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Huntington Must Take the Oath

The Senate Committee on Pacific Railroads is Given New Powers

Can Call for Persons and Papers and Compel the Witnesses to Answer

Allen Opens the Fight and Pettigrew Says Sharp Things About the Railroad

Dishonest Propositions Made

The Propositions of Reorganization Committees Are Denounced as Beneath the Contempt of the People

WASHINGTON, February 13.—My prediction that when Mr. Huntington appears before the Senate Committee on Pacific Railroads, to urge that the negative be stricken out of the commandment “Thou shalt not steal,” it will be in obedience to an imperative summons, has gone thus far toward fulfillment. The committee has no power to summon him.

The matter of the roads thrust itself up suddenly in the Senate by Mr. Allen of Nebraska moving a resolution (which may or may not have been inspired by Banker Coomber of Sioux City) asking the Secretary of the Interior for full information about the Union Pacific, the Kansas Pacific and the Sioux City and Pacific roads, which are birds of a feather.

Mr. Allen was finally persuaded, however, to drop his resolution and leave the matter where it now is—in the hands of the committee, Messrs. Walcott and Brice of that body assuring him that all would be well.

But the subject was not dropped until the committee had been authorized to “send for persons and papers”—even the person of Mr. Huntington. It is also given the customary authority to administer oaths.

Hitherto the inquiry into Pacific roads matters has been conducted by both this committee and that of the House in a free and easy way that was altogether charming. Anybody that has had anything to say has invited himself to go before the committee and say it. Naturally the most of the witnesses were those who expected to make something by their testimony, which was so constructed as to bring something.

Mr. Allen pointed out that honest folk along the lines of the roads have never spoken, or have spoken infrequently. The bondholders, lawyers, “financiers” and lobbyists, representing interests, have done most of the talking. Mr. Huntington’s eagerness to serve his country with a system will perhaps not abate, but perhaps he will think his best audience is the House Committee, which still does not mind a little lying.

During the debate Senator Pettigrew made a speech which I am told was gall and wormwood to the funders. Your regular correspondent is now moving heaven and earth to obtain it without too much trouble to Mr. Pettigrew, who suffers from a severe indisposition to be bothered.

The Southern Pacific Company's literary bureau has turned up another swift and willing witness to the righteousness of its claim to exemption from payment of debt—if the bureau is not fibbing again.

This gentleman (the only one of the grist bearers to the opinion mill whose name has not been telegraphed) is Mr. James T. Feiter, Secretary of the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce. He is represented as a person prolific of views, but the gist of his utterances is in the first sentence, which is as follows:

“I am and always have been unqualifiedly in favor of any fair measure for the refunding of the debt of the Central Pacific to the United States.”

The happiness of emblazoning Mr. Felter's repudiation upon the record of the age is of the kind of happiness that one would not willingly forego.