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LA FOLLETTE'S SPEECH

The speech recently delivered in the United States senate by Senator La Follette of Wisconsin, on the rate bill, may truly be said to be the most notable deliverance of any public man of the present generation. Mr. La Follette did not limit himself to a discussion to the points in dispute over the pending bill, but branched out into the broadest consideration of the subject with which the bill deals, and in so doing penetrated to the core of the railroad question.

After discussing the question of transportation in general, he asserted that authority is vested in the government of the United States to control transportation, both as to the character of the service, and the charge for the service as an inherent right of sovereignty, and that the obligation rests upon the government to exercise the power. He asserted that the adjudicated cases fully sustain his contention quoting many authorities to prove his position.

He called attention to the fact that while the opponents of the pending measure described it as the drastic and revolutionary. It was significant that instead of basing their opposition to it on such grounds, their chosen line of battle was to quibble over a constitutional question. He scouted the contention of opponents of the bill that it was an attempt to extend the power of the government over interstate commerce, and asserted that the bill contained nothing not included in, and inseparable from, the power to regulate interstate commerce.

He proclaimed his faith in the supreme court of the United States and declared that corporate interests have little reason to expect aid or comfort from that source, affirming that while great interests have not hesitated to corrupt legislation and propose their attorneys for judicial appointments, that the supreme court was yet free from taint.

He ridiculed the subterfuge of the opponents of the bill in setting up a

constitutional scare crow to wrangle over, when their real purpose was to secure legislation that would afford opportunities for endless delays of litigation and the defeat of justice, asserting that the railroads should be satisfied with their constitutional rights.

Mr. La Follette then reviewed the interstate commerce law, and the various recommendations to congress made by the commission to strengthen and improve the law during the past nineteen years, all of which fell upon deaf ears resulting in loss to the American people running into hundreds of millions. He characterized the pending bill as merely an attempt to patch up the blunders of the present law, and as being entirely inadequate to meet the demands of the people for justice, and offering no solution of the great transportation question. But, it being a move in the right direction he felt it his duty to assist in making it as perfect as possible, and to assist in its passage for what good it might be able to accomplish. Mr. La Follette announced that he would support the Bailey amendment, and then proceeded to urge the importance of further amending the bill and to explain an amendment offered by himself. The La Follette amendment authorizes the interstate commerce commission to ascertain the value of the railroad property of the United States in order to afford them a basis from which to determine what would constitute reasonable compensation for the transportation of freight and passengers. The Wisconsin senator asserted that the railroads of the country are capitalized at a sum in the aggregate exceeding \$13,000,000,000 while the actual investment does not much exceed \$5,000,000,000. He takes the ground that \$7,000,000,000 and over of water injected into railroad securities are a fraud and a swindle, and that the American people are under no obligations to recognize them, and that the railroads collect more than \$400,000,000 each year in over-charges for the purpose of paying interest and dividends upon fictitious capital.

Senator La Follette's amendment goes to the very core of the railroad question and the speech of the senator in defense of the people's side in the great contest to preserve their lives and property from being devoured by corporate greed places him in the front rank of American statesmen.

Senator La Follette's address throughout was broad and comprehensive displaying the greatest familiarity with every detail of the subject. He combatted each and every objection urged against rate regulation with argument that was logical, incisive and conclusive. But, the distinguishing feature of his great address was his discussion of what constitutes a just and reasonable rate. While Senator Tillman and others have alluded to the evils of over capitalization no member of either house of congress ever before presented the case of the people against the railroads in so complete and comprehensive a way or with such frankness and power as it was presented by the Wisconsin senator.

Senator La Follette's speech states the case of the American people

against the railroads as it now exists. It is unfortunate that the attention of the American people was taken up by the San Francisco horror at the time of its delivery so as to prevent its being more fully reported to the country and receiving a larger measure of attention from the press. Under the circumstances the only means left to give this great speech, the publicity that it deserves is for individuals who are interested, to send to the senator for a copy of the speech enclosing a sum sufficient to at least cover the cost thereof.

We hope that every patriotic citizen will send at least 25 cents to the Wisconsin senator for a few copies of the ablest defense of the people of America against corporate aggression that has yet been made by anyone, inside or outside of congress.

THE CANDIDACY OF MR. BERGE

Two years ago George W. Berge was the candidate of the fusion forces for governor of the state of Nebraska. In the campaign of that year Mr. Berge proved himself to be a candidate of rare qualities, a man with whom the people had only to come in contact, to imbibe from him the ardor and inspiration he threw into the fight for the overthrow of railroad government in the state. All who attended his meetings were persuaded that every utterance that fell from his lips was true and that he was sincere and could be depended upon, if elected, to defend the interests of the taxpayers of the state.

During thirty years of practical experience in political campaigns the writer has never before observed such general apathy on the part of the voters as existed in the state of Nebraska in 1904. The people had their minds made up. All who were not positively for Roosevelt were either indifferent or disheartened. The conditions in Nebraska were no exceptions to the general rule throughout the country. The press reports showed that W. J. Bryan was the only speaker that could draw large audiences in any state of the union that year.

The peculiar conditions that existed in 1904, are here recalled for the purpose of showing that Mr. Berge inspired enthusiasm and revived the drooping hopes of the voters in a manner and to a degree that was most remarkable.

The secret of Mr. Berge's power lies in two things, the first of which is, being right, and the next in being terribly in earnest. The indignation that burns in every fiber of his being against the insufferable conditions of railroad extortion and corruption in our state becomes contagious among his hearers when he makes a public address, so much so, that he is regarded by all who have heard him as the embodiment of the people's cause against corporation government and railroad extortion in the state.

Letters have been pouring in to The Independent office in large numbers daily for more than two months, coming from every section of the state, in which the writers express their preference for Mr. Berge as the candidate for governor this fall, and giving estimates of his superior

strength over any other candidate that can be named for the office.

Having noticed Mr. Berge's name mentioned in connection with another state office, that of Attorney General, by two or three democratic newspapers recently, and having intimate knowledge of Mr. Berge's views on the subject of his future candidacy, the writer sought to obtain a statement of Mr. Berge himself, to prevent the public from being misled upon the subject, which would necessarily follow if the suggestions of the papers referred to were passed over unheeded. But finding that Mr. Berge and his family are absent from the city for a brief sojourn at Excelsior Springs, Missouri, thus making it impossible to receive a communication from him in time for publication this week, we have decided, in order that the public may not be further misled on the subject of his candidacy to state what we know to be the facts. We violate no confidence and betray no secret in saying that we know it to be Mr. Berge's determination to enter the race for the gubernatorial nomination this year, and that under no circumstances will he accept a nomination for any other position. Mr. Berge will return home early next week, when, under the circumstances the public may expect from him a full statement of his position.

Mr. Berge feels a just pride in the

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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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