

Charles Edward Russell on J. J. Hill.

Opinion on the quality of the effort, the value of contribution in this period frequently is passed on lack of definite knowledge of the career, coupled with prejudice and with devotion to a principle contrary to that which the leader was following.

Charles Edward Russell, former Socialist candidate for president of the United States, brilliant journalist, has recently written an admirable book "A-Rafting on the Mississippi". One of his heroes is a fine old river man, Captain Van Sante, who, toward the end of our period had a fine and successful fight with Hill over a merger that he was trying to put through between the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern. In speaking of Hill, Russell makes this statement "From obscurity and near-penury he had been lifted without investment or exertion into great wealth and the control of some of the most important railroad properties of the United States." (p.321).

Superficial examination of the facts in Hill's case show that while he was lifted from obscurity and near-penury that it was only through extraordinary exertions and at the start investments which had been the results of more than 20 years of study, hard work and thrift, coupled with wise investments and a great faith in the future of the country to which he had come as a boy, alone and poverty-stricken.