

have played politician against politician, candidate against candidate, party against party, and this kind of diplomacy has resulted in scores of cheap and easy victories for railway rule.

In the category of petty politics must be classed the agitation for a special session of the legislature. Realizing that the failure to enact freight rate legislation has impaired their fighting strength, the republicans have cast about for some stratagem to restore party prestige and regain the confidence of the voters. The leaders are willing to adopt bold and even desperate tactics to achieve this object. Without regard, apparently, for the question of expense they are asking the governor to call a special session and he is said to be lending a pliant ear to their pernicious pleadings.

The constitution grants the governor power to call a special session whenever any extraordinary occasion arises. In what respect does the present demand for a reduction in freight rates differ from the demand that existed last winter? The only difference seems to lie in partisanship and petty politics. The members of the legislature, who failed in their duty during the regular session, now assert that they did not then appreciate how general and vehement was the demand among the people for legislation that would give relief from railroad tyranny. Properly interpreted, however, this plea simply means that the legislators now realize that their party has been weakened and needs some political restorative. During the regular session these members returned to their homes on passes frequently enough to ascertain just how deeply and earnestly the people desired regulation of the railroads and reductions of freight tariffs.

Having ignored all pleadings, invectives, threats and curses during the regular session, the free-pass legislators are seeking to beguile the people by a pitiful piece of hypocrisy. In this stratagem they no doubt have railroad support. The railways entertain no fears as to the results of the present partisan agitation, whether the special session is or is not called. If the members of the legislature were governed by pure motives the objections to a special session might not be so great. While it is true that the Newberry bill is still on the statute books and can be enforced, a special session could enact much restrictive legislation to meet railroad conditions that have grown up since 1893.

Republican leaders feel that even though no special session is called the little game they are playing will have an excellent partisan effect. It will do no harm, they argue, to continue the agitation as boisterously as possible, to gather together great heaps of dust with which to blind the people and to riot in these dust piles until they have wholly obscured the true situation. It is the duty of all honest citizens to clear the atmosphere, to denounce ruinous partisanship, and to promptly check the political horse-play by which the politicians are seeking to delude the people.

LET DEMOCRATS BEWARE

The Independent has called upon the republican aspirants for congressional honors to reject free-pass delegates. Now that the democratic congressional convention for the First district has been called The Independent renews its warning. This publication is merely voicing the demand of the people when it insists that the railways be refused any part in the selection of those who shall represent Nebraska in congress. As usual the railways will attempt to gain control in that quarter which promises the best prospect of success, but they will not therefore take any chances that might result in the election of a congressman wholly free from their influence.

It is the duty of the First district democrats to adopt a firm and pronounced attitude against railway dictation and against the free-pass system of bribery. If they send to their convention men who are free of the railway taint, men who will refuse to forget their patriotism and the obligation they are under to a bribe-ridden state, they will deserve to win. On the other hand if the republicans fail in their duty they will deserve to lose, and The Independent feels safe, when it considers the notable revolution in sentiment among men of all parties, in predicting that partisanship will be lost sight of on election day and the candidate who stands for the wishes of the people as against the wishes of the railway, who desires to become the First district's representative in congress that he may uphold the hand of the president in the fight for railway regulation, will triumph at the polls and will gain a victory as glorious to Nebraska as the victory against Standard Oil was glorious to the people of Kansas.

The democrats must make their position clear immediately so that there may be no misunderstanding at the primaries. It will be too late when the convention is called to order to eliminate the men who ride on passes. Those men may be in control or may hold the balance of power between contending candidates when the convention meets. From now until the convention, therefore, every avenue by which railway representatives or bribed pass-holders may slip into the convention should be guarded and every democrat in the First district should constitute himself a sentinel to bar the way of those who seek to betray the people.

BUY AMERICAN GOODS ABROAD

The latest reports from Washington indicate that President Roosevelt and Secretary Taft are striving to spare as far as possible the wounded sensibilities of the high tariff element in the republican party. At present no "abnormal purchases of material" will be made abroad, and it is announced that no great stock of supplies will be secured in foreign markets

until after congress has convened and has had an opportunity to pass "directive legislation."

Evidently President Roosevelt and Secretary Taft have been not a little alarmed by the dervish-dance of the "stand-patters" and the "wild-man-from-Borneo" attitude of the manufacturers. Here is an excellent chance for the effective wielding of the "big stick" so justly famous in the annals of this administration, and it is to be hoped that the president and his genial secretary, who have defied bears in Colorado or dog-eating Igorrotes in the Philippines, will not be unduly frightened by the wierd demonstrations of the predeceous protectionists.

The reassuring statement is made that "this decision does not mean that the president and Secretary Taft have in any degree changed the policy recently announced to govern purchases for the canal. This may be true, but it now looks as though the president and his secretary entertained the hope that congress would take pity on their plight by compelling them to spend at home the money for canal construction. Why would it not be a good idea for the worried chief executive and his no less anxious secretary to purchase the supplies abroad, but to purchase only American goods, which, as we all know, are sold much cheaper abroad than at home?"

TAKE YOUR STAND, JUDGE HOLMES

The republican congressional convention meets at Falls City June 1. President Roosevelt will be watching with interest the result of this convention, for it will be the very first opportunity that republicans have had in any congressional district to demonstrate whether or not the president is to be sustained by his party in his determination to secure railroad regulation and rate reform. The president has promised the American people a square deal. Now will the republicans give the president a square deal? A square deal to the president from the First congressional district means a congressman who is in sympathy with the president's views on the rate question and who is entirely free from obligations to the railroads.

If the republicans of the First Nebraska district permit the convention to be controlled by the railroads, that means a railroad candidate and it means a rebuke to the president.

Will Judge Holmes, who has been endorsed by the Lancaster county republican convention, and authorized to select the Lancaster county delegation, select a delegation of railroad cappers and free pass holders? If he does the other counties of the district will know what that signifies. And if these other counties then also send free pass holders, that will mean railroad control of the convention, a railroad candidate, a railroad victory over the president and a railroad victory over the people who pay the freight.

The agitation for rate reform has reached the acute stage. In the election which will follow the congressional convention the lines will be squarely drawn between the people and the railroads. The railroads are now bending their energies to win this first battle, this republican nomination. They are operating through their organization of free pass holders. The headquarters of this free pass holders' organization is in Lancaster county. Lincoln is the railroad stronghold. Judge Holmes now has this stronghold in his vest pocket. Judge Holmes can now, if he will, show his loyalty to the president and to the people by selecting a delegation of men who have been and are now independent of railroad influences and who do not belong to the free pass organization.

The free pass organization is the railroad political machine. It is the vehicle in which railroad tools ride into office. The free pass is the sign by which the railroad manager knows his own. It is the coat of arms which distinguishes the free-ride aristocrat from the common man, who pays the freight. It is up to Judge Holmes to show his delegation. By that sign the Falls City convention will know that he has counted the cost and has deliberately taken his stand, either with the president and the people, or with the railroads.

HOW THE RAILROADS TAX THE PEOPLE

The people of Boston threw the tea overboard because they wanted to protest against taxation without representation. All civilized people guard with jealousy the right to tax, for the power to tax means power to govern.

In this new revenue law the question of the power to tax is raised into an issue of more importance than is generally understood by Nebraska people. The railroads of the state, which, through their control of the state board, have been able for many years to fix the tax rate on their own property, have never until now been able to dictate also the tax rate on the property of the people. By the old method, the people elected assessors to assess their property, leaving the state board to assess the railroad property. But now, under this new law, the township assessors are appointed and organized into a county assessing machine, under the control of the county assessor; and the county assessors are organized into a still more powerful machine under the control of the state board; and the state board, being an official machine, is under the control of the railroads. And so the power to tax the people has passed into the hands of the railroad corporations.

Under the new revenue law the state board has power to review and to raise the tax and to summarily remove from office without a hearing any or all of the local assessors. Should the state board see fit to do so, it can, for it has the power, remove from office everyone of the hundreds of local assessors and absolutely dictate the entire taxing system. It can in-