Newspapers by ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/459239660

The San Francisco Examiner (San Francisco, California) · Sun, Jun 17, 1894 · Page 24

Downloaded on May 11, 2020

A MAN AGAINST A MONOPOLY.

Adolph Sutro Outlines His Plan of Campaign Against the Railroad Corporation—His Own Wrongs the Incentive, but Now the Fight Is On He Will Push It to the Bitter End—Expects to See the Southern Pacific in the Hands of a Receiver Before Next January—A Five-Cent Fare to the Beach Would Not Stop the Battle Now—He Believes He Is the Man of Destiny.

Grover Cleveland, President of the United States, and Stephen J. Field, Justice of a Pacific Railroad Funding Bill means the perpetual despotism exercised by Collis P. Huntington and his gang, for fifty years more to come. Shall they win? Or shall the People, from their children and children's children down to deserve such punishment?

ADOLPH SUTRO.

One of the stairs from Adolph Sutro's Long Distance flies aimed at the credit of the Central Pacific Railroad Company.

Adolph Sutro is to-day the most interesting figure before the people of this State. Fifteen years have passed since alone he won the greatest victory in finance ever achieved in this country. Notwithstanding virulent and powerful opposition, constant abuse and perpetual ridicule, he raised millions of capital, gained the support of the United States Congress and constructed the Sutro tunnel.

Now in possession of vast wealth, owning 2,200 acres of land in the corporate limits of the city of San Francisco, older than seventy years, he begins a second great contest, a gigantic warfare in credit and finance. His opponent is the Central Pacific Railroad monopoly. His object is to destroy the credit of that corporation.

Fighting alone is his old business. He comes to the battle of his later-day warfare as fresh and vigorous as he came to his fourteen years' struggle with the Bank of California and the stalking magnates of the Comstock.

His organization of opposition to the Funding bill now in Congress, by passage of which an extension of fifty years' time would be granted the Central Pacific Railroad Company to pay its indebtedness to the Government, is thus for the principal part of his work in his present contest.

Of his purposes he speaks with no hesitation. This history of the reasons for his fight against the monopoly, this relation of his plan of campaign, this record of his victory of former years is a transcription from his own dictation.

"I will first tell you how my opposition to the railroad company began. I own all the property from near Webster street and First avenue to Sixth and Seventh avenues, on the south side of the Park.

"First avenue you may call the water side of the Park, although it is almost inland. From it the waters fall on one side toward the bay, and on the other side toward the ocean. The approaches to First avenue from the bay are easy grades, or comparatively so, and from thence to the ocean they are also reasonable grades for the distance they have to fall. Running from Frederick street there is a pretty steep, a descent going down into it street, which is the street facing the Park on the south, of one hundred feet at right angles, where the bed is grade proposed of 18 per cent in one hundred feet. All the other grades are comfortable, non-driving grades.

"I look upon it street as one of the great thoroughfares of the future. I have had to make that street accessible. I proposed to Mr. Crocker some two or three years ago that they modify the steep grade and cut off a little from a block of land which they owned on the north side of Frederick street into a block of land which I own on the south side of it street, making a curve in the road. Their grade would then be only 7 per cent. They would not do it. They absolutely refused to do it, and insisted on an 18 per cent grade there.

THE COASTAL WAVES.

"I submitted the same matter to Mr. Huntington when he came out. He declined a proposition of mine that we each give a corner to the city and open a public street on a curved line with a grade of only 6 per cent. Mr. Huntington refused to give me that little corner. Their railroad is to be built in either direction, as they please. They built it to suit their convenience and no grade has ever been established.

"When the railroad company asked for the franchise for the spur track that was to go to the Park I opposed it. I said, 'If you allow them to go to the boulevard you will have no control of them.' I opposed it because I am located up on one end of it and the outlook from those rocks, and they whispered to one another, and it struck me at the time that they made up their minds that they would some day own all that property. I opposed it because I knew that would be the case.

"When the baths were advanced as for that their magnificence could be seen, some of the railroad employees came out here and looked at them and said what a grand thing it was, and one day Mr. Crocker came and he was astonished, and his grand-son, Charles F. Crocker, came out here afterward, an agitator meeting, I was supposed to be dead that way, and he was there with his mother-in-law, and Mrs. Easton, and some other ladies, and they were all perfectly delighted. I was quite astonished to see how scarce they became after I had made the baths fashionable, and how kind. They could not do enough for me. It was at that time that I had the idea made for a depot, and all that kind of a thing, but it struck me from the beginning that they were not sincere, and that instead of giving us real accommodations they would only make believe, and that they would throw obstacles in the way of traffic, and that they would not build a depot. The next fact, it struck me, was that they would not build a cable road, not even an electric road.

"My idea was to have a depot right close to the baths, so that people coming out of the warm building should not catch cold, and I had the idea of a cable road and a cars. That was my main object in that. There was nothing more said about grades after the ocean on Fulton street, the depot and the depot matter long fits, and I told Mr. Huntington that he had better and lower his Francisco until this thing was settled. I told him that before he built he was here. I told him that I would not deal with Fred Crocker, because I was so mad.

"He promised me then and there that this thing should be settled before he left. Then I went up in the country to my ranch, and when I came back again I saw Mr. Huntington, and he promised that that matter should be settled, and it was not done. I asked him to come out and take lunch with me. On that occasion, after lunching, we went into my private room, and I said: 'Now, Mr. Huntington, you must pardon me for talking to you about business matters while you are my guest, but I have got to make the main object of your visit here.' I want this matter settled. Now, will you come down to a 5-cent fare?' That was my question. He said no; they could not do it; that the boys would not agree to do it.

"I said: 'I don't want to frighten you, because I know you are not a man who is easily frightened, but I simply tell you what I am going to do. I will come you on the before you get through with it.'

"He straightened himself up and he said: 'Is that a threat?' I said: 'No sir, it is not a threat.' I explained to them that this peninsula embraced thirty-six square miles of land within the city and county, and that two square miles were excluded from the benefits of a single fare. It certainly issued to me extraordinary. I told them that I would not be satisfied with anything but a cent fare then they would run a 5-cent fare. Common sense told me that. If a street railroad is once in operation the expense is about a certain amount, and every passenger you add does not cost anything to transport. The cars are there, the service is there, the motive power is there, and after that it is clear profit. It is a short-sighted policy to refuse to give the people a cent in the way of travel and to throw obstacles in the way of settlement along the road, for every house adds so much to the income of the railroad.

"Cheap transportation always provides its own traffic. Now it looks suspicious to me that they should single out this particular district, called the Richmond district, and exclude it from the benefits of a single fare.

"Some years ago I had old man Crocker out here, and Mr. Huntington and Governor Stanford, and I think young Crocker was out, too, and I showed them all along the coast, the magnificence of the scenery and how it could be developed. I showed them the heights as a breathing spot for poor people, as a benefit to the public. I had grieved, and I stood under the contemptible meanness of preventing the people from these places of rest here at a cent. I showed them all that, and they would not even say they would consider it. They would not even say that they would some day own all that property. I opposed it because I knew that would be the case.

"When the baths were advanced as for that their magnificence could be seen, some of the railroad employees came out here and looked at them and said what a grand thing it was, and one day Mr. Crocker came and he was astonished, and his grand-son, Charles F. Crocker, came out here afterward, an agitator meeting, I was supposed to be dead that way, and he was there with his mother-in-law, and Mrs. Easton, and some other ladies, and they were all perfectly delighted. I was quite astonished to see how scarce they became after I had made the baths fashionable, and how kind. They could not do enough for me. It was at that time that I had the idea made for a depot, and all that kind of a thing, but it struck me from the beginning that they were not sincere, and that instead of giving us real accommodations they would only make believe, and that they would throw obstacles in the way of traffic, and that they would not build a depot. The next fact, it struck me, was that they would not build a cable road, not even an electric road.

"My idea was to have a depot right close to the baths, so that people coming out of the warm building should not catch cold, and I had the idea of a cable road and a cars. That was my main object in that. There was nothing more said about grades after the ocean on Fulton street, the depot and the depot matter long fits, and I told Mr. Huntington that he had better and lower his Francisco until this thing was settled. I told him that before he built he was here. I told him that I would not deal with Fred Crocker, because I was so mad.

"He promised me then and there that this thing should be settled before he left. Then I went up in the country to my ranch, and when I came back again I saw Mr. Huntington, and he promised that that matter should be settled, and it was not done. I asked him to come out and take lunch with me. On that occasion, after lunching, we went into my private room, and I said: 'Now, Mr. Huntington, you must pardon me for talking to you about business matters while you are my guest, but I have got to make the main object of your visit here. I want this matter settled. Now, will you come down to a 5-cent fare?' That was my question. He said no; they could not do it; that the boys would not agree to do it.

"I said: 'I don't want to frighten you, because I know you are not a man who is easily frightened, but I simply tell you what I am going to do. I will come you on the before you get through with it.'

"He straightened himself up and he said: 'Is that a threat?' I said: 'No sir, it is not a threat.' I explained to them that this peninsula embraced thirty-six square miles of land within the city and county, and that two square miles were excluded from the benefits of a single fare. It certainly issued to me extraordinary. I told them that I would not be satisfied with anything but a cent fare then they would run a 5-cent fare. Common sense told me that. If a street railroad is once in operation the expense is about a certain amount, and every passenger you add does not cost anything to transport. The cars are there, the service is there, the motive power is there, and after that it is clear profit. It is a short-sighted policy to refuse to give the people a cent in the way of travel and to throw obstacles in the way of settlement along the road, for every house adds so much to the income of the railroad.

"Cheap transportation always provides its own traffic. Now it looks suspicious to me that they should single out this particular district, called the Richmond district, and exclude it from the benefits of a single fare.

"Some years ago I had old man Crocker out here, and Mr. Huntington and Governor Stanford, and I think young Crocker was out, too, and I showed them all along the coast, the magnificence of the scenery and how it could be developed. I showed them the heights as a breathing spot for poor people, as a benefit to the public. I had grieved, and I stood under the contemptible meanness of preventing the people from these places of rest here at a cent. I showed them all that, and