

you used to rave when the populist proposed a moderate maximum freight rate bill with none of these other attachments. Is it any wonder the old Nebraska pop strokes his whiskers and smiles a quiet smile?

This attempt in Kansas to down monopoly and re-establish competition has given heart to those who have been robbed for so many years in other states and they have mustered up courage enough to attack the trust also. Indiana, Texas, Iowa and Oklahoma have fallen into line, but they have all run up against one thing—freight rates. There is where every man lands that starts out to get justice in a contest with any trust. That's the snubbing post that every one is drawn up to, tied and then kicked. There will be no final relief, and these Kansans and other fellows who have started out to fight the trust will find that there is none, until the government owns the railroads. As soon as Rockefeller got his pipe line complete, rates on crude oil went up to 51 cents a barrel for crude oil from Kansas oil fields to the Missouri river, while Rockefeller reduced the price of oil to 31 cents a barrel.

When we populists used to try to tell the republicans about these things, the great dailies immediately denounced us as lunatics and anarchists. They insisted that trusts were benevolent institutions and declared that they reduced expenses and lowered the price to the consumer, although prices always rose to the consumer as soon as the trust got into working order. Every time that Rockefeller reduced the price of crude oil, he raised the price of the refined.

In this fight against the trust, the republicans have not gone at it in the way that a populist would. The populist would prosecute criminally the Standard Oil managers, and as soon as they had the bald-pated old pirate in the penitentiary, they would go after the railroads. But the republicans are doing pretty well, that is, considering the class of newspapers they have been reading. The populists shout, "Whoop-la! Give it to 'em."

Costly Newspapers

The Custer County Beacon (populist), says:

We took charge of the county in 1890, with a debt of \$40,000 hanging like a dark pall over us. In spite of drouth, the chinch bugs, grasshoppers and the bankers' panic, we paid off every dollar of that indebtedness and turned over the county to our successors with every warrant paid and with a levy cut in two.

But the people wearied of well-doing. For some unaccountable reason they took from our hands the reins of county government and turned them over to our political enemy. Now, we take our compass to find where we are, after several years of high tax levies and collections under distress, and find that we are again in debt \$15,000.

When the populists had the state government they acted very much in the same way, and in spite of years of drouth, mortgage foreclosures, and without raising taxes, paid off more than \$600,000 of the state debt. But the people did not like that either, and now with vastly increased taxation we have a vastly increased state debt. These are facts. The official records at the state capital show that they are facts. Any man who denies that they are facts, is simply ignorant or a common, every day, political liar. The farmers who prefer to have a plutocratic paper that costs only 25 cents a year or is sent to them for nothing, perhaps don't know the facts and they in the end pay from \$10 to \$25 a year for their paper in increased taxation. The tax-eaters can well afford to send the papers to the farmers for 25 cents or for nothing.

Wildcat Insurance

The New York Equitable Life Insurance company is a stock company—the sort of company that the people in Nebraska have been in the habit of calling "old line" companies. Its cap-

ital stock only amounts to \$100,000 and James H. Hyde owns 51 per cent of it, which gives this young high flyer the management of over five hundred million dollars of money to invest, and insurance to the amount of 1,500 millions. When young Hyde, who inherited this stock from his father, gave a hundred thousand dollar dinner at which the performance of the Little Egypt at the Seeley dinner in the "altogether," were put into the shade, there was a row. The knowledge that the savings of millions of people are at the mercy of this young butterfly of fashion is not a pleasing one, and the prospect that the Equitable had reached a point where the public would no longer patronize it caused some of the more sober ones connected with the company to advocate a change of its organization so that policy holders could have a voice in the election of directors. But the Independent believes that back of all this is the use of the many millions of the Equitable funds by trust and loan companies connected with Wall street, as a market for railroad bonds and stocks of the big trusts. It has even been suggested that E. H. Harriman be elected president of the Equitable, and thus turn the whole affair over to the Standard Oil crowd.

The Philippines

From several remarks made by republican members in the house during the last few weeks it is very evident that that body is in a mood, privately, to award a handsome prize to any one who will point out a decent and honorable way for us to retire from the far east and relinquish our obligations in our colonial possessions.

George E. Frost, chairman of the committee on naval affairs remarked very bitterly the other day after a fight on the naval appropriation bill that: "At least one-third of great naval outlay was attributable to our position in the Philippines." Another member of congress said in discussing the same subject: "We are like the man who had the bear by the tail, we can't let go and we can't hold on." Both members of the house and senate are saying: "We got into the greatest mess in all our history when we took the islands, but now that we have got them we must hold on until we find a chance to slide out. One of the republican senators from the northwest said:

If Japan is successful in the present war with Russia, and becoming arrogant at the end of that conflict, casts covetous eyes at the Philippines, on my soul, I don't know how we could prevent her from taking them. Of course, if Uncle Sam got his dander up we could go over there and retake them, but I think it would be hard to inflame public sentiment in this country sufficiently to make that reconquest possible.

The readers of The Independent will remember how often it declared when the republicans had the imperial craze that the acquisition of the Philippines, instead of being a defense in time of war, would be a weakness, and that it would be almost impossible to hold them and defend our own coasts against any great power.

But the republican leaders have had a fashion whenever a fad struck them, whether financial, domestic or foreign, to declare that every man who pointed out their folly and madness, was a traitor and a copperhead. And every mullet head when he heard the declaration answered back: "Yep, that's so."

Only One Way

The object of The Independent has been to show the absurdity of this talk about "railroad control." It involves a contradiction. If the government has a right to regulate one kind of private property it has a right to regulate all kinds. If it can say that a man who invests his money in a railroad can not fix the price of his service and the commodity he has to sell, it also has the right to fix the price of the service and the commodity of the man who puts his money in a farm. The principle is exactly the same. To get

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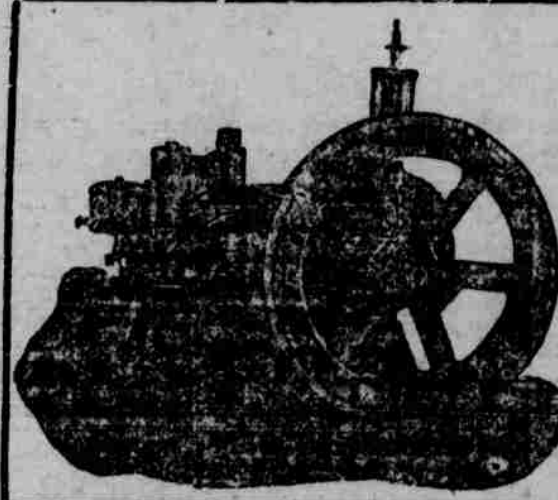
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out of this dilemma the railroads are called quasi-public or semi-public property. That is another absurdity. If they are semi-public property the public should own one-half the bonds and stocks and have half of the board of directors, which is never the case. All the bonds and stock is owned by private parties and none by the public. The truth of the matter is this. The railroads are no more capable of private ownership than the wagon roads, the highways on the sea or the rivers. They are in their nature public, not semi-public property. The public has as much right in the highways as it has in the air or the sunlight. Man has a natural right to move about on

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