

# The Independent.

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## People Should Direct Efforts in Politics Toward Controlling United States Senate

Recent revelations in the kingdom of high finance have made it possible for the people to understand with clearer vision just where the real power in American politics is located. The insurance disclosures showed that the money of the great insurance companies had been used for years by Wall Street speculators. At the end of that investigation the kings of finance found themselves temporarily cut off from one source of money supply. This was particularly unfortunate for them because at that very time they were engaged in the old game of inflating stocks with the intention of unloading upon the public at ridiculously high prices.

As soon as the dominant faction in Wall Street—the Standard Oil crowd—realized that more money was needed to continue the process of inflation, it put forward Jacob Schiff to demand government aid. This aid has not yet been given, but if the gamblers continue to feel the need of more money government aid will probably be forthcoming. Why?

Standard Oil is supreme in politics as in business. A New York paper some months ago gave the following estimate of the market value of the stocks and bonds held by the Standard Oil crowd:

Bank stocks .....	\$ 233,102,500
Industrial stocks .....	1,888,248,235
Railroad stocks .....	5,094,518,255
Other stocks .....	2,000,000,000
Bank deposits .....	419,868,342
Dividends, profits and surplus.....	100,000,000

Total .....

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\$9,734,638,332

In itself this accumulation of wealth denotes vast power, but its power is greatly increased by the wealth it dominates. Standard Oil controlled, and still controls, the great insurance companies, although the assets of these companies belong to thousands of policyholders in this and other countries.

Standard Oil dominates the banking business, the transportation business and the industrial interests. And by the power that it wields in business it dominates the politics of the nation. In every state and city of the country its will is supreme because of eager dependents and retainers. In Nebraska, for example, it is

represented by the railway machine. This machine elects the legislature and the legislature elects the United States senators. The chief reliance of "the system," as Thomas W. Lawson has described the Standard Oil power, is the United States senate.

One who grasps these facts in their full significance is to wonder at the corruption existing in the United States senate. Indeed, the corruption beneath the surface is as much more extensive than the surface corruption as the lava within the earth is more extensive than the lava that has been poured from the various volcanoes that curse the earth with their presence.

The few senators who go to Washington with good intentions find that the machinery is in the hands of an influential few. The new senators fall in line under the party lash. If they remain insurgents they earn the reputation of a Tillman, who was villified for years because of his honesty, while the most fulsome puffery was purchased to keep Depew's reputation above par. Senator La Follette is the latest insurgent in the senate. If he remains an insurgent he will soon share with Tillman the reputation of being a wild disturber and a dangerous character.

Standard Oil has taken possession of the United States senate because that body controls legislation. It has an absolute veto on all legislation and is protected from the people by the indirect vote. The framers of our constitution feared pure democracy and provided for a limited democracy which finds itself so restricted at the present day by the constitutional checks put upon it that it cannot make or execute laws, but must surrender this power to a moneyed oligarchy.

Wherever senators are to be elected the people should interest themselves in direct primaries as the sole means of securing popular representatives in the upper house of congress. Conventions are liable to be controlled by party bosses and indorsements by conventions are apt to register the will of the corporations rather than the wishes of the rank and file of a party. But even in those states where a direct primary has not yet been provided for by law the people may obtain satisfactory results by providing direct primaries within the party. The purpose should always be to eliminate corporation influence. The United States senate has been corrupted and degraded by this pernicious influence, and the people are no longer able to exercise that control over legislation which is necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties.

## Independent Spirit and Bossism

All eyes are turned on congress with an interest that has not been displayed for many years. It is the popular hope that congress will adopt some legislation which will serve to free the nation from the iron yoke of monopoly. How far congress will succeed in meeting this hope it is impossible to predict, but in the end there is sure to be grave disappointment.

After facing the trust problem for twenty years the people have finally decided that the chief cause of trusts is railway favoritism. They believe that if railway discrimination can be prevented, the trusts will lose much of their power. If competition can be restored, if the power to tax the people can be taken away, the trusts will cease to monopolize business and a new commercial era will begin—an era of fair competition, normal prices and high wages. Solve the railway question, and you solve all the other questions. By this is meant that the railway question, once satisfactorily adjusted, all other questions can be adjusted with ease.

The people are now trying to remove the railway peril through congressional action. They recognize that the power of congress

is limited by the constitution and they know that the government's power to regulate the railways is also limited by the constitution. Senator Foraker has declared that most of the proposed legislation is unconstitutional and that if congress passes any of the radical measures the railways will at once take the fight into the courts.

The question therefore resolves itself into this: Congress must act within the constitution, or the constitution must be amended by two-thirds of the states. There are two courses open to congress, acting within the constitution. It can pass a law giving to the interstate commerce commission a certain measure of control over the railways, subject always to review by the courts, or it can provide for government ownership. It is understood, of course, that no attempt will be made to secure public ownership. President Roosevelt is opposed to it, and it has few supporters in the house or senate.

Railway regulation is the only hope at present, but so limited is the power congress can delegate to the interstate commerce commission that railway regulation is bound to prove futile. The scope of the