

exceedingly poor excuse at this time. The president should be the nation's leader in all good causes and there is no better cause now before the people than the movement to abolish the free-pass system. Some have queried with a note of anger and pain what the president is to do when the people in certain sections of the country demand to see him. Have the people of the United States come to such a pass of imperialism that they must witness a royal progress through certain districts of the country at short intervals? Do their loyalty and happiness require such food to feed on. Would they show signs of revolution if the president were to stay in Washington and with democratic simplicity and independence decline to take a trip unless he was able to pay for it either out of his private purse or out of the public purse?

At this juncture it is of much more importance that the chief executive should lead the anti-pass movement than that he should make a royal progress through the south or through any other section of the country.

INSINCERITY ON PASS QUESTION?

Although there is an anti-pass plank in their platform the republicans are betraying much indifference and insincerity with reference to the free transportation evil. Throughout the state republican papers are treating the question with ill-concealed levity and contempt. A number of newspapers have frankly declared their hostility to anti-pass legislation.

At the state house, however, the insincerity of republican officials is even more notable than among the republican editors. It is true that some of these officials surrendered their passes as an act of conformity with the anti-pass declaration of the platform. This was to be expected, and was a cheap and easy method of creating confidence in the sincerity of the convention which adopted the platform. There is, however, a better way of proving their sincerity. On the statute books of the state there is a law which forbids transportation companies to contribute money, property, transportation, help or assistance to any political party or to any candidate for any civil office, or to any political organization or committee, or to *any individual* to be used or expended for political purposes.

Why is not this law enforced? The attorney general cannot now plead ignorance of the law's existence. It has been called to his attention forcibly by the democratic platform. The fact that its enforcement is demanded by his political adversaries is no good reason why the attorney general should refuse to see that it is enforced.

Congressman Pollard has declared that the people cannot expect relief from railroad domination as long as the system of free pass bribery exists. Here is an admonition from a friendly source that the attorney general should heed. Surely the free pass bribery system can never be destroyed as long as complacent prosecuting attorneys decline to enforce the law against free pass bribery.

It looks very much as though the powers that control republican politics inserted the anti-pass plank in the platform as a deception. A stronger law than that which now exists cannot be placed on the statute books until the next legislature convenes, and between now and then the machine politicians will find time to "educate" the people to look with less repugnance on free pass bribery. If the republican ticket is elected they will claim perhaps that anti-pass legislation has been repudiated. At all events they can so order republican affairs that the next state convention will disregard the pass question and thus give a republican legislature, if such a legislature is elected, its cue to ignore anti-pass legislation. It is likely that republicans who refuse to enforce a mild law this year will seek to place a strong law on the statute book next year?

DANGER IN FEDERAL CHARTERS

Those interested in having the federal government regulate life insurance are advocating federal charters for all life insurance companies. A mere licence to transact business after complying with certain government rules is not considered sufficient. That would be federal supervision, but not federal control, and these men are anxious that the national government should take complete charge of life insurance because they see that public sentiment will lead the states to adopt more drastic insurance laws. They understand that the only way to escape rigid state legislation is to secure federal control.

A federal licence to transact business would not necessarily interfere with state legislation. Before such a licence would be granted the life insurance companies would be forced to meet all federal requirements, but the government could not require the insurance companies to do anything that would bring them into conflict with

state laws, for such requirements would infringe on state rights and would be unconstitutional. The national licence, moreover, might be made optional. The life insurance company could comply with the requirements or not as its officials should see fit. It would, of course, be to its benefit to obtain the federal licence. Failure to secure such a licence would be taken as prima facie evidence by the people that the company was unable to meet the just requirements of the federal law, and this would work greatly to the company's disadvantage.

This kind of supervision, however, is not the kind desired by those who are now talking the loudest for federal control. They are demanding that the government shall issue a federal charter to all life insurance companies and that this charter shall be the sole licence required of the company. State licences would thus be abolished. Fortunately for the nation their plans cannot be carried out unless the constitution is amended and a constitutional amendment must be ratified by two-thirds of the states. The supreme court has decided that life insurance is not interstate commerce and if the court does not reverse itself the life insurance companies must pin their hope of federal supervision to a constitutional amendment. The greatest danger is that the supreme court may be induced to change its mind as its personnel is changed. New judges might be placed on the bench by corrupt political methods similar to those used by the insurance companies to influence state legislation. That such a scheme has entered the minds of insurance officials is evident from the declaration made a few days ago by a prominent insurance man that the supreme court might change its decision if afforded new light. Such a result is indeed probable if the insurance companies and trusts are permitted to continue their practice of buying national elections for preferred presidential candidates.

A timely warning as to the intentions of Senator John F. Dryden and others who are advocating federal charters will do much good and will make the people more determined than ever that laws shall be enacted which will prevent corporate wealth from controlling the election of presidents.

Hereafter when a trustee steals the funds of widows and orphans he should excuse his conduct on the ground that he contributed the money to the republican campaign fund. He will then find defenders who will say he was actuated by sincere motives. Unkind persons might say that there would be no certainty that he had contributed the funds to the committee, but the same may be said of the insurance contributions. The insurance companies had a non-ledger method of bookkeeping which made it possible for certain officials to slice off liberal portions of moneys ordered paid. It would be interesting, therefore, to compare the books of the republican campaign committee—if any books have been preserved—with the statements made by the high insurance officials as to the amounts contributed. It might be revealed that some of the officials exacted toll for doing disreputable work.

Defending the expenditures made by the life insurance companies to influence legislation, James M. Beck of New York declared that most of the legislation proposed in state legislatures is of a blackmailing character and he added that the insurance companies rarely spent a dollar to secure favorable legislation. Mr. Beck should explain why it is not better to spend money for good legislation than to spend money to defeat bad legislation. As a matter of fact, however, the insurance lobbies squandered the money of policyholders with an impartial hand to secure favorable and defeat unfavorable legislation.

The American association of bankers went on record as approving government subsidies for American shipping interests. The bankers have grown so rich on subsidies themselves that they are beginning to get generous. Why not subsidize our farmers who are trying to cultivate the poorer lands of the country?

Senator Burton of Kansas is seeking to make a deal by the terms of which his prosecution would cease on his immediate resignation from the senate. Time was when a Burton would have disgraced the senate, but we have had so many senators of his kind lately that his offer seems of little worth.

Through an oversight an article headed "For Rate Control," which appeared in a recent issue of The Independent was not credited to the editor of the Lincoln State Journal.

Japan will probably give the Koreans as much self-government as the Japanese are capable of enjoying.