne |
| Land Commissioner | Albinus A. Worsley |
| Attorney General | Edward H. Whalen |
| Supt. Public Instruction | A. Softley |

For Mr. Watson's Speech See Page 3.