

The Independent.

GEORGE W. BERGE, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Volume 18

Lincoln, Nebraska, September 14, 1905

Number 17

Good Government Requires Men Both Honest and Capable

"You can't make any law that will absolutely guard the city against official corruption or bad judgment," said District Attorney Jerome, of New York City, a few days ago. No truer statement was ever made. We may favor the most promising reforms, but if we have not honest and capable men in office injustice and mismanagement will not cease.

This is a principle that is coming to be understood more clearly every day. The voters have awakened from the dream that a party name and a blast on the trumpets is a sure pledge of higher and better things in government. The value of organization cannot be overestimated, but organization without good works is dead. Even District Attorney Jerome's career bears witness to the value of organization. It is true that he has now cut loose from party harness and proposes to win his next race without rider or driver, but it is exceedingly doubtful whether Mr. Jerome could ever have attained his present prominence and power had he not been backed by organization at the outset of his political career. On the other hand, Mr. Jerome's career bears witness to the influence of a good man in politics. It is now reported that even Tammany is considering the advisability of endorsing his candidacy for the district-attorneyship.

When the people take more direct control of their government, national, state and city, by means of direct primaries and the initiative and referendum, they must not forget that the man as well as the principle is important. Of what avail is a sound principle with a dishonest and corrupt man back of it? We are

accustomed to hear that popular government is still on trial, and when the next step is taken toward more direct government by the people the world will watch the test with eager interest. If, as The Independent has contended, a great defect of our present government is the fact that the people have too little power instead of too much, the approaching test will prove a signal and lasting victory for popular government. But this assumption is based upon a belief in the honesty and intelligence of an upright and enlightened people.

The initiative and referendum has proved an effective check upon corruption wherever it has been tried, but it is not an absolute cure and will not prevent bad management in office. Municipal ownership, to be successful, will require officials who are both honest and capable. The election of senators by direct vote will prove a great boon to the nation if the people are vigilant and determined to have good government. The mere right of the people to vote directly for their senators is not enough. They must be watchful lest men of little worth and overweening ambition impose themselves upon an indulgent and careless constituency.

Fortunately for the nation there are signs everywhere that the people are beginning to realize these truths, that they are rousing themselves from their cynicism and indifference and that they are resolved to obtain good government by electing good men. It is, indeed, a healthy sign. It speaks well for the nation and is an earnest effort of what the people can do to make their government honest and efficient when they are enlightened and determined.

English and American Charges for Transportation

American railway officials are fond of dwelling upon the superior accommodations of our railways for the transportation of passengers as compared with similar accommodations on English railways and to assert that on the whole the rates in this country are lower than in England. Aside from such considerations as the long haul, which gives the American roads a distinct advantage, there are other considerations which the enthusiastic American official usually fails to take into account.

A few years ago Mr. George H. Daniels, general passenger agent of the New York Central, said:

"In the United States the first-class passenger fares average 1.98 cents a mile, while in England the first-class fare is four cents per mile; third-class fare for vastly inferior service is two cents a mile, but only on certain parliamentary trains."

In a work on British railways recently issued Hugh Munro Ross calls attention to some differences in transportation that expose the fallacy of the position taken by the American officials. He points out the fact that on the Twentieth Century Limited of the New York Central, running between New York and Chicago, the normal fare would be \$20, whereas \$28 is charged. "In addition," he continues, "the passenger has to pay for a sleeping-berth, which cannot be had for less than \$5, and may cost more; he therefore pays in all at least \$33. In Great Britain there are no through journeys so long as 980 miles, but from Euston to Aberdeen, 540 miles, it is possible to travel at an inclusive speed of 48 miles an hour for 0.83d, (1.66 cents) a mile, third-class, or during six months of the year with a tourist return ticket for 0.62d. a mile; while for 1.65d. a mile a man can travel there and back first-class in a sleeping car with a

separate compartment entirely to himself, not merely a berth in a general Pullman car, where a curtain is all that shuts him off from a dozen other sleepers, some, perhaps, women."

After this little fling at the American sleeping car, Mr. Ross sums up as follows:

"In America the 'first-class' fare of 1.98 cents a mile corresponds to our third-class rate, since there is in general nothing cheaper. The real first-class is provided by the Pullman cars, for the use of which extra payment is required, and experienced travelers will tell you that four or five cents a mile is a fair allowance for railway expenses in the United States, including the charges for sleeping and parlor cars. In fact, American railroads cling to the practice—now generally looked upon as antiquated in this country—of admitting to their best trains only those passengers who pay the highest rates; and, so far from the man who pays a penny a mile getting in England a 'vastly inferior service,' he really enjoys a considerably better one, because he has the choice of more trains and faster trains."

This neglect of essential facts when instituting comparisons between European and American rates is common among the bureaucratic writers who are now claiming that freight rates are higher in England than in the United States. Again leaving aside the consideration of the long haul, which is most important, there are differences in the manner of charging freight rates in England and in the United States which must be heeded and which show how futile are the comparisons usually made to prove the fairness of American rates.

The freight charge in the United States is merely for trans-