

This is suggestive of something in the career of the late Albert B. Cummins, of Iowa. As a young lawyer he won a notable victory for the Iowa Farmers' Alliance in breaking a monopoly in the manufacture of barbed wire that was exacting high tribute from western farmers seventy-five years ago. That brought him to the notice of eastern monied men for help in making merger contracts.

A group in New York had availed themselves of his professional skill in preparation of papers to effect joint control or consolidation of certain large railroad properties. When this was done, J. P. Morgan confided to Mr. Cummins that it was to be a step toward complete ending of competition, and asked the Iowa lawyer what he thought of it.

"Yes, you have taken a step in that direction, and perhaps it can be done," said Mr. Cummins, "but I disagree wholly with you as to the desirability of doing so. If and when you have the railroads all together and are able to exact whatever you please, the next step, and it would be inevitable, would be government control or ownership. As a lawyer I have given you the best of my service; as a citizen I cannot go along with you."

That was long before Mr. Cummins thought of being governor or senator, but in his long public career he never deviated from the principle he had stated to the great financial magnate.

A Tower of Strength

There is a tower of strength for you and me—

'Tis that which we call faith, and as the sea

Oft dashes on the rocks

Storms may come to us; but in the gale

We lean upon that faith, and soon once more

We see a beacon light—it is the shore.

—Franklin Lee Stevenson.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.