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***His Deal With Pacific Mail***

***Huntington Forced to Tell the Truth by Senator Morgan***

***Thousands of Dollars Paid to the Steamship Company Annually***

***Engaged the Carrying Space of Each Vessel But Did Not Use It***

***Badly Mixed in His Statements***

***Under Oath the Magnate is Subjected to a Withering Fire of Quesitoning and Contradicts Himself***

WASHINGTON, February 14.—My prediction that Mr. Huntington would not again appear before the Senate Committee on Pacific Railroads unless summoned has gone the way of most predictions, as, like all of them, it richly deserved to do. Today he not only appeared, but took his hand out of all manner of pockets long enough to hold it up and be sworn. He was not asked if he knew the nature of an oath; it was assumed that he did.

Mr. Huntington was a disappointment; even Grove Johnson who dropped in to give him moral support and encouragement must have felt that much. Those who had come to scoff remained to pity. All felt that the show did not meet the just expectations of the audience. He was nervous and in a visible tremor. His manner was distinctly apologetic, he had the air of one begging for his existence and permission to prolong it. His speech, if such it may be called, was typewritten and apparently unfamiliar. Frequently he got “stalled” in the middle of a sentence and had to make a repeated rush at what was ahead of him before he could have his way with it. Once he attacked a word five times before overcoming it. At times he was almost inaudible.

Some of the committee appeared to think these failures were due to the infirmities of age; and doubtless that belief was useful to him in securing somewhat more consideration than the nature of his purpose and the matter of his discourse merited. For after all he merely sought to promote plunder by perjury.

Perjury is an ugly word, but it is to be remembered that Mr. Huntington was under oath. He had sworn to tell the truth, yet his address consisted largely in affirmation of the honor and generosity of himself and his associates in the construction and operation of his railroads—ungenerous and dishonorable men, as anybody can prove.

The spectacle of this old man standing on the brink of eternity, his pockets loaded with dishonest gold which he knows neither how to enjoy nor to whom to bequeath, swearing it is the fruit of wholesome labor and homely thrift and beseeching an opportunity to multiply the store, was one of the most pitiable it has been my lot to observe. He knows himself an outmate of every

penal institution in the world; he deserves to hang from every branch of every tree of every state and territory penetrated by his railroads, with the sole exception of Nevada, which has no trees. Yet this notorious old man stood there before a committee of the highest legislative body of his country and made oath that he was an honest man and unselfish citizen.

The incident illustrates in a signal way the precise value of the power of such bodies to “administer oaths.” “The Central Pacific Railroad Company,” said Mr. Huntington, “has harmed no man.” He said too, “It is the best equipped road in the country,” and he solemnly (still under oath) explained that that was why it could not pay its debt to the government. A just inference is that he and his associates wasted so much of the government loan in equipping the road that they did not feel justified in restoring any they had stolen in building it.

Finding that few of his statements were challenged, Mr. Huntington grew more confident as he proceeded. At one time he turned over three or four sheets of typescript at once, loftily explaining that he would forbear to reply to certain recent personal criticisms.

“If I did,” he said with a significant look at a critic for whom I have the highest respect, “I might become personal myself.” So the portentous spectacle of Mr. Huntington becoming personal is one that must belong forever to the domain of imagination.

The “witness” had not plain sailing all the time. Of the committee’s three terrible men, Senator Brice hardly opened his mouth, and Senator Wolcott, who had fatally tamped on the preceding witness and most of those before him, took no part in the proceedings—was, indeed, absent most of the time. This left only Senator Morgan to “cross examine.” He is a terror at that, but seemed to lack knowledge of the situation, and only two or three times did he make “Oom Collis” execute painful contortions of body and mind. For example, Mr. Huntington, making a point of the Southern Pacific’s generosity, pointed out that it took over its own line the freight of competing lines at its proportion of whatever unprofitable rate the competing line had fixed. But he had finally to admit that no competing line had the right to fix for such freight a rate not acceptable to the Southern Pacific.

But his worst quarter of an hour was that devoted to an exposition of the contract with the Pacific Mail. The facts of that outrageous conspiracy, by which the Pacific Coast was practically deprived of water competition, are too well understood in California to need a statement here.

Mr. Morgan happily had heard about the matter and compelled Mr. Huntington to disclose the truth. The latter admitted that his company had contracted at various times with the Pacific Mail for 600 tons of the carrying space of each steamer, and that that was about all the actual freight capacity the steamers had. He admitted that they had paid for it an annual sum of from \$60,000 to 4100,000. But for some time he had the hardihood to assert that his company actually sent 600 tons of freight on each steamer. Later he confessed that he did not know that such was the fact, and finally that he did not think it was.

Asked how he justified the “arrangement,” he said it was necessary in order to keep the railroads from bankruptcy. He had the fairness, however, not to urge that it kept the State of California from bankruptcy.

As Mr. Morgan was apparently about to make him confess that in this one instance the good of the country was not uppermost in his benevolent heart, Senator Frye threw himself between them, and insisted that the persecution cease; it was wrong to tax the poor gentleman’s memory when he had agreed (as he had) to produce a copy of the contract with the Pacific Mail, which would show all. But Mr. Morgan refused to believe it would show all he wanted to know.

The Chairman, Mr. Gear of Iowa, thought it wicked to torment the witness, and eventually the unpleasant person from Alabama “was heard to cease.” Possibly Mr. Frye, who is

the author of the funding bill favored by Mr. Huntington, was concerned for the good name of his staunchest supporter.

The “witness” was again “tangled up” when he had affirmed the inexpediency of the Central and Union lines being under one management. Asked why that was inexpedient, he replied to the effect that the limitations of the human brain would prevent; it was too much for one man to do. But he admitted that he himself was the controlling head of a system comprising 7,000 miles of road. Eventually he explained in effect that he was an exceptionally able man, and by way of proof repeated the “old, old story” of the Central Pacific, its snow sheds and its bridges.

An amusing feature of his harangue was the emphasis that he gave to his company’s services in “policing” its savage environments, in subduing and keeping holy “the whiskered pandours and the fierce hussar” of the desert. To the Eastern mind, inheriting the tradition of Indian warfare in Colonial periods, it must have seemed a perilous service indeed to suppress the formidable Paiutes.

The committee is to meet again on Monday morning, when Mr. Huntington, it is understood, will again attend, with the Pacific Mail contract and the Kentucky charter. It is hoped he will then be asked something about the Contract and Finance Company, and the other conspiracies having a bearing on the moral aspect of the matter. I am sorry to observe, though, that moral questions do not engage as much attention in Washington as they once did in Judea. I doubt if Mr. Huntington’s open confession that he was, is, and means to be a pirate of the Spanish Main would be held relevant to the question of making a new bargain with him or would injure the effect of his advocacy of any proposal for his own advantage.