

Current Comment on Leading Topics

THE NEBRASKA CAMPAIGN

The reform press of Nebraska is taking a lively interest in the present campaign because for the first time the democratic and populist parties are contending in fact as well as in theory for the same principles. The democratic platform contains planks that could have appeared only in a populist platform a decade ago. The rank and file of both parties now seem to realize that the one way to secure better government in Nebraska is to wrest control of government from the railways and give it to the people and to secure it in their hands by enlarging the scope of popular rule:

We are not so much opposed to the use of passes as we are to the hypocrisy of the holders of passes. If Judge Letton wishes to accept passes from the railroads while he is in a judicial position, and we are informed that he has, we presume that it is up to him and his conscience. However, when he makes a grandstand play before a convention, he should unload himself of passes.—Beatrice Sun.

We have got our new revenue law and it is a scorcher. It goes up in the garret, down in the cellar, all through the barn, stock yards, box pens, and chicken coops and the only way you can evade taxes is to lie about it or have your wealth invested in some corporation. With all this increase in taxes, republican extravagance eats it all up and more. Every fund shows a deficiency for September, and the university fund goes broke. The expenditures for the month of September exceeded the receipts by \$144,873.74. Under the old system of taxation the fusionists met expenditures and had a balance left. Wouldn't it be good policy to get back, or do you prefer to be continually going deeper into debt?—Minden Courier.

It is with no little pleasure that we note that our old time and highly esteemed friend, Judge Hastings of Wilber, has been nominated by the fusionists for judge of the supreme court. We know him intimately as a lawyer and judge and we have naught but good to say of him. He is learned in the law, honest and kind hearted. If the fusionists should by accident carry the state they would have a man eminently worthy to sit as a member of the supreme court and one that would add honor and distinction to that august body. We do not mean to say by this article that we are supporting Judge Hastings for supreme judge on the fusion ticket, for we are not. The republican party has a candidate in the person of Judge Letton, also personally known to us, that is in every way worthy of the position to which he aspires. We simply desire to say of Mr. Hastings what is his due.—Wood River Interests.

Despite the fact that the republican state officials have returned their passes with a great flourish of trumpets they are engaged in a deliberate attempt to deceive the people. The Herald knows of one state official who gave up his pass and had the fact scattered broadcast by means of the public prints who is riding on "dead head" mileage which he received from the same source from which he has been in the habit for years of receiving passes. The republican press of the state is laying stress upon the fact that their officials are carrying out their platform pledges and this shows the way they are doing it. Have you any faith that the republicans of the state will treat the people fairly as against the demands of the corporations if they are given a vote of confidence for their present decenton? If you have your hump of credulity is abnormally developed.—Fremont Herald.

We wonder if it is possible that the people of Nebraska generally who desire that the power of the railroads should be lessened in Nebraska politics will vote for Judge Letton for supreme judge, thinking that he is favorable to the interests of the people rather than those of the corporations? We want the

people of Dawson county to know that Judge Letton was the choice of the Northwestern railroad for supreme judge, and that the Dawson county delegation to the republican state convention cast their votes for Judge Ames, the candidate favored by the Union Pacific railroad, and that if the majority of the people of Dawson county cast their votes for Judge Letton they cast them for a man whose candidacy was championed by the Chicago & Northwestern railroad. With this knowledge before you you have a right to vote for Judge Letton if you want to, but don't fool yourself into believing that you are voting contrary to the wishes of the railroads and corporations. We advise every man in Dawson county to vote for Judge Hastings. He is a man of great ability and owes his nomination to no favoritism of corporations.—Lexington Clipper-Citizen.

Norris Brown, Nebraska's voluble attorney general, is branching out to suggest a maximum rate to be fixed by law as a remedy for life insurance evils. There may be merit in the suggestion. Much would depend, however, upon whether or not the rate were enforced or not, once it was enacted. Nebraska, for instance, has a maximum rate law. It relates, it is true, not to life insurance rates, but to railroad freight rates. Nevertheless, it is a law of much importance to Nebraska. It would save hundreds of thousands of dollars every year to the citizens of the state if it were enforced. But there's the rub. The railroads don't want it enforced. It would interfere with the fat dividends they are paying on watered stock. And Norris Brown, attorney general, whose duty it is to enforce it, casts his lot with the railroad bosses and allows the statute to slumber undisturbed and disregarded.—World-Herald.

FOLLY OF CHILD LABOR

The folly of child labor is clearly pointed out by Owen R. Lovejoy in Men and Women for October. He shows that low wages must produce poor purchasers and can therefore never increase prosperity:

We have deluded ourselves with the belief that national prosperity is measured by ability to produce goods. The theory is fundamentally unsound. The material prosperity of a nation depends on the ability of her population to consume goods. Any system which weakens the consuming power of a community strikes at the foundations of its economic prosperity. Tendencies in social development that augment the cost of living without a corresponding increase in the rewards of labor may build imposing structures, but they are without foundation. Hence the crowning indictment against child labor in a practical age is that the child laborer is a poor consumer. Undeveloped physically he lacks the capacity for those goods which are the staples of vigorous physical life; undeveloped in mind he lacks the capacity to consume books and other means of extending his information; undeveloped in taste he lacks the ability to consume those various works of art which are the pride of modern civilization. Furthermore he is a poor consumer because he is poor, for the prevailing wages of the child toiler fasten a millstone of permanent poverty upon 90 per cent of the child laborers which will exclude them as purchasers from the markets of the world. The toiler man of the industrial world is over-production; over-production of clothing, food and furniture. Yet there are literally thousands of homes in America today for which clothing has not been over-produced, and whose children lie down at night in rags spread on the floor, because no over-produced beds have come to their tenements or pioneer huts. And every day in many of our great cities may be seen the lean, little fingers diving into ashcans in filthy courts, to find the fragment of some "over-produced" bit of fruit to allay actual hunger! Markets are flooded and industry periodically languishes, not from over-production, but because poverty raises a barrier between the goods and the would-be con-

sumer; and the greatest contribution to this lack of adjustment between necessities and ability to purchase is the wastage from the laborer the fair compensation for his work—and this is made possible by the inarticulate juvenile army which a short-nosed industrial economy keeps ever on hand as raw material to force the labor market.

ELY SEES THE SIGNS

President Ely of the American Street Railway association said in a speech at Philadelphia that municipal control of street railways and other public utilities may soon become an issue in practical politics and he added: "This is due to a mass of censorious statements in the public press. We must refute these statements or suffer by them." The Columbus Press-Pat, commenting on these remarks, has this to say:

The street railway syndicates do not like "to suffer" and they are growing more and more fearful that the education of the people will cause just the kind of suffering that will hurt them most. There has been a mighty advance in the reasoning power of the people within a few years, and the subject on which their entire thought is concentrated at this moment is municipal ownership of public utilities. How to get rid of corruption in municipal government, has been answered in hundreds of instances by the people rising in their intelligence and their power, and themselves taking under their own supervision and their own control their light, their waterworks systems, their garbage systems and the other utilities in which they are individually and collectively interested. The next logical step in this progressive and purifying movement is municipal control of street railways; and the American Street Railway association is convinced that the people intend to take that step. Hence the cry of warning which the president of this association utters. He begs the question by calling municipal ownership "Socialism," and characterizes its advocates as "demagogues." The people will not be diverted from their purpose or their rights by the mere calling of names; but they will one and all be able to discover the key which unlocks the secrets of the opposition, of the American Street Railway association, to municipal ownership, which President Ely furnishes in the words: "We must refute the statements or suffer by them."

CRITICISING THE CHANCELLOR

The address of Chancellor Andrews in defense of the Rockefeller methods gave zest to the campaign for regents at the very outset. The reform press continues to condemn the chancellor's position and to point out that the true sphere of a state university is independence:

Chancellor Andrews of the state university has gone back to his former convictions. He can now defend Rockefeller and Rockefeller's methods of getting money.—Nebraska State Democrat.

"The main thing is piling up wealth"—Chancellor Andrews. Building up character, getting an education, is secondary auxiliary to the main thing, "piling up wealth." A person with only partial vision can readily see that tainted money taints. There is method in it. Rockefeller will take care of him from now on. Minden Courier.

Do the plain, hard working, honest people of Nebraska pay the head of the state university a big salary to teach their children that their fathers are actuated by hatred of wealth when they believe that pirates and robbers, otherwise known as "promoters," should be brought to justice.—York Democrat.

Chancellor Andrews of the Nebraska state university heartily compliments the rich who have amassed fortunes and declares that those who have been caught through the machinations of "bad" promoters have no