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Senator Chandler Tears the Mask from Railway Plotters

Already the big guns are booming in the great battle which has begun between the champions of the people and the mercenaries of the railways. Former Senator William A. Chandler of New Hampshire has just thrown a succession of thirteen-inch shells squarely into the camp of the haughty and confident hirelings. He has come out as a strong leader on the side of the people, but he warns his followers that they must not expect a quick and easy triumph. Indeed he tells them that restrictive railway legislation at the next session of congress is foredoomed.

Senator Chandler has torn the mask from the face of the railway pharisees, scribes, priests and teachers. He has exposed the conspiracy whereby the money power is seeking to suppress free speech. Tainted money and tainted transportation are being used from one end of the country to the other. Tainted transportation is liberally supplied to newspaper men, lawyers, ministers and educators. Tainted money is given to newspaper enterprises, old and new, to churches and universities, and the leading lawyers of the country are retained as special pleaders for the railways. Thus it is that we find the press silent as to the true conditions of the mighty contest now being waged. Thus it is that we find ministers of the gospel and chancellors of state universities and of other institutions of learning constructing elaborate defenses around the gold-piles of corrupt financiers.

Speaking of the free pass Senator Chandler declares, as The Independent has frequently insisted, that it is as good as money for purposes of bribery, and that in many instances it is better than money because it can be given much more safely to influence judges, legislators and executives. He asserts, what we all know to be true, that this money power employs tainted money and tainted transportation to elect executives, judges and legislators in every state in the union.

These are days of lucid and striking exposures, but Senator Chandler's expose of the railway power and the allied money power is more impressive and convincing than anything of the kind yet written. He makes it clear that the railway power is determined to prevent the passage of any bill that will give the interstate commerce commission the power to fix rates found to be unreasonable or

which will provide that a rate, once fixed, shall immediately take effect and remain in force unless and until changed by commission or by court. To defeat such legislation the railway literary bureaus have been flooding the newspaper offices with specious arguments, false assertions and flagrant misrepresentations. They have been "playing" one section of the country against another. They have appealed to the prejudice of the southern people by claiming that the government would have no right to permit "Jim Crow" car discrimination in the south. If the argument were sound it would be equally applicable to the tourist cars in the north, but, of course, it is a lying and hypocritical argument designed for the sole purpose of arousing race prejudice.

Senator Chandler states that the great hope of the people lies in the courage of the president and his perseverance in the policy of railway regulation which he advocated last spring. The senator shows that the railways have tried to frighten the president and he takes the charitable view that the president has not been intimidated or driven from his position. But there are too many indications that the president has altered his views. Whether his courage has failed him or whether he has been influenced by persuasive politicians is unknown to the people, but the people do know that the president has changed front. The republican platform adopted by the recent state convention held in Lincoln shows how the mind of the president is wavering and how the railways have seized upon his weakest utterance as an announcement of his policy. That plank is as follows:

With unbounded confidence in the integrity and statesmanship of President Roosevelt we heartily approve his recent utterance in which he says: "I believe that all corporations engaged in interstate commerce should be under the supervision of the national government. I do not believe in taking steps hastily and it may be that all that is necessary in the immediate future is to pass an interstate commerce bill conferring upon some branch of the executive government the power of effective action to remedy the abuses in connection with railway transportation."

This utterance is essentially different from the president's positive declaration at an earlier date that the interstate commerce commission should have the right to fix a remedial rate in case of complaint, such rate to become effective at once and to remain in effect "unless and until" changed by commission or court.

Place Only the Proven Friends of Reform on Guard

It must be constantly kept in mind by the voters of Nebraska that the great reforms they are seeking can only be obtained by electing good men to office. If they are to trust the men by whom they have been betrayed, or if they are to trust men of the same ilk, they will never obtain better government or better laws. What the people of Nebraska need is a complete change of political control. They must never forget that those who have been consistent advocates of reform for years are the men to trust in office rather than those, who, influenced by a sudden realization of the popular sentiment, quickly desert the old gods for the new. This is a general but truthful statement of the present situation in Nebraska. Careful study of this situation should convince the impartial voters of two facts:

1. There is no good reason why a populist or democrat should vote for the republican candidate for supreme judge or for the republican candidates for regents of the state university.
2. There are many reasons why sincere republicans, who have

been demanding relief from railway rule and trust domination, should vote for the reform candidates.

Nothing was said prior to the republican convention about Judge Letton's being a reform candidate. That was an afterthought. As soon as the nomination had been made republican journals began to describe the amiable judge as a staunch reformer. Their sole reason for such a claim seemed to be that the avowed candidate of the Union Pacific and Burlington interests had been defeated in the convention. There was nothing in the career of Judge Letton to suggest that he would take to the supreme court those qualities of mind and character that help their possessor to resist corporation influence.

A reform candidate must be a man of strong personality, high ideals, firm convictions and unwavering will power. Such a candidate the reform forces found in Judge Hastings of Saline county. The best friends of Judge Letton do not claim that he fulfils these requirements. The most they will assert is that he is an intelligent