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J. M. DEVINE, Editor
FREDERIC O. BERGE, Business Mgr.

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IT WOULD BE COWARDLY

Two years ago when the Roosevelt tidal wave swept over the land leveling everything before it, when not a piping sound was audible from a single democratic politician in the state, the ambitious party leaders having silently slunk into their tents and caverns, it seems that the fates held in reserve for the occasion a gifted leader, filled with the fire of truth, to send forth to battle for the rights of the producers and tax payers of Nebraska.

It is well known that had the democrats believed that there was any prospect for one of their number to succeed in reaching the governorship in 1904, George W. Berge would not have been the nominee of the party for that office. But, lacking a leader possessed of the necessary convictions and courage to enter the campaign against the adverse political tide that had set in, they consented to the nomination of Mr. Berge, and then left him to fight his battle unaided and alone. During the campaign the men who were conspicuous as leaders of the fusion forces of the state for years remained silent as the grave waiting until the storm would blow over when they might emerge from their seclusion and again assert their divine right of leadership.

The only assistance that was vouchsafed to Mr. Berge by any of the former leaders was to caution him against being radical in his demands for reform in the government of the state. The admonition was wasted on a nature foreign to such baseness and treason to the people. Berge is not made of the material of which trimmers or time servers are made. He was not cast in such a mold. The suggestion of such a course aroused indignation in his breast. As well might Garrison have been asked to compromise with slavery as to expect

Berge to smother the fires of resentment against railroad government that burned in every fiber of his being. His nature forbid compromise and his voice rung out over the state and quickened into life the giant of the prairies that lie sleeping beneath the heels of Harriman and Hill, while beneath all political banners and all sorts of uniforms, pass bribed politicians were holding to his nose chloroform sponges of many political brands.

Berge's campaign in 1904 was a surprise to the politicians of both parties. He aroused the people from their lethargy and filled them with enthusiasm, and so far as he was personally able to reach the voters of the state, he created a following unsurpassed in numbers and enthusiasm by any political leader of modern times, even under more favorable conditions. Berge struck a key note that stirred the public conscience to the center in his scathing arraignment of the free railroad pass as a bribe.

Those who are old enough to remember the dark days of 1861-2, when the union armies were returning runaway slaves to their southern owners, who came into the union lines under a flag of truce and claimed the negroes as their property, will remember the terrific force of the sensation created by the use of a single word, when General Benjamin F. Butler declared slaves to be contraband of war, and refused to give up the negroes within his line to southern claimants. The effect of that declaration was most startling. The nation seemed to hold its breath for a second in surprise, followed by a sigh of relief and then a loud acclaim of joy. The most vexing question of the day had been solved, and the back of the confederacy was broken by a single stroke of genius from a master mind.

Even as Butler broke the back of the confederacy with the word contraband, so has Berge undone the railroads by stamping the word bribe upon the free railroad pass. His campaign was followed by the publication of his book exposing the free pass bribery system which soon found its way into practically every village of the land. Mr. Berge's indictment against the free pass penetrated the conscience of the nation and the free pass stands condemned as a criminal device before the bar of public opinion. Since then the free pass has been outlawed by the legislatures of Ohio, Iowa and other states. Thus, the insidious bribe, the most fruitful source of political corruption employed by the railroads, is stigmatized, branded and doomed. Revolutions never go backwards. The milestones on the pathway of human progress are as permanent as the everlasting hills. The decree against the free pass has gone forth. Its days are numbered.

The collective mind cannot be deceived by the wiles of small men, nor the will of the people defeated by the blundering of the incompetent. Therefore, if perchance cowardly souls

should dominate the democratic state convention and deny to the people of the state the privilege of electing the man of their choice to the governorship by refusing to renominate Mr. Berge, such action cannot fail to incite the people to resentment against the treatment of their favorite and result in his being elevated to premiership of the party in the state and made the preferred candidate for the United States senate.

Politicians are prone to deceive themselves through their inability to correctly estimate the demands of the public. The smart little fellow of politics sometimes scores when the people are not looking. But when the people are aroused and taking an active part in public affairs, the coward is soon detected and men are measured not by the elastic tape line of their own inflamed imaginations but by the unbending steel of public intelligence. The deep seated demand of the people of the state for relief from railroad rule and extortion has burst assunder party lines. George W. Berge is regarded by the people as the personification of this demand. The people are knocking at the door of the democratic party of the state. Will the door be opened unto them?

THE PRICE OF LIBERTY.

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." The Savior of mankind was betrayed into the hands of His enemies for an amount much less in value than that of an annual pass over the railroads of Nebraska. The free railroad pass, the most insidious of all bribes, is doing its deadly work in the politics of our state at this time. It is being used with telling force upon the politicians of both political parties. The people who pay the freight must arise in their might and deal a death blow to the iniquitous free pass bribery system.

In the campaign of two years ago George W. Berge, with rare power and eloquence, pointed out to the voters of Nebraska that this insidious bribe stood between the people of the state and the control of its government. Those who listened to his indictment of the free pass as the most prolific source of political corruption, and heard his appeal to the people to arise in their might and reclaim the government of the state, destroy the free pass bribery system and drive the professional lobby from the state house, recognized the voice of a true leader who struck at the well-spring of political corruption, and they gave him their confidence and their votes.

When Mr. Berge opened his campaign and leveled his guns upon the pillars of the temple of railroad government, the free pass bribery system, he was warned by a number of democratic leaders that it was unwise to pursue a course sufficiently radical to provoke the active hostility of the enemy and advised to pursue a more conservative and conciliatory course. To Mr. Berge's mind the suggestion meant treason to the people, and in-

stead of influencing him to make a meaningless campaign it had the opposite effect of impressing upon him the importance of waging a war of extermination against the influence which the railroads were using so effectively to subordinate to their will the office holders and politicians of the state.

In view of the fact that it is known generally among the politicians that the democratic voters of the state favor the renomination of Mr. Berge for the governorship, and in view of the further fact that the railroads of the state are leaving no stone unturned to defeat his renomination, it becomes a matter of no merit to undertake to discriminate regarding the motives that actuate different individuals in opposing his renomination. One thing is certain, which is that the reason assigned for opposing the renomination of Mr. Berge is insufficient to constitute a motive for any important act by a man of average patriotism and intelligence.

Mr. Berge is known by the people

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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 50 cents.

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