TWELVE PAGES

THE OMAHA DAILY BEE.

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ISSUE OF THE HOUR

Earnest Appeal to the High Moral Sense of Nebraska Voters.

"REPUBLICANISM VERSUS BOODLERISM"

Tattooed Tom's Assaults Upon the State's Financial Credit.

MAJORS AS A CORPORATION CAPPER

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THE STATE MUST BE REDEEMED

Complete Stenographic Report of Mr. Rosewater's Fremont Speech, Being the Opening Gun in His Campaign Against Majors and Railroadism.

Saturday evening Mr. E. Rosewater delivered a political address at Fremont upon the subject: "Republicanism versus Boodlerism." Love's Opera house, the largest auditorium in the city, was crowded. The audience was composed of representative men of all parties—democrats, populists, prohibitionists and all kinds of republicans. There was also a fair sprinkling of ladies present. It was a representative meeting of representative people, who listened to the speaker with most respectful attention, according him generous applause at frequent intervals. Hon. Samuel Maxwell, formerly chief justice of the supreme court of Nebraska, in introducing the speaker, said:

"The gentleman who will address you this evening has been a citizen of this state for more than twenty-five years, and has labored earnestly and continuously for the prosperity and upbuilding not only of Omaha, but the entire state; a man who from the first has advocated government of the people, by the people, for the people, and insisted that the government of the state shall be conducted on business principles, and that boodling and boodlers shall be excluded; a man who is fearless in the performance of what he believes is his duty, and an earnest champion of what he believes to be right. I introduce Hon. Edward Rosewater, editor of The Omaha Bee."

Mr. Rosewater advanced to the front of the stage, and was received with cheers by many enthusiastic admirers. He spoke as follows:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Fellow Citizens: The large gathering which confronts me here tonight, and the prolonged greeting which I have received at your hands, are abundant proof that the people of Fremont and the citizens of Nebraska are taking a deep interest in the issues that are pending before us in the present campaign. The issues enunciated as a text for me tonight are, "Republicanism, or Railroadism." I propose to address myself first to republicans, to republicans who are stanch and conscientious advocates, and who believe in the fundamental doctrines and principles of the founders of the party. I propose to address myself especially to young republicans, and the young men who are about to cast their ballots this fall, perhaps for the first time, or who, at any rate, are not contaminated by the pernicious influences that have sapped the very vitals of republican institutions and prevent the people from exercising a free, untrammeled choice of our public officials and representatives in the interest of good government. I shall appeal to republicans who believe in the right of every man to cast his ballot as his conscience dictates, and are opposed to any despotism that enthralls the people and deprives them of the right of self-government for which the revolutionary fathers struggled and staked their lives and fortunes, and for which the soldiers who went to the war from 1861 to '65 fought, and for which today, when they are roused and become conscious of the issues, they will again strike a blow for liberty by resisting the corporate power that seeks to dominate this commonwealth.

Now, to begin with, what is a republic? According to Webster, it is a government by the people, through representatives elected by their choice, acting in that behalf.

Are the people of Nebraska so governed? That is the question that confronts us today. Now what were the doctrines and the cardinal principles of the republican party, enunciated by its founders and by successive national conventions?

REPUBLICAN DOCTRINE.

As far back as 1800, following the administration of Washington, the true republicans of America expressed in a very few words the principles that animated them in organizing the first republican party: "The freedom of speech and of the press, and opposition, therefore, to all violators of the constitution; to silence by force and not by reason the complaints, or criticism, just or unjust, of our citizens against their public agents; freedom of religion and opposition to all maneuvers to bring about a legal ascendancy of one sect over another."

The liberty platform of 1843 reads as follows: "Resolved, That freedom of speech and of the press, and the right of trial by jury, are sacred and inviolable, and that all rules, regulations and laws in derogation of either are oppressive, unconstitutional, and not to be endured by a free people." The free soil platform of 1852—and you must remember that the liberty party, the free soilers and the abolitionists formed the nucleus out of which the republican party of our day was formed—the free soil party made this declaration: "Resolved, That we inscribe upon our banner, free soil, free speech, free labor and free man, and that under it we will fight on and fight ever." That fight is going on as much today as it went on at the time that this declaration was made. (Applause.)

The platform adopted by the republican national convention held in Philadelphia in 1856 declared: "Resolved, That the maintenance of the principles promulgated in the Declaration of Independence, and embodied in the federal constitution, is essential to the preservation of our republican institutions." This resolution was also reiterated in the republican platform of 1860, by the convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln.

The platform of 1856 also declared: "That, while the constitution of the United States was ordained and established in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty, and contains ample provisions for the protection of the life, liberty and property of every citizen, the dearest constitutional rights of the people have been fraudulently and violently taken from them; their territory has been invaded by an armed force; spurious and pretended legislation, judicial and executive officers have been set over them, by whose usurped authority, sustained by the military power of the government, tyrannical and unconstitutional laws have been enacted and enforced; the rights of the people to keep and bear arms have been infringed upon, test oaths of an extraordinary and entangling nature have been imposed as a condition of exercising the right of suffrage and holding office; the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures has been violated; they have been deprived of life, liberty and property, without due process of law; that the freedom of speech and of the press has been abridged; the right to choose their representatives has been made of no effect."

SHALL CORPORATIONS RULE?

This arraignment was directed against the invasion of Kansas by slave-holding hordes of ruffians, and the attempt to convert Kansas and Nebraska into slave territories, was just forty years ago, when they were carved out as territories, and with the creation of Nebraska into a territory a struggle began and ended with universal freedom on American soil. Shall it be said of Nebraska, shall it be said of you today, that the principles and objects for which the pioneers of this state had to fight, and for which the republican party was the champion, shall be repudiated and discarded and the government of this state surrendered to the railroad corporations, which manipulate your conventions and foist upon the people candidates who are absolutely under their control? I do not believe that Nebraska has become so recreant to the early lessons taught by her pioneers. (Applause.)

Now, the republican platform of 1868 was framed by the convention that nominated Ulysses S. Grant for president, and was this: "We denounce all forms of repudiation as a national crime, and the national honor requires the payment of the public indebtedness in the uttermost good faith to all creditors at home and abroad, not only according to the letter, but the spirit of the laws under which it was contracted.

"This convention declares itself in sympathy with all oppressed people who are struggling for their rights.

"That we recognize the great principles laid down in the immortal Declaration of Independence as the true foundation of democratic government, and we hail with gladness every effort toward making these principles a living reality on every inch of American soil."

I desire you particularly to note this declaration relating to the credit of the nation, because, as we get along further, it will be made evident to you that the gentleman who has been placed upon the republican ticket as a candidate for governor is committed entirely to a different policy, judging by his legislative record.

The republican platform of 1876, in the centennial anniversary of American independence, declares: "When, in the economy of providence, this land was purged of human slavery, and when the strength of the government of the people, by the people and for the people, was to be demonstrated, the republican party came into power. Its deeds have passed into history and we look back to them with pride. Incited by their memory to high aims for the good of our country and mankind, and looking to the future with unfaltering courage, hope and purpose, we, the representatives of the party in national convention assembled, make the following declaration of principles."

THE RIGHT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT.

This was the preamble. This called attention to the fact that the republican party was organized for the purpose of maintaining and perpetuating the right of the people to govern themselves. Now, mark the following declaration in the same platform: "We rejoice in the quickened conscience of the people concerning political affairs, and will hold all public officers to a rigid responsibility and engage (that means 'pledge') that the prosecution and punishment of all who betray official trusts, shall be swift, thorough and unsparing."

Has this pledge been lived up to in Nebraska? Point twelve months back only, if you please, and see whether or not those who were entrusted by the republican party of Nebraska with the care and management of state institutions have been loyal to the solemn party pledges and faithful to their trust, and whether justice has been meted out to those who have failed to do their duty and who have betrayed a trust. Let us also remember that if this pledge to prosecute all who have betrayed the official trust applies to men who have held office in the past, it must also apply to all men who aspire to be in office in Nebraska and who want to be placed by your suffrages in control of the state government.

The question heretofore among republicans has been: "Are your candidates capable? Are they honest?" Today it is simply: "Are they willing to be faithful, pliant tools of the railroad corporations, and particularly that railroad corporation which has assumed to control the affairs of the state and taken its destinies into its own hands for the time being. (Applause.)

SOMEWHAT PERSONAL.

But before I enter upon further discussion of the relations of the citizens of Nebraska to those of corporate powers, of their influence upon our conventions, of their interference with your rights and my rights, and of their attempt to subvert our government, I want to square myself with regard to the campaign that was fought some years ago, in which one of your eminent citizens was a candidate for governor. It had been charged by this gentleman and by his friends, and this charge has been reiterated from time to time, that his defeat was due almost solely to foul play at my hands and at the hands of The Omaha Bee. He has carried a bandage upon his head ever since he met that defeat, and the scalp wounds that have been cut seem to have been kept wide open by his friends, as well as my enemies, who have poured brine into them in order to keep him soreheaded for all time to come, by constantly agitating and constantly denouncing the method by which he was defeated. (Applause.)

Now, let us see what proof there is of foul play or treachery. I came here today to face him, and I sent him an invitation this afternoon, in courteous language, to be here present, and if I shall say anything that is not true, I want him or his friends to rise here and contradict me. (Applause.) It has been asserted on behalf of Mr. Richards, (for I might as well name him), and by himself and his editorial and political friends, that The Omaha Bee did not give him the right support. Not only that, but that The Bee had opposed him openly and covertly, that it had failed to do its duty in that campaign with regard to himself, and that I had entered into a conspiracy to bring about his defeat and the election of James E. Boyd.

Now, what are the facts? Mr. Richards was nominated on the 24th of July, 1890. I was a delegate to that convention. The delegation from Douglas county did not support Mr. Richards; it supported Dr. Mercer as its candidate. My vote was cast for Dr. Mercer. After Mr. Richards had been nominated, and when the motion was made to make his nomination unanimous, a number of the delegates from Douglas county protested and refused to have that nomination made unanimous. I addressed myself to those delegates and implored them right there on the floor not to make a spectacle of themselves, but to join in and make the nomination unanimous. That fact cannot be truthfully gainsaid. So much as to my personal action in that convention.

On the day following that convention The Bee said editorially, and here I want to call your attention to this package (exhibiting package). They are typewritten copies of editorials on behalf of Mr. Richards and the ticket that appeared in The Bee during that campaign. I cannot read them all, but will read a portion of them to show whether or not Richards had fair support. The day after his nomination, on July 25, the following editorial appeared:

"The Republican Ticket—The republican party enters the campaign of Nebraska this year with a ticket that will in the main command the hearty support of the party. The obstinate and shortsighted refusal of the republican alliance farmers to take an active interest in the primary elections conventions rendered it next to impossible to eliminate the railroad element and present a ticket free from corporate influence from top to bottom and in every respect equal to the demands of the hour.

"But, while the party could and should have done better in its choice of some of the candidates, it might have done very much worse.

"Mr. L. D. Richards, the nominee for governor, is a man of high standing and first-class executive ability. His colleagues on the ticket are all known to possess the requisite qualifications for the performance of the duties that will devolve upon them.

"It now remains for the party to organize, make a careful survey of the field, and prepare for a struggle that will tax the best energies of its leaders, and require the loyal support of the rank and file to lead it to victory in November."

WAS RICHARDS A PROHIBITIONIST?

On the day following the republican state convention the Omaha Republican, which at that time had espoused the cause of prohibition, charged that Richards was a prohibitionist. On the very next day, without consulting Richards or conferring with him, knowing that this charge would prejudice him in the eyes of many republicans, the following was written by myself:

"Not a Prohibitionist—The assertion made by the Omaha Republican that the nomination of L. D. Richards assures the adoption of the prohibition amendment is an unwarranted conclusion and tends to place Mr. Richards in a false light before the people of this state. It creates the impression that he is a prohibitionist and will use all his influence to promote the adoption of the prohibition amendment. Mr. Richards is a temperate man, but he is not a prohibitionist and has never committed himself to the proposition."

If I had been scheming to defeat Mr. Richards I certainly would not have written this article, without even waiting for him to request such a denial. It was made in his interest, and any friend of his must see that it was made for the benefit of the candidate and not to his detriment.

Now comes an article of August 12: "The Duty of Republicans—The republican campaign in Nebraska has not been formally opened, but the opponents of the party are already busy with detraction and in efforts to alienate those who have always faithfully followed the standard of republicanism.

"The only danger to the republican party in Nebraska is from the defection of republican farmers, who may be induced to express their dissatisfaction by either voting with the democrats or assisting that party by giving support to the so-called independent movement. The duty of every republican in the present exigency is to stand by his party. Whatever reforms he may believe necessary there will be better chance of securing from the republican party than from any other." This is merely an extract; the article is somewhat lengthy.

Now comes one of September 20: "Opening of the Campaign." And right here let me call your attention to some facts. Although the nomination of Mr. Richards had been made in the latter part of July, the campaign was not opened until the 20th of September. It was at my suggestion that we had an early convention, in order that we would meet the organization of the independent party at that time half way and prevent it from making the inroads into the rank and file of the party which it was liable to make if they had the field all to themselves for the whole summer. But Mr. Richards saw fit in his exuberance to go down to Vermont and New England, and there to introduce himself to his friends and relatives as the next governor of Nebraska (laughter), very much the same as Candidate Majors has been doing. (Laughter.)

A BIT OF POLITICAL HISTORY.

And what was the result? Richards did not return until early in September, and we had to wait with the campaign until the 20th of September before it could be opened, thus losing him the opportunity for forestalling some of the work that was done when he was away in the east.

"Opening of the Campaign—The republican campaign in Nebraska will be formally opened today, and thereafter until the day of election in November will be carried on with earnestness and vigor."

This editorial is concluded by an appeal to republicans to remain faithful and stand by the ticket. And now about that formal opening. Mr. Richards came to Omaha on the day on which the formal opening took place at the Exposition hall, in which he spoke, and I followed in a speech appealing to republicans for support of the ticket, himself included. But before those speeches were made a private meeting was held by the republican state central committee. At that meeting Mr. Richards was present, and so were John M. Thurston and John L. Webster. The question was asked, how much majority will Douglas county give against Mr. Richards? Mr. Webster and Mr. Thurston thought that it would not exceed 3,000, and I told them that it would exceed 5,000. They ridiculed my statement, and said that I was way off in my estimate. I told them that I knew Douglas county pretty nearly as well as anybody else, and warned them against a big landslide. Was there anything in that that showed treachery or ill-will? Had they acted upon my advice Richards would not have met with such a Waterloo in Douglas county as he did on November 4.

After the speeches had been made at Exposition hall some of the friends of Mr. Richards proposed to go down to Ed Maurer's and see the boys and treat them to beer. I advised Mr. Richards not to go, stating, as he was not a man who made a practice of visiting saloons, it would do him no good; that saloon keepers had no respect for men who came only about election time, asking their support. But he did not take my advice, and so I followed along. (Laughter.)

I am not a patron of saloons, but, of course, I am not a prohibitionist. I want to say that much to you, for probably there are thousands of people in this city who consume more liquor in a week than I have in all my life. (Laughter.) We went down there and there were about twenty-five or thirty men called up to the bar. The barkeeper poured out the beer, every man took up his beer mug, and one of the gentlemen called out: "Now, here's to the next governor of Nebraska, Mr. Richards." And the bartender, who didn't seem to know what this was all about, cried out: "What? Richards? Why, Jim Boyd is going to be the next governor of Nebraska." (Laughter.) This was the beginning of the campaign—the opening. (Laughter.)

Following the opening of the campaign, here comes an editorial, September 23, three days after that meeting: "Stand by the Party—No leader of the so-called independent party and no democrat has yet given a single sound reason why any republican farmer of Nebraska should not stay by the party in the present campaign. There is no reason that is worthy a moment's consideration of any intelligent man who can understand the utter fallacy and futility of the independent movement, and who knows the history and the aims of the democratic party."

And then follows a long editorial on that score.

"Push the Canvass." This editorial wound up as follows: "It is necessary to say plainly that the republican party of Nebraska cannot hope to win unless the canvass is pushed more vigorously and earnestly than it has been thus far. The exigency calls for an honest view of the situation and frank counsel, and The Bee deems it its duty to spur campaign managers and candidates on to greater activity."

Then comes another that reads: "Mr. Richards' Campaign."

Now, just listen to this one and see whether The Bee gave him fair support: "Mr. Richards carries on his canvass for the governorship with a modesty and dignity characteristic of the man. Reports from the various parts of the state which he has visited show that he has everywhere won popular respect and impressed the people as a man who could be trusted to administer the affairs of the state honestly, wisely, and in accordance with the platform promises of his friends. His speeches are plain, straightforward statements of the record and principles of the republican party in relation to their issues in the present campaign. They are admirably adapted to the situation." And finally concludes as follows: "Mr. Richards represents in his life and character the best citizenship of Nebraska. His campaign is a good index of the sound and honorable administration which might be expected of him as governor." That appeared in The Omaha Bee on October 16, 1890.

Here is another: "An Ovation to Richards—Last night a grand ovation to Hon. L. D. Richards is the answer of the republicans of Douglas county to those who have said they would prove lukewarm in their support of the gubernatorial candidate. Douglas county republicans have not thrown down their guns and run away." That was October 21. Here is another: "Stand by the Ticket—The republican ticket, nominated by a thoroughly representative convention of the party, is entitled to the steadfast support of every republican in Nebraska. Every consideration of party loyalty and duty demands of republicans that they shall endorse at the ballot box the action of their convention." Then this closes with an appeal for them to stand by the entire ticket:

"The Next Governor." There is another article, "Nebraska has never had a democratic governor, and, in spite of the loud claims of Mr. Boyd's friends, there is no reason why one should be chosen this year. There never was a time when the republican party had better reason for desiring a republican in the executive chair, nor a time when the party had an abler or purer man for its candidate. No one who has been a republican should vote against L. D. Richards, directly or indirectly." Now, does that show any hostility to Mr. Richards? I should think not. The article winds up as follows: "The republican candidate is equally deserving of loyal support on personal grounds. He is a type of the strong, earnest, successful men who are developed from honest material by western life. He has made his way from the bottom of the ladder to distinction without the aid of fortuitous circumstances. He has been true to every trust imposed in him, public and private. There is nothing in his career to call for an apology, from the time he went to war as a boy of 14 to the time when he became the candidate of the republican party for the highest office in the gift of his state. These considerations should make the election of Hon. L. D. Richards certain in a state that has a natural republican majority of nearly 30,000."

Does that show that The Bee did not give Mr. Richards a cordial and warm support?

WHAT MORE COULD HAVE BEEN DONE?

Now, the last, on November 3, the day before the election: "Stand by the Colors"—Every republican in Nebraska should stand by his party ticket. In that course alone lies his safety. An enemy that for twenty-five years has sought vainly to win in a fair fight seeks now to win by fostering discord and distrust in ranks where harmony is fatal to their designs." And so on.

I think I have read sufficient from the columns of The Bee to satisfy any rational person that nothing was left undone by the paper during the campaign to hold the republican vote for Mr. Richards. Individually, I was very much occupied. I had undertaken to manage the anti-prohibition campaign, and for that reason could not give my personal attention to the editing of the paper from day to day, but only gave it an occasional supervision. I had hired Mr. Smythe, who had been the editor of a republican paper at Kearney, and paid him $200 a month during that campaign to conduct the political columns of the paper; and Mr. Smythe was a personal friend and a warm friend of Mr. Richards, so that Mr. Richards could have commanded him at any time.

Now, what happened during the campaign? Mr. Richards did not see fit to pay but the smallest attention to the vote in Douglas county. Ten days before the campaign closed I met him at Holdrege in the Republican valley, where I was engaged in campaigning against prohibition. I asked Mr. Richards what he was doing there and why he was not in Omaha, and he said he was looking up his "fences" in the Republican valley, but would get to Omaha pretty soon. I then told him that I would be back within a very few days, and would then personally make a canvass and introduce him to many business men with whom I was acquainted, and try to make them feel that he was safe and sound on the question in which they were very deeply interested, but Mr. Richards never called.

RICHARDS HAD AN OPPORTUNITY.

On the Saturday night before the election telegrams were received by The Bee from several counties stating that the republicans in interior districts would vote for prohibition if Douglas county and Omaha particularly, did not support Mr. Richards. These telegrams were suppressed. The next morning I sent for Mr. Richards and also for Senator Manderson. I met them in my office Sunday morning and told them that these threats would only irritate and arouse our people against Richards, and therefore should not be made. I said to Mr. Richards, then and there, "I have made a thorough investigation of the condition of the state with regard to prohibition. I have responses from 12,000 farm subscribers as to their proposed action upon the prohibition question, and 8,000 of the 12,000 are against it." I assured him that the amendment would be defeated by over 20,000, and advised him, in view of the feeling in Omaha, to have himself interviewed by Mr. Smythe and state flat-footed that if prohibition was defeated in the state he would not sanction an act of the legislature that would make prohibition statutory. If it was carried, then he would have to do his duty as governor to enforce the constitution and the laws. Mr. Richards went from me to the room occupied by Mr. Smythe, and I saw nothing further of him; but, the next morning, when I picked up The Bee and read the expected interview, I was chagrined to find a wishy-washy article that was neither flesh, fish nor fowl, and amounted to nothing on the issue, and therefore had no effect upon the voters of our county. (Applause.) Now, I submit to you, gentlemen, whether, with the showing, there is any good reason why this man and his friends should constantly continue to malign me as an enemy of the republican party, as a private enemy of Mr. Richards, as a traitor to him, and a treacherous conspirator who sought to sell him out? There is no truth whatever in it, and I defy him to bring the proof.

Now, there is another thing that I want to call your attention to. If Richards had taken the trouble, and he had opportunity enough, he would have known enough to know where to look for the cause of his defeat. It is notorious that in the convention that nominated him there was a contest between the Elkhorn Valley railroad and the Burlington as to which should capture and own the governor. The Elkhorn road was victorious. The Burlington then turned in for James E. Boyd. Czar Holdrege worked for him wherever he could through the republican railroaders, or railroad republicans, in that way defeating Mr. Richards. (Applause.) And here is the proof that stares him in the face. It shows that in every county, from Douglas county to the Colorado line, Mr. Richards was cut, and fell behind the average. Here we have, for instance, Adams county: Richards, 1,331; Allen, who was about medium on the republican ticket, for secretary of state, had 1,453; Buffalo county, Richards, 1,295; Allen, 1,401; Cass, 1,864 for Richards; 1,901 for Allen; Clay, 1,197 for Richards; 1,365 for Allen. And so on clear down the list, and the total amounts to 1,646 votes. These 1,646 votes represent the republicans that are pliant in the hands of the Burlington road, and will vote the democratic ticket one year and the republican ticket the next year, and the populist ticket the next year, if there is a populist that suits the B. & M. managers. These railroad republicans voted against Richards. Had they voted for him he would have been elected by over 2,000 plurality over Boyd. That is the true inwardness of his defeat, and I hope from now on that the ledger is closed, and that no more will be heard about Rosewater's conspiracy and his treachery and the base defection in the campaign of 1890. (Applause.)

HAD A LETTER FROM RICHARDS.

We now come to the question of the misrule of the state by the railroads. I will not undertake to formulate the conditions under which this is done, but leave it for a good, straight republican, who has supported republican principles and republican candidates during a lifetime, and who was honored by the people of Iowa with the position of governor—I refer to Governor Larrabee. In a volume published last year known as "The Railroad Question," Governor Larrabee presents the issue of the railroads in politics, and I will read you a little from that book.

(A letter was handed to Mr. Rosewater at this moment.)

This is a letter from Mr. Richards, but I am not able to read it, because it is a little bit difficult. It will be published, however. I had invited Mr. Richards to be present, but I presume "something" has prevented his attendance. (Laughter and applause. Cries of "Read it—read it".)

You want me to read the letter? (Voices: "Read it.") O, yes, if you are anxious to have me read it, I am not afraid to read anything. (Laughter.)

"September 15, 1894. Hon. E. Rosewater: Sir—Your invitation to be present at Love's opera house at 8 o'clock to listen to your political address, when you propose to discuss the living issues of the day and the relations of The Omaha Bee to my candidacy in 1890 was received by me at 7 o'clock this evening. It is not probable that you will say anything new, and I have no time nor disposition to punish myself by listening to a rehash of your stale chestnut. (Laughter.) Had you advised me in good time that you desired by presence to discuss with you the position of The Omaha Bee and its relations to republican candidates and the republican party during the past fifteen years, and agreed to divide time, it would have given me infinite pleasure to meet you before my townspeople, when I might be able to emphasize your treachery. I have seen nothing in your conduct or that of The Bee since my letter to you of December, 1890, to which you are respectfully referred, to change my opinion of you as an alleged republican. Respectfully, L. D. RICHARDS."

(Laughter.)

Well, I want to say right here that I am willing at any time to accommodate that gentleman to a debate. I am willing to discuss with him in the presence of the people of your city on the policy of The Omaha Bee and my conduct toward any republican that I have opposed or the paper has seen fit to oppose within those fifteen years, and, if he can show me that I have not had very good reasons, commendable, moral reasons, and high moral grounds for taking the position that I did, I will agree to apologize to him. I will even apologize to Richards for saying so much for him. (Laughter and applause.) I cannot go any further into this matter. I now propose to discuss the relations of the railroads to the people, and if the gentlemen wants to ask me any questions when I get through, I will be very much pleased to answer them. (Reading) "Railroads in Politics. The question might be asked, How is it possible that in a republic where the people are the source of all power, and where all officers are directly or indirectly selected by the people, to carry out their wishes and to administer the government in their interests, a coterie of men bent on pecuniary gain would not be permitted to subvert those principles of common law and public economy which from time immemorial have been the recognized anchors of the liberty of the Anglo-Saxon race?

"The statement that under a free government it is possible for a few to suppress the many might almost sound absurd to a monarchical, and yet it is true that for the past twenty-five years the public affairs of this country have been unduly controlled by a few hundred railroad managers.

"To perpetuate without molestation their unjust practices and prevent any approach to an assertion of the principle of state control of railroad transportation, railroad managers have secured, wherever possible, the co-operation of public officials, and, in fact, of every semi-public and private agency capable of affecting public opinion. Their great wealth and power have made it possible for them to influence to a greater or less extent every department of the national and state governments."

FIGHT FOR THE NEW CONSTITUTION.

The railroad issue has been with us for a good many years, and boodleism has always been with us. As far back as 1871, when the people of this state sought to formulate a new constitution, through a convention composed of our ablest jurists and most prominent citizens, this struggle between the people and the corporate power already had commenced. That constitutional convention framed an excellent organic law. It was modern in every respect. It provided for railroad restriction and regulation, and it provided safeguards for our banks as regards the liability of their stockholders, in the interests of the depositors and in the interests of investors. The railroad managers and the bankers were displeased with that constitution, but they could not and did not dare to openly oppose it before the people. There had been submitted with the new constitution four separate amendments. One of these was for church taxation. That amendment gave them the keynote. Immediately the cry was raised that the constitution proposed something unheard of. Placards were in every town and village, headed: "To your tents, Oh, Israel; will you submit to the taxation of the cemeteries and churches?"

On the one side the Catholic bishop, O'Gorman, who preached a crusade against the new constitution, and on the other side Rev. Mr. Delamatre, a Methodist minister, took the stump against the new constitution.

For the first time in the history of the United States, probably, the Catholics and the Protestants joined hands to oppose the adoption of a constitution which was framed for equal taxation and corporate control.

What was the result? The crusade was carried on all over the state. Railroad passes were furnished to all of the preachers and the priests and hired speakers, and the necessary funds were contributed by the bankers. The constitution which the people had sought to frame for their own protection was declared defeated.

It never was defeated. With the audacity that corporate managers are capable of certain officials were subsidized and corrupted to tamper with the returns, and the constitution which actually had carried was counted out.

The late General Strickland, president of that constitutional convention, who was one of the officers charged with declaring the result, was implored not to make it public that the constitution was being counted out, and a pledge was given then and there that if he would declare it defeated by a few hundred majority, the legislature following was to be allowed to resubmit the constitution, omitting the offensive parts. This fact has never before been made public.

The Omaha Bee was the only daily paper north of the Platte that advocated the adoption of that constitution. All of the other papers had been bought off by the corporate conspirators. When the election was over, a silver plate service, valued at $1,200, was presented to Rev. Mr. Delamatre as a testimonial of appreciation of his services. When the legislature passed a bill to resubmit that constitution, the governor who had given us the pledges for its resubmission, and who was one of the parties to this gigantic fraud, vetoed the bill. The influences of the railroads and the bankers were so great that it it could not muster votes enough to pass over the veto. That is a matter of history. About that time the granger agitation began all over the west. Everywhere laws were being passed restricting the powers of a public carrier, and when that constitutional convention met in 1875, they were forced by public sentiment to insert a stringent provision in regard to maximum rates, with regard to discrimination and pooling. But that instrument, the constitution, does not enforce of itself. It required legislation, and it required faithful officers who would carry out the mandate of the instrument they were sworn to obey. For seventeen long years that part of the constitution relating to railroad regulation remained an absolute dead letter. We fought over these questions time and again; convention after convention was held, platforms were adopted, pledges were made only to be broken, until a great mass of republicans in this state became thoroughly disheartened and disgusted. Yet it was the germ of the populist party. The populist party of Nebraska would not have contained 10,000 members today, scarcely 15,000 at any event, had it not been for the pernicious interference, for the criminal conspiracies that were constantly carried on by the railroad lobby at every session of the legislature and at every republican convention, for they were managing the republican party, because it was the party in power in Nebraska, just as they manage the democratic party in Georgia, because that is the party in power.

PEOPLE ROSE IN REVOLT.

Well, it would be a long story to recite all the railroad raids upon conventions and legislatures within the past twenty years, but you will remember that in 1890, just prior to the nomination of Mr. Richards for governor, there had been a conference of leading republicans held in the city of Lincoln, protesting against the course being pursued, and endeavoring, if possible, to bring the party to a realization of its danger. Just at that time the populist party was about to be organized. Remember that in 1889 Mr. Morrill, the republican candidate for university regent, received 93,317 votes in this state, and the very next year Mr. Richards received only 68,878, or a falling off of 24,439 votes in one year. Now, what does that signify? It signifies that there was a deep-seated discontent all along the line in the republican party, and that a large number of voters, principally farmers, and many of them old soldiers, just as loyal and brave as any of the veterans of the union armies, had detached themselves from the party that had saved the union because they wanted to save the state, and wanted to transmit to their children and children's children the free institutions which the founders of the republic and the saviors of the republic had established and saved for them. (Applause.)

In 1890 these resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, That we reiterate and cordially endorse the fundamental principles of the republican party as enunciated by successive national republican conventions from 1856 to 1888, and we believe the republican party capable of dealing with every vital issue that concerns the welfare of the American people whenever the rank and file of the party are untrammeled in the exercise of their political rights.

Resolved, That we view with alarm the intense discontent among the republicans of the state, chiefly due to the pernicious and demoralizing interference of corporations and their attempts to control all departments of our state government—legislative, executive, judicial—and we earnestly appeal to all republicans who desire to preserve our institutions to rally to the rescue of our state from corporate domination by actively participating in the primary elections and nominating conventions.

Resolved, That while we desire to accord to railroad corporations their rights and privileges as common carriers, we demand that they shall go out of politics and stop interference with our conventions and legislatures.

Resolved, That railroad passes distributed in this state for political purposes are a species of bribery pernicious in their influence, and tending to undermine public morals, subversive to a free and unbought expression of the will of the people in their conventions, legislatures and juries, and we hereby demand the prohibition of passes and free transportation in any form under severe penalties.

Resolved, That Nebraska has for years been subject to exorbitant transportation rates, discriminating against her products, thus retarding her development, and we condemn the State Board of Transportation for failing to exercise the authority vested in them, and by refusing to afford to the people the relief they were pledged to give. We therefore demand that the legislature shall enact a maximum tariff bill covering the transportation of our products and principal imports.

After the conference, by which these resolutions had been promulgated, a committee waited upon the republican state committee, of which Mr. Richards was at that time the chairman. We received a very courteous hearing, and the party ordered its convention held early, at our suggestion, in order to forestall the threatened defection of republicans into the populist ranks. The convention of 1890 adopted a platform very nearly similar to this declaration, and, moreover, they refused to renominate John Steen, land commissioner, and Mr. Cowdrey, secretary of state, and came within an ace of dumping out Tom Benton for auditor, although these state officers had only had one term, and were, under custom, entitled to a renomination. They were dumped overboard because the republican party wanted to respond to public sentiment, and endeavored at that time to rebuke the failure of the Board of Railroad Commissioners to carry out the mandate of the law. During that same summer Governor Thayer issued a proclamation calling the legislature together in extra session, and providing that they should pass the maximum rate law and abolish the State Board of Transportation. That showed which way the wind was blowing. It showed that the republican rank and file of the state demanded some action; but after all that was promised and pledged in our platform nothing came of it.

BUILDING OF A CELL HOUSE.

Let me now revert to the work of the legislature of 1893. Before that legislature had met, during the summer of 1892, prominent citizens of Lincoln made charges in the public prints against various state officers and state institutions, charging that there had been a general extravagance and corruption in state institutions, that the state was being robbed, thousands and thousands of dollars were being squandered, that coal was being delivered to private citizens and charged up to the state, that materials that were inferior were being accepted and paid for as first-class goods, and that a wholesale system of plunder and spoliation was going on in state institutions. These reports were at first discredited, but when the legislature convened these charges were investigated and found to be substantially true. It also transpired that the State Board of Public Lands and Buildings, consisting of the attorney general, the secretary of state and the land commissioner, had gone into a conspiracy with the contractor of the penitentiary, the notorious Charley Mosher, and that they had made a contract with Mosher to construct a cell house for $10,000, for which the previous legislature had made an appropriation.

Now, in the first place, the contracts with William H. B. Stout, which Mosher had assumed, provided that 280 cells should be built at the expense of the contractor, and the legislature itself was violating the contract, or rather giving away $40,000 to the contractor, in making the appropriation. This fact was as well known to those state officers as it is known to me. Why was it, then, that these state officers undertook to build that cell house? Simply because in their collusion with this man Mosher, who is a boodler extraordinary (laughter) and a manipulator of legislatures and conventions, there was provided liberal lubricating material for the state house ring. (Laughter.)

This cell house was to be constructed by Mosher, and the State Board of Public Lands and Buildings appointed his own manager, Bill Dorgan, as superintendent of construction. Here was a contractor who also acted for the state as superintendent. There were no plans, no specifications, and the contractor was left to furnish such building material as suited him, charge what he pleased and make out vouchers for work and material without furnishing proof of what had actually been done or expended. There were $40,000 squandered on that cell house; it was a gigantic steal. The building cannot be used for anything except storage. The board drew $500 of that money and expended it on a junket down east under the pretense that they were inspecting other penitentiaries and a number of institutions. The most remarkable thing about it was that the vouchers showed that the exact amount paid out on that trip was $500. They did not spend 15 cents less; nor 10 cents more. (Laughter.)

BROUGHT ON IMPEACHMENT.

Now, then, the legislature, finding this scandalous state of affairs, passed resolutions impeaching these officers. The vote on the impeachment resolutions was almost unanimous; only five members recorded their votes against them. Two of these were, I believe, democrats; one of them James E. North, the present collector of the state of Nebraska; and the other, if I remember right, was Senator Mattes of Nebraska City, who is traveling around in Europe and distributing hoe cake to the Germans at the instance of J. Sterling Morton. (Laughter.) Only five out of 132 members voted against these impeachment resolutions, and yet it is said that those resolutions were passed as a piece of political spite work. That seems preposterous to any rational man, for democrats, populists and republicans voted together.

When this matter reached the supreme court a trial was had, and the court was divided. The majority of the court acquitted the impeached officers on the ground that their misconduct was a technical violation of the law only, although their method of doing business was severely censured. Chief Justice Maxwell voted them guilty and filed a dissenting opinion, sustaining the point he made, that they should have been dismissed from the service. (Applause.)

Now, under ordinary conditions, men who were acquitted under such peculiar circumstances, who were acquitted on a Scotch verdict, would have been glad to lie down and keep still and tend to their business and avoid any further censure. Not so with these impeached state officials and the boodle ringsters at Lincoln. They were bound to have a vindication, and the only way to have their vindication was to depose Samuel Maxwell from the supreme bench. In that they had no difficulty in finding active allies in the railroad corporations. It was a most dangerous and powerful combination. The state officers and their retainers, railroad mercenaries, working night and day, to defeat Samuel Maxwell, who was one of the organizers of the republican party of this state, who had been on the bench for twenty odd years, and never had been charged with faltering in his duty, whatever else there might have been said against him. (Applause.)

Had Samuel Maxwell indicated or intimated that he was willing to do the bidding of one of those corporations, the one that is now dominating the state—I mean the B. & M. railroad and the czar, Holdrege—he would have been on the bench today.

HOW MAXWELL WAS DEFEATED.

How was his defeat brought about? By chicanery, coercion of railroad employes and boodle. In your own county a straw man was put up as a candidate to prevent him from securing a delegation, and the most dastardly means and shameless trickery were resorted to. Men who conspire to undermine good government are more dangerous than the burglar who breaks into your house, or the safe-blower who robs a bank. What is money or property as compared with the right of American citizens to impartial trials in our courts of justice and to the honest and fearless interpretation of our laws.

In Douglas county the general sentiment of republicans was in favor of returning Judge Maxwell. If no interference had taken place he would have had that delegation solid and would have been renominated. How was the popular will thwarted?