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Strong Case Against the Trust

It was an interesting story that Thomas D. Worrall told at the Omaha hearing of the injunction case against the Nebraska Grain Dealers' association. It gave the public an insight into the methods by which legislators are corrupted, and it is a rather striking fact that free tickets, free dinners and free entertainments of various kinds are relied upon as the cheapest and most effective means of obtaining important results. To kill measures considered hostile to the interests of the trust, few, if any, cash bribes were given. Free "courtesies" did the work.

Mr. Worrall hinted that there was one ugly transaction toward the close of the legislative session of 1903. "I think we did make one mistake," was his way of expressing the idea, but he did not specify, and the point was not pressed. He did not mention the names of any legislators who had been influenced by the grain trust lobby, and this point, too, was ignored by both the attorney general and the attorneys for the defendants. These names may be brought out later in the investigation, and there is no good reason why the guilty legislators should be shielded.

If the transactions were of such a nature that the members cannot be punished under the law, it is desirable that they should be condemned at the bar of public opinion. Publicity has always been recognized as a powerful restraint on bribe-givers and bribe-takers. As long as they can work in secret they will care little for public disapproval that cannot be brought home to them. But when the legislator understands that he will not be shielded from public opinion and from the scorn and contempt of his immediate neighbors he will be less inclined to avail himself of the bribes and courtesies that are held out to him at every turn during a legislative session. On the other hand, if he finds that at every investigation to uncover corruption the name of the bribe-taker is suppressed, the dishonest legislator will not fear to accept every bribe that is offered.

Otto Siedel, a Milwaukee councilman who fell under the influence of the bribe-givers, has revealed how cheaply the game of

bribery is played. One big bribe is given, and after that the bribe-taker's vote has only a small market value. In Nebraska the bribe-taker seems to be even cheaper. His love for things that are free is possibly derived from the free-pass habit which became popular in the early days of legislative history.

By his testimony Mr. Worrall is placed in the light of having been perhaps the most active member of the trust. It was he who acted as treasurer and disbursing agent in handling the corruption fund, but he seems to have been unconscious that the work he did in conjunction with Updike, Peck, Fowler, Duff, Westbrook, Ferguson and Wright was wrong, except as to the one case, which he called "a mistake."

The testimony of Mr. Worrall and Mr. Peavey placed in a much clearer light the operations of the grain trust. The methods employed to destroy the business of independent dealers were elucidated and instances were cited of dealers who were driven out of business or forced to join the combination. Apparently the case against the trust has been proved. The evidence seems to sustain every allegation made by Mr. Worrall or by Attorney General Norris Brown. If the charter of the Nebraska Grain Dealers' association cannot be revoked it will not be due to any weakness in the testimony.

The members of the Nebraska Grain Dealers' association can no longer say that there is no trust. They are somewhat in the position in which Congressman Dingley is said to have found himself on one occasion when he was debating with Tom Johnson concerning the existence of trusts.

"There are no trusts," said Dingley.

"How about the steel trust?" asked Mr. Johnson without a suggestion of guile.

"There is no such trust, and there never was one," snapped Mr. Dingley.

"There is a steel rail trust," calmly replied Mr. Johnson, "and I am president of it."

Public Ownership and Paternalism in Government

Reading, Mass., Aug. 14.—To the Editor of The Independent: Is it not true that our railroads give the people twice as cheap freight rates as government-owned roads? Is it not true that the Boston street railway is superior to the Glasgow street railway in everything? And was Jefferson not correct when he said that government was best which governed least.
F. G. R. GORDON.

The writer of this note has perhaps been reading some of the bureaucratic literature comparing freight rates in this country with the rates charged by the government-owned roads of Europe. The Independent has already taken occasion to demonstrate the worthlessness of these statistics.

In Europe there is no such things as a long haul. A haul of 300 miles is a long haul in Germany or France, whereas in the United States 1,000 miles is about the shortest of our long hauls. Surely, our correspondent would not contend that rates in such countries as Germany and France should be as low as rates in the United States. The question rather would be, are the rates on the government roads of Europe higher in proportion to the average length of the haul? Some of the railway bureaucrats have contended that such is the case, but their comparisons are based on what they term the "per ton mile."

The average per ton mile for the United States is 76 cents. J. J. Hill, who is the largest stockholder of this road, recently compared this rate with the per ton mile of Russia, where, he said, "the conditions of long hauls are more like our own." He states that the American rate is only 42 per cent of the Russian

rate, on the per ton mile basis. On this basis, therefore, the Russian rate would be \$1.61. Mr. Hill, however, fails to take into consideration some important facts.

The average car-capacity of the Trans-Siberian railroad is about eight tons and the trains are not long. Many American cars have a capacity of fifty tons and the trains are long. An English visitor to the United States was recently astonished to see on the New York Central road a train one mile in length. Moreover, the railways in this country have 80 to 100 pound rails; their rolling stock and locomotives are of the best, and their trains make fast time. A freight train leaving Moscow does not reach Vladivostock, 5,300 miles away, in less than eighteen days. Like distances are covered in the United States in less than a week. In 1903 the Trans-Siberian road transported 1,000,000 tons of freight and during the same period the Pennsylvania road transported 70,000,000 tons. If under such circumstances freight can be transported in Russia for \$1.61 it would seem possible to transport freight in the United States at a lower rate than 76 cents.

The rate per ton mile in Germany is \$1.40. The average haul per ton is 60 miles against 130 miles in the United States. And it must not be lost sight of that the terminal charges absorb an increasing proportion of the rate as the haul is shortened. On this basis the rate in the United States should not be over sixty-five cents. It must not be forgotten, moreover, that in the United States there is a relatively greater amount of low-grade freight