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TRY TO WEAKEN BILL

CORPORATION SENATORS SOUR AT HEPBURN'S MEASURE.

If They Can Introduce "a Little Joker" That Will Give Courts Complete Power of Review They Will Be Satisfied.

Washington, D. C., Feb. 15.—Rate legislation has occupied the attention of the senate committee on interstate commerce for several days, but the members are slow to agree. As has been anticipated Elkins, Aldrich, Kean, Foraker and Crane are opposed to the Hepburn bill, which Dolliver, Clapp and Cullom have indorsed.

While the general run of statesmen look upon the Hepburn bill as quite moderate in its regulative measures, the corporation senators are far from satisfied with the provision giving the interstate commerce commission power to fix rates after complaint and investigation, subject to the constitutional rights of the railways to appeal to the courts for relief. The hostile senators demand that specific powers be given the courts to review all the acts of the commission and to be the final arbiter with reference to rates. In other words, they ask that the courts be given the power to override the commission at any and all times. Realizing, however, the power of the opposition they may give up hope of having their own bills indorsed by the committee and may rely on their legal skill to weaken the Hepburn bill by a "little joker" they have prepared.

Mr. Tillman and Mr. McLaurin have not yet declared themselves in favor of the Hepburn bill. Mr. Tillman is anxious to obtain a more drastic measure. Should these democratic senators fail to vote for the bill it cannot be reported in its present form. If one of the votes is lost the committee will be tied, unless Senator Cullom returns to Washington in time to cast his vote.

DEMOCRATS TO MAKE PLANS

Dollar Dinner Will Be Held in Lincoln on March 6.

State leaders of the democratic party will meet the rank and file at a dollar dinner to be given in Lincoln, Neb., on March 6. Chairman Allen has fixed on the foregoing date after hearing from all the speakers who have been invited to attend.

The chances for democratic success seemed so good to Chairman Allen and others high in the councils of the party that a dinner and conference was decided upon for the devising of ways and means to make the approaching campaign a triumph. The idea instantly met with favor among democrats in all parts of Nebraska and the prospects are excellent for one of the biggest democratic love feasts ever held in the state.

The democrats base their hopes on

the bitter dissatisfaction with existing conditions, state and national, among the republicans of Nebraska. Partisanship, they believe, has lost its power, and they think that the result will be a large independent vote that can be won by the democratic party if it nominates high-grade candidates on a sound but radical platform.

Speakers from outside the state who have been invited are, Hon. Cato Sells, Vinton, Ia.; General Weaver, Colfax, Ia.; Mayor Rose of Wilwaukee, and Hon. John H. Atwood of Leavenworth, Kas. The state speakers invited are Hon. G. M. Hitchcock, Hon. George W. Berge, Hon. A. C. Shallenberger, Hon. W. H. Thompson, and Hon. P. E. McKillip of Humphrey. Governor Folk of Missouri, who was among those invited, thought at first that he would be able to attend the dinner, but he has now definitely informed Chairman Allen that he will not be present.

Chairman Allen has received many letters from all parts of the state commending the idea of a conference and he is confident that the attendance will exceed 500.

STRIKES BLOW AT FREE PASS

La Follette Introduces a Sweeping Bill in the Senate.

Washington, Feb. 15.—Senator La Follette has introduced a bill prohibiting federal officials from asking or accepting railroad or other passes and prohibiting railroads from granting them. It imposes penalties for violations of the law.

The bill forbids all persons and corporations giving free passes or franks to any political committee or its employes, to any candidate for an office under the constitution or laws of the United States, or to any holder of such an office. The bill forbids passes, franks or privileges being issued to any person which are withheld from any other person for "the traveling accommodation or transportation of any person of property, or the transmission of any message or communication."

The punishment for violations of the bill is "imprisonment at hard labor not more than seven years, nor less than one year, or by fine not exceeding \$5,000, nor less than \$100."

Agents and officers of companies within the purview of the bill are to be privileged from testifying in relation to anything it prohibits, and no person so testifying is liable for punishment for any offense concerning which he was required to testify.

"Free pass," as used in the bill is defined "any form of ticket or mileage entitling the holder to travel over any part of the line or lines of any railroad, issued to the holder as a gift in consideration of any service performed or to be performed by such holder, or any other person, except where the ticket or mileage is used by such holder in the performance of his duties as an employe of the railroad issuing the same."

Railway mail service men while in the performance of their duty are to be exempt from the provisions of the bill.

Congressman Norris of Nebraska

assisted Congressman Gaines of Tennessee in drafting the anti-pass amendment, which the latter offered to the rate regulation bill. It was first drawn by Mr. Gaines and then turned over to Mr. Norris, who almost entirely reorganized it and added the provision that railroads must keep a pass register, which shall be opened to the interstate commerce commission, and adding several penalties. The amendment received ninety-three votes, with 137 in the negative. All the Nebraska members supported it, as did nearly all the democrats. Iowans, so far as they voted, opposed the amendment, and so did the South Dakota members. The reason offered by the latter two delegations was that they were represented on the committee which prepared the bill and was opposing all amendments, and they wanted to be loyal to their colleagues.

GRASS SEED IS ADULTERATED

Agricultural Department Issues Circular Putting Farmers on Guard.

Washington, Feb. 13.—The department of agriculture issued a circular relative to an investigation of the adulteration of orchard grass, bluegrass, clover and alfalfa seed. The department gathered seed from all parts of the United States, buying in the open market, and of the seed examined about one-third was found to be adulterated. The degrees of adulteration varied from 10 per cent to 75 per cent. The names of upward of 100 firms, which the department alleges are selling the adulterated seeds are printed in the circular.

It is estimated that 700,000 pounds of Canadian bluegrass seed are annually imported into the United States and mixed with the Kentucky bluegrass seed and sold as the latter.

A similar amount of trefoil is imported from England, mixed with alfalfa seed and sold at a corresponding advance, says the circular. The seed men hold that in many instances they have innocently bought from others the adulterated seeds. The department volunteered to examine and report without charge upon any seed samples sent by dealers or consumers.

Pleads for the Starving

President Roosevelt has issued an appeal taking official cognizance of the famine in northern Japan. It has grown to such serious proportions that he asks for contributions. He recommends that these be sent to the American National Red Cross, which will forward them to the Japanese Red Cross to be used as the Japanese government may direct. Contributions can be made to local red cross treasurers or sent direct to Hon. Charles Hallam Keep, Red Cross treasurer, United States Treasury Department, Washington, D. C.

Send \$1.00 for a year's subscription to The Independent and receive Mr. Berge's book, "The Free Pass Bribery System," free as a premium. This offer will remain but a short time.

TRADING AND PLOTTING

REVOLTS HAVE BECOME POPULAR AT WASHINGTON.

Factions Trying to Compromise With Each Other and With the President—Democratic Discord Not So Serious as Republican Dissension.

Washington, D. C., Feb. 15.—(Special)—Democratic sentiment here is severely critical at the present time. The democratic senators are greatly displeased at the insurgency of Senator Patterson, although they give him credit for perfect sincerity and admire him for his rugged defiance of caucus threats to read him out of the party. While his rebellious attitude may result in the ratification of the San Domingo arrangement, thus striking a hard blow at democratic cohesion and power of opposition, there are few senators who are disposed to take vengeance upon the Colorado statesman.

Sympathy for Patterson

Senator Patterson was the object of much sympathy when he returned to Washington because of his campaign against political corruption in Colorado and because this led him into criticisms of the supreme court which resulted in his being fined for contempt without a trial. Among men of his own party he has been regarded as a martyr suffering for the freedom of the press, and even his republican friends, who are disgusted with political affairs in Colorado, have endeavored to make it clear that they look upon him as a victim, not of his own folly, but of unfortunate circumstances.

Planned Moral Victory

Democratic senators expected to win a great moral victory by presenting a solid front against what they consider President Roosevelt's usurpation of the treaty-making power. The defeat of the San Domingo treaty—for such it is, although out of courtesy to the senate it was called a protocol—would mean increased prestige for the democratic party. The triumph of the treaty will place the republican senators in a good position to oppose White House wishes on other matters, notably rate legislation. The plan is to throw a sop to the White House Cerberus, who is hated by a few and feared by many. After tickling the president by "nudging up" to him on the San Domingo affair, the corporation senators expect to attack the Hepburn bill with the purpose of tearing it to pieces. It is even reported that the president has traded off the most vital part of effective rate legislation in order to secure the senate's support on the San Domingo treaty.

Hepburn Bill Threatened

True friends of effective legislation regard the Hepburn bill as none too