

Current Comment on Leading Topics

CAMPAIGN IN NEBRASKA

The most important contribution to the literature of the present campaign in Nebraska during the last week was Chancellor Andrews' reply to the reform candidates for regent of the state university. It reads:

As candidates for the regency of the state university would certainly not make intentional misstatements, Messrs. Cole and Lightner must be themselves misinformed.

First—The chancellor does not in any way "apologize for predatory wealth," and has never done so. Not a word from him can justly be so construed. His utterances on the subject, which are numerous, have been pronounced on the other side. See his book on "Wealth and Moral Law."

Second—He is not under the slightest obligation to John D. Rockefeller in any way whatever. No citizen of Nebraska, not even Mr. Cole or Mr. Lightner, could be less so. He has never received from Mr. Rockefeller, directly or indirectly, a single cent's worth of benefit. He has no debt to pay or favor to ask.

Third—No such thing as Mr. Rockefeller's educational board exists. The general education board is a United States corporation, made up of strong and independent men. No one acquainted with them could for an instant suspect any among these of subservience. The board existed and was doing noble work years before Mr. Rockefeller's \$10,000,000 gift, which forms by no means its whole fund.

Fourth—The state university is not an applicant for aid from the board, but at least four prominent Nebraska schools are so, representing as many of the largest religious denominations in our state. Others will apply. In view of these facts many will think it not improper for a Nebraskan to be a member. If, however, the regents, present or future, do not wish their chancellor on this board, they have only to say the word.

No, Judge Letton has not returned his passes, so far as this office is aware.—Beatrice Sun.

Don't be fooled about the republican schemers at Lincoln doing anything to relieve the people from the iron grasp of the railroads and corporate wealth. They voted down every measure in the last legislature which was in the interest of the people and they will continue to give you high freight rates and still higher taxes till the people put them out of power.—Lyons Mirror.

There's going to be a revolution in the politics of the country. The exposures of officers in the government service, the corruption of state legislatures by railroads and other corporate interests, the fattening of trusts by means of the tariff, are influences which will cause the honest western republicans to divorce themselves from the dishonest elements of the eastern wing of the party. They will get together with the liberal element of the reform forces of the west and south and then there will be a needed cleaning out of the Augean stables. They will turn the rascals out.—Auburn Herald.

It is true that fusionists did not do all that was expected of them when they had control of the state government a few years ago, but they passed the Newbury bill, which has been construed constitutional and which a republican attorney general promised to attempt to enforce and has so far not done. They gave the people the Australian ballot law. They saved hundreds of thousands of dollars to the state by more honest management of state institutions. They passed the Horn law, that has saved Hamilton county enough money to almost or quite build the court house and effected a like saving to other counties and the state, besides greatly purifying politics. They may not have done what they should, but they have done almost all that has been done for the people in the way of good legislation. Remember this fact when you come to vote and, if you can recall how much Hamilton county's share of state taxes used to be under fusion adminis-

tration, you will find that it has been more than doubled since republicans got into power. You may be a republican and yet think it almost a necessity that there be an opposition party in the state. If so, vote to encourage their candidates in an off year like the present, when there is little political significance in the election. The fusionists have some good men as nominees. When you think them better than your own vote for them—Hamilton County Register.

Judge Letton owes it to himself, to his party and to the voters of Nebraska of all parties to take the public into his confidence. If he has failed to surrender his passes as yet he ought to say so. If he has surrendered them he should say so, and tell when that interesting event occurred. The World-Herald, in perfect good faith, puts these questions to the republican nominee: Have you surrendered your railroad passes? Have you surrendered all of them? If so, when did you surrender them. If not, are you going to surrender them? If so, when?—World-Herald.

The insurance companies would not have to spend so much money on the legislatures if they would only issue passes.—York Democrat.

Hastings is as absolutely honest and impartial a jurist as I ever have known and expect to know. He is one of the ablest lawyers in Nebraska. No evil corporate influence has ever been able to approach him, much less affect his actions. Like Caesar's wife he is above suspicion. As commissioner of the supreme court while I was chief justice, I learned to respect and honor him for his unwavering integrity, his profound knowledge of the law and his deep and sincere sympathy for the masses of the people.—Chief Justice Sullivan.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS

The president's speeches in the south have intensified interest in the campaign for railway regulation. The president is still rather vague in his recommendations. His strongest recommendation with reference to railway regulation was made last spring when he urged congress to give the interstate commerce commission power to fix rates, which should take effect at once and remain in force until changed by the court. The president seems to abandon the idea of having the rate go into effect immediately, but he advises expeditiousness in the regulation of rates. He makes a valuable suggestion when he declares that the government should have the power to inspect the books and accounts of railways for the purpose of finding out whether the railways have been giving all shippers "a square deal". His views are stated in the following extract from one of his speeches:

I do not believe in government ownership of anything which can with propriety be left in private hands, and in particular I should most strenuously object to government ownership of railroads. But I believe with equal firmness that it is out of the question for the government not to exercise a supervisory and regulatory right over the railroads, for it is vital to the well being of the public that they should be managed in a spirit of fairness and justice toward all the public. Actual experience has shown that it is not possible to leave the railroads uncontrolled. Such a system, or rather such a lack of system, is fertile in abuses of every kind and puts a premium upon unscrupulous and ruthless running in railroad management; for there are some big shippers and some railroad managers who are always willing to take unfair advantage of their weaker competitors, and they thereby force other big shippers and big railroad men who would like to act decently into similar acts of wrong and injustice, under penalty of being left behind in the race for success. Government supervision is needed quite as much in the interest

of the big shipper and of the railroad man who wants to do right as in the interest of the small shipper and the consumer. Experience has shown that the present laws are defective and need amendment. The effort to prohibit all restraint of competition, whether reasonable or unreasonable, is unwise. What we need is to have some administrative body with ample power to forbid combination that is hurtful to the public, and to prevent favoritism to one individual at the expense of another. In other words, we want an administrative body with the power to secure fair treatment as among all shippers who use the railroads—and all shippers have a right to use them. We must not leave the enforcement of such a law merely to the department of justice; it is out of the question for the law department of the government to do what should be purely administrative work. The department of justice is to stand behind and co-operate with the administrative body, but the administrative body itself must be given the power to do the work and then held to a strict accountability for the exercise of that power. The delays of the law are proverbial, and what we need in this matter is reasonable quickness of action. The abuses of which we have a genuine right to complain take many shapes. Rebates are not now often given openly. But they can be given just as effectively in covert form; and private cars, terminal tracks and the like must be brought under the control of the commission or administrative body, which is to exercise supervision by the government. But in my judgment the most important thing to do is to give to this administrative body power to make its findings effective, and this can be done only by giving it power, when complaint is made of a given rate as being unjust or unreasonable, if it finds the complaint proper, then itself to fix a maximum rate which it regards as just and reasonable, this rate to go into effect practically at once, and to stay in effect, unless reversed by the courts. I earnestly hope that we shall see a law giving this power passed by congress. Moreover, I hope that by law power will be conferred upon representatives of the government capable of performing the duty of public accountants carefully to examine into the books of railroads, when so ordered by the interstate commerce commission, which should itself have power to prescribe what books, and what books only, should be kept by railroads. If there is in the minds of the commission any suspicion that a certain railroad is in any shape or way giving rebates or behaving improperly, I wish the commission to have power as a matter of right, not as a matter of favor, to make a full and exhaustive investigation of the receipts and expenditures of the railroad, so that any violation or evasion of the law may be detected. This is not a revolutionary proposal on my part, for I only wish the same power given in reference to railroads that is now exercised as a matter of course by the national bank examiners as regards national banks. My object in giving these additional powers to the administrative body representing the government—the interstate commerce commission, or whatever it may be—is primarily to secure a real and not a sham control to the government representatives. The American people abhor a sham, and with this abhorrence I cordially sympathize. Nothing is more intemperate from every standpoint than a law which is merely sound and fury, merely pretense, and not capable of working out tangible results. I hope to see all the power that I think it ought to have granted to the government, but I would far rather see only some of it granted, but really granted, than see a pretense of granting all, in some shape that really amounts to nothing.

TAX ON INHERITANCES

The Omaha World-Herald commends the law for a tax on legacies and inheritances and gives the following resume of its principal features:

By the decision of the Nebraska supreme court the act of 1901, providing for a tax on legacies and inheritances has now been declared valid. The decision is highly impor-