

business problems involved in city transportation; no men are better equipped to help the people arrive at correct conclusions on this subject; no men have greater selfish interests or broader patriotic motives in seeking the proper solutions of the problems; no men will unite more cordially with their fellow citizens in an effort to better conditions, materially and morally. They believe earnestly that the railroad companies and the problems involved in their operation should not be made the targets of political attacks, but should be left unmolested, subject to public, non-partisan control, to carry on their business.

They know that co-operation between the railroad, the general public and city officers—cordial, sympathetic, willing co-operation—is an essential to efficient service.

There are two methods by which corporate interests can be protected. One is by their officers and officials apparently abstaining from politics, apparently devoting themselves entirely to business, claiming to be business men and not politicians, and making secret deals with those politicians who will give them protection.

The other method is for the corporate manager to defy boldly the politician, high or low, who undertakes to drive him from a participation in public affairs; to refuse to be blackmailed, to refuse to buy political protection through campaign contributions, to put his trust in the plain people of the country, and, willingly, boldly and fearlessly lay his case or his needs before them.

I advocate, absolutely, clean political methods—bold, fearless, courageous methods—and the establishment in every community, by the men who manage corporations, of a reputation for fearless political courage, until they secure a leadership in civic affairs recognized to be disinterested and for the public good.

I advocate a campaign of education, the widest publicity of the affairs of public service corporations, freedom from entangling political alliances, the sternest integrity in the administration of both the private and the public side of corporate management, and the passage of such laws as are necessary to establish non-partisan tribunals of a judicial rather than a political character, with power to grant franchises and regulate public service corporations.

One of the causes of political distrust of the corporation to-day is that corporate managers have sometimes professed to be out of politics, while they have had secret deals with the demagogue who has been proclaiming his desire to keep the railroad out of politics.

There is no doubt that a campaign of lies has been inaugurated and is being carried on by our opponents. Why should not the railroad interests of the country inaugurate a campaign of truth and go before the people confident that the campaign of truth will win out over the campaign of lies? They may meet with temporary defeat here and there. What of it? Defeat should only be an inspiration for more vigorous action if a man is armed with conscious integrity. The time is ripe for a movement of this character.

A bold, frank, open, courageous course will give any man a standing, whether he is a corporate manager or whether he is not, in any American community.

Railroad managers should take an active leadership in providing the best method by which franchises may be granted with the least temptation to corruption and the best results to our cities. This is a subject upon which all good citizens should unite. Corporate managers do not desire to overreach the people in acquiring new franchises.

No greater misconception exists in the public mind than

that the franchises generally of street railways have been founded in corruption. As a matter of fact these franchises were originally granted to the foremost men in their respective communities, often influenced by a noble public spirit and the desire to give to their communities the transportation absolutely essential to a city's growth.

We may admit, however, that the present method, by which the state grants a charter to a public service corporation, and then leaves it to the local legislative bodies in our towns and cities to grant franchises for the use of the streets and to regulate the rates of public service corporations, has been the source of corruption. The system is wrong. So long as greed is strong in the human breast, so long will you find some politicians ready to hold up the corporations until they have exacted their pound of flesh. Nor will the fact that the public laws controlling the city charter provide for the freest advertisement of franchises for sale to the highest bidder meet the difficulty. A striking illustration of this fact has been found in San Francisco. By the charter of that city to-day any franchise for a street railroad must be advertised for 90 days and the bidder must pay a minimum amount of the gross receipts to the city government. At the end of 25 years all the property of the railroad passes to the city without consideration other than the grant of the original franchise.

Some of the foremost gentlemen of San Francisco applied to the Board of Supervisors for a franchise to build a railroad through the sand dunes of what is known as the Sunset District. There were no houses in this district and the streets had not been opened. These gentlemen, who were large real estate owners, determined to open an important boulevard at their own expense, and to build a street railroad into this desert of sand, for the purpose of developing their property and putting it upon the market. The street railroad franchise was of no value. They knew that it could not be made profitable, and that they would be compelled to charge the money which they expended in the construction of the boulevard and the building of streets to the cost of their real estate. It was manifest that it was to the interest of the city that the franchise should be granted, and yet it was held up for months by the Board of Supervisors. Finally, some of the men connected with the enterprise employed a prominent lawyer, who then also occupied the position of a political boss. They paid him a fee. Still the franchise was not passed during his period of political control. Subsequently certain members of the Board of Supervisors were bribed, on a skating rink ordinance, by a set of buccaneer financiers and politicians who had banded together to gain control of the city for personal exploitation. These men offered and gave complete immunity to the supervisors whom they had bribed, provided the supervisors would incriminate, among others, these land owners in the Sunset District. The supervisors promptly accepted the price of their immunity, and declared that they had been promised money by the so-called political boss if they would pass the ordinance for the railroad. The land owners who had projected the road and who were ready to build, and did subsequently build, a splendid boulevard at their own expense, were promptly indicted. The political boss was also given a written contract of immunity, in the hope that he could be forced to incriminate the land owners among others, but it developed that the supervisors never received a cent of money either from the political boss or from the gentlemen connected with the enterprise. The political boss declared that he had received a fee in connection with the road, but that he had never been authorized, directly or indirectly, to pay