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OFFICE OF THE

New York State Farmers' Alliance,

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Col Carr
DEAR SIR:

The farmers throughout this land, impoverished and distressed, not through those calamities of nature against which human prudence is unable to guard, but by a quarter of a century of unwise, class legislation, have formed Alliances none too soon, for the safety of republican government. The tributes of revenue taxation, supplemented by excessive railway charges, the exactions of unlawful trusts and combinations, and the operations of speculators in produce are rapidly reducing them to a condition bordering upon pauperism.

The railroads, as a whole, capitalized on a basis of two, three, or four dollars for every one actually paid in can make returns to the holders of their securities only by charging nearly all the profits of the producers' crop for its transportation to market. By sundry devices stocks and bonds are issued to amounts often aggregating more than four times the value of the property much of which may have been given to the company by voluntary surrender of right of way, and by town, county or state subscriptions. Then, under the delusive designation of a syndicate, European American bankers are paid commissions of five per cent. for scattering a large portion of those securities over all Europe. The European holders thereupon send proxies to Wall street bankers with instructions to select a \$25,000, \$50,000 or even \$100,000 a year president whose ability will enable him to obtain labor at starvation wages and squeeze large dividends out of the farmers. This has our country been mortgaged for money a great part of which constitutes the wealth of a few hundred men whose cunning, bribery, or corrupt practices have brought a large portion of its honest yeomenry face to face with absolute want, while they see the soil, earned by the sweat of years of labor, slipping from beneath their feet. Meanwhile, there is no tea, coffee or sugar in the house, and but little flour; and the federal treasury having been looted, so that it has become necessary under the pretence of reciprocity, and of subsidies to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, to re-impose the \$60,000,000 tax upon sugar, the children must continue to cry for it as an impossible luxury. The boys labored hard, all the summer from sun to sun, in the burning heat, only to find themselves tired and ragged, without money to purchase clothing to decently cover their nakedness and render them fit for attendance at the district school. The daughters, delicately reared, have been compelled to enter the factory of the adjacent village to earn wherewithal to pay the taxes, and keep down the interest upon the homestead farm, while Congress, pressed by political bosses who are directors in the Pacific Railroads, propose to extend the loans of more than a hundred million dollars to those companies for a further period of seventy-five years at two per cent. interest.

It is a sorrowful thought that unless the farmers' movement shall secure honest government millions of the re-enslaved sons of those sturdy grandsires who at Lexington and Bunker Hill "fired the shot heard 'round the world" to procure the liberty of freedom for their progeny, for all time, will be compelled to toil during countless ages to grub up from the soil interest and dividends upon railroad securities three parts out of four of which may represent only water, and for much of which no value has ever been received except by the railroad millionaires.

Thus the toilers of the earth having become the mere vassals of the railway potentates, and the victims of the political leaders of both parties who are affiliated with and serve them, the Farmers' Alliances have sprung, like Jonah's gourd, out of the ground in a single night. Their aggression into the realm of politics will not be for a day, nor pitilessly repressed. In the eyes of humanity and of religion the farmer is exercising a sacred right which should be guarded and enforced by all the power of the government. The poor and the prosperous are equals before the polls where the farmer will appear in the grandeur of his misery, and the rich in the pettiness of his folly.

The overcapitalized railroads are beasts of prey,—the farmers the victims. The Assembly of the State of New York truly declared by resolution of May 16th, 1873, that: "The practical effect of allowing dividends to be paid on such stock would be to recognize and encourage fraud, to paralyze the industries of an innocent people living tributary to the line of the road by imposing additional burdens on them for its use; to levy unjust and oppressive burdens on the commerce of the city; to increase the cost of living, by increasing the cost of transporting the necessaries of life between producers and consumers, and finally, to enrich adventurous gamblers and speculators as against good morals, the welfare of the people and public policy." (See State of New York Assembly Document No. 93, of 1873.)

The railway manager, holding the finger upon the pulse of the farmer to ascertain how much more he can endure without extinguishment of the vital spark, should be deprived of power to oppress by enacting laws for more rigid regulation, or for the government ownership of the railroads.

The swindles so successfully perpetrated by railroad rings naturally lead to the organization of the *Trusts,—scorpions stinging the farmers to death,*—the decay of our social and political edifice which permitted the one having suggested the other. If one dollar invested in a railway could be converted into three of stock why should not that inflating be applied to other property or business by turning it over at three times its actual cost to a trust corporation which lives forever, and being without soul or body to save or punish is enabled to extort prices sufficient to earn ten per cent. profit upon such inflated capital?

While the actual value of farms has shrunk fifty per cent. the nominal value of trust properties has been increased three hundred per cent. Such combinations were, by the laws of England, made crimes hundreds of years ago, and should be suppressed by federal and State statutes wherever they exist in this country. *The poor tillers of the soil pay for all.*

The telegraph should be owned by the government. The national banking system should be abolished and legal treasury notes substituted for their issues. The greatest good to the greatest number seems to demand the scaling down to hard pan of the watered railroad securities, or the ownership of the railroads by the government. The sub-treasury plan of the national alliance, as old as the days of Joseph in Egypt, or some better system seems necessary, now, to suppress the evil produced by combinations of middlemen and speculators which, by frequently causing fluctuations of fifty per cent. in prices, give them the biggest harvest of every year.

Let Alliances be forthwith organized in every county to make their own legislative and congressional nominations, selecting those, only, who will sign written pledges to carry out the farmers' wishes. If all Farmers' Alliances and Unions will forward to the undersigned the substance of their platforms and views, he will endeavor to have the grievances of all collated and formulated for presentation to the National Alliance so that, at a convention a uniform plan for securing legislation to protect the farmer against the rapacity of cunning and unscrupulous avarice may be established.

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