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TO THE READERS OF THE INDEPENDENT

As you will observe the make-up of The Independent has been changed so as to embrace a number of additional features which will greatly add to its value. Also with this issue I step aside as editor. In the future Hon. J. M. Devine will be its editor and have general charge of the paper. Mr. Devine for years edited the National Watchman at Washington, D. C. I congratulate the readers of The Independent as well as myself for being able to secure the services of such an eminent journalist. No abler or sturdier defender of the rights of the people against invasion by corporate or other interests, has been found in recent years. The encouragement, unmeasured commendation and cordial and generous support bestowed upon The Independent during my brief administration have been to me both gratifying and reassuring and I bespeak for Mr. Devine this same cordial support. I relinquish this work at this time for several reasons.

In the first place I am connected with a law firm and the work there demands my entire time. The work I have done here has been just that much extra and was done mostly evenings when I could be relieved from other work. It is too much and I find that I must either relinquish this work or abandon my law practice entirely. After due consideration I have concluded that it is best to remain with my chosen profession rather than permanently enter a new field.

Then there is another reason why I turn this work over to others at this time. The response by the voters of Nebraska to the issues that I thrust into the campaign in 1904, wherein I received 30,000 more votes for the governorship than the combined vote cast for Parker and Watson, the presidential candidates running on the same tickets, removed the last vestige of doubt from the minds of both friends and enemies of the cause I championed, that I had struck at the vul-

nerable point in the armor of railroad government in our state. And lest the issue thus forced into the arena of Nebraska politics in 1904, which it is universally conceded would have swept the railroad party from power had it not been for the Roosevelt "Tidal Wave," be neglected after the election, I purchased The Independent and dedicated it to the redemption of Nebraska from railroad control. Afterwards I published a book exposing that most insidious and successful instrumentality of political debauchery and wholesale bribery, used by railway corporations to secure control over the government of our cities, states and nation, "The Free Pass Bribery System."

My efforts have met with signal success. The Independent found a welcome in thousands of homes in Nebraska and other states and its circulation has been constantly growing. My book "The Free Pass Bribery System" now has readers in every section of the country and the demand for it is daily increasing. During the 1904-05 legislative session I also had introduced an anti-pass bill and I appeared before the legislative committee on railroads and argued for its passage. Of course, the bill with others of its kind was defeated. It never found its way out of the committee-room.

The platform upon which I made my race for governor less than two years ago, has been making tremendous headway. Ever since that election the tidal wave has been rising and the people today see more clearly than ever before how the free pass bribery system, the corrupt lobby, the political bosses which these instruments of corruption beget, must all be first driven from the field of politics before we can get wholesome legislation and incorruptible officials.

In Nebraska the forces are already forming for battle. It will be a memorable struggle. The people want the free pass bribery system destroyed, root and branch; they want corrupt lobbying driven from our state capitol; they want the railroad tax question settled right; they want extortion and discrimination in freight rates stopped; they want above everything else honest and true men who can be trusted to do this work. Arrayed against the people is the powerful influence of the railroads, an army of free pass holders and a corrupt lobby. Oh, if the people could only stand together in such a struggle, what a victory they could achieve! But attempt is already being made to confuse the issue. Already railroad tools who for twenty-five years have been passholders and agents of the railroads are posing as reformers and professing sympathy with the righteous cause of the people. An appeal will be made to partisanship in the hope of lining up in that way honest anti-railroad voters for railroad candidates. The game of politics was never played with more consummate skill than it will be played in the coming campaign. The real issue confronting Nebraska people is whether we shall have a real or sham battle. I want to be free so I can devote at least some of my time to help win a real victory for the people.

GEORGE W. BERGE.

PARTY SLAVERY

Evidence that party lines set more lightly upon the voters of the country than ever before is abundant upon every hand. This is in a great measure due to the strain they have been subjected to in recent years.

The quality in human nature that makes men partisan remains, but the tension put upon it by the party leaders has been more than it could bear. Party leaders of the present day do not represent great ideas and policies for the betterment of the country and the people, regarding which natural differences of opinion may exist. But, on the contrary, they represent in the main the ambition of rival rings and cliques, engaged in exploiting the people for private gain.

As an illustration, take United States Senator Aldrich of Rhode Island, whose leadership of his party in the United States senate stands unquestioned. Who does Mr. Aldrich represent in the senate of the United States? The people of Rhode Island? Not at all. To assert that Mr. Aldrich represents the people of Rhode Island in the presence of any of his colleagues of the senate, or within the hearing of newspaper correspondents at the national capitol would evoke from them a smile of pity, a sort of contemptuous pity for the innocent who knew no better than to make such a remark. Senator Aldrich is regarded at the national capitol as the chief bugler of the numerous Standard Oil statesmen (?) occupying seats in the two houses of congress.

Standard Oil is a term not sufficiently comprehended by people generally. It has a much broader meaning now than it had before the oil monopolists captured the sugar trust, the copper trust, the steel trust, the leather trust, the gas and electric lighting combinations of our great cities, the street car systems of our great cities, and later to find investment for their fabulous incomes have seized control of a number of our great railway systems. The people generally do not know that Standard Oil is the dominant power in what is known as the Gould system of railroads. The wealth of George Gould together with that of the Gould family is much less than the wealth of any one of the dozen men known as the Standard Oil crowd. Neither is it generally known that George Gould only holds his position as the head of a number of railway systems by the grace of the Standard Oil crowd, who regard him as a good railroad man, the same as they regard Havermeyer as a good man to look after the sugar refining business, or Corey to direct the steel trust. Of course, these men hold large investments in the various enterprises they are at the head of. If they did not, they could not retain their positions. Standard Oil is master, and it acts upon the principle that governed ship-owners for centuries, that of requiring a would-be captain to invest his own money in the ship as the condition of being placed in command. Not many years since the Vanderbilt family controlled many systems of railroads. The New York Central was the pride of the Vancerbilts. But that

system is now dominated by Standard Oil.

Standard Oil, the Morgan, Hill, Hariman combine and the Pennsylvania railroad clique, constitute the backbone of the republican party. These great Orbs each control a vast number of Satellites, which together with their principles constitute all there is of the republican party, with the single exception of Theodore Roosevelt. The party is very sick just now. Its ailment is known as Rooseveltism. Some say the party will soon recover; that the disease, although exhibiting many spectacular symptoms, is in no wise dangerous; that only minor members of the party have the disease, any way, and that it is a fake disease at best. Others, however, are positive that the disease will kill the party and make Bryan president.

For our own part, while we do not take Roosevelt very seriously, we regard Rooseveltism as a symptom of national health. The minor members of the party who have fallen victims of this so-called disease are so numerous that Rooseveltism has so far proven itself to be stronger than the party. If Roosevelt is actually sincere, in dead earnest, and will use the power and resources at his command, it is within his power to deal Standard Oil and its cohorts a solar plexus blow from which they will never recover. He can have no ex-

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Mr. Berge's new book on "The Free Pass Bribery System" which sells regularly for \$1.00 will be sent with either of the above combinations, postpaid for the additional sum of 60 cents.

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