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Will Maupin, late democratic candidate for railway commissioner, who did not land, has sprung a surprise upon the democrats of the state, and incidentally upon an unsuspecting public as a whole. It was said that the democratic state candidates who were successful would provide official pie for the defeated ones, and in compliance, Eastham of Broken Bow, defeated candidate for land commissioner, is provided for with the deputyship in the state auditor's office, while Whitehead, democratic candidate for state superintendent of schools is given a place in the state superintendent's office. That leaves only the great grandstand player, Billy Maupin, to be cared for, and he shines as an unparalleled instance of a democrat refusing to be "cared for" in that way. Oh, Bill, Bill, side pard of that other greatest democratic mountebank, outside of Billy Bryan, one Jidge (?) Telegram of the Columbus Howard, how could you so ruthlessly destroy democratic precedents?

It is confidently expected that President Wilson will veto the illiteracy clause in the immigration bill passed by both houses of congress. By a vote of 47 to 12 the senate favors and refuses to strike out the offending clause. This was all threshed out when Taft was president, and he also refused to sign the immigration bill with illiteracy clause. The senate at that time passed the bill over Taft's veto, but the house got cold feet and failed to pass the measure over. This time it is believed that both houses will pass the whole bill with the illiteracy clause inserted over Wilson's veto, if he follows Taft's action. Just what good reason Wilson will assign for his promised veto is not yet made known.

All reports of possible trouble with England over the protest of the United States against that country for interference of our shipments of merchandise to the belligerent countries, is being quelled. It is hardly probable that Johnny Bull wants to take on more than the present enemies. The contemplated scare, then, over Uncle Sam having Canada and England on the north and east and Japan on the west to fight will not take on reality.

Did you notice that everybody has a so-called cure for the European war except the Germans and allies? This country is flooded with orators who are using their mouths to show the cure. Talk is the cheapest thing on record.

A late report is to the effect that Stone of Missouri is to succeed Bryan as secretary of state. Don't believe it. You could not pry Billy loose from that job, unless it be understood by him that he could still run the administration from the outside.

A cabled locomotive has now been invented that will halt a train going 60 miles an hour within 2,000 feet. It is said that nature has always a way of stopping any train within 50 or 100 feet, by simply providing an unforeseen accident.

A report having been made current that the Japs are sending an army through Siberia to join the English in the fight on Germany, the Japanese authorities deny doing so or having such intention.

The latest: France is said to be building two great fleets of aircraft armed with cannon and booms, with which to invade Germany in the spring.

It is now over five months since the European war started. And the end seems as far in the future as ever.

WHY THE COST OF OPERATING RAILROADS HAS BEEN INCREASED

Struggling Against Increased Cost of Labor, Supplies, Etc., On One Hand--Reduced Rates on The Other.

During the last few years the advocates of government ownership of railroads have been somewhat persistent in the public press and the matter is referred to here not with any idea of combating this propaganda, but merely that the people may briefly see both sides of the picture. So long as a lot of men welcome the wrecking of the railroads on the theory that the government will take them over and that such a state of affairs would be preferable to private ownership, it would be impossible to obtain from them a fair judgment of the latter system which now prevails in the United States. It is impossible to go into this great question at any length at this time but, here are a few things worth thinking about. Much has been said in recent years about the "water" contained in American railroad securities, and in this connection the valuation of the government railroads of Europe is very interesting. In Germany the state owned roads are valued at \$114,185 per mile, in Austria at \$120,692, in Hungary at \$69,210, in Italy at \$136,886, in Belgium at \$190,914, in Switzerland at \$102,950, in Roumania at \$90,113, in Japan at \$88,104, in New South Wales at \$71,391—while the privately owned lines of the United States, regardless of what water may have been forced into them in specific instances, are valued at only \$63,944 per mile. Whatever inflation may therefore have been put into their properties in the past, the fact remains that their present valuation is much lower than that of the government owned railroads of Europe, and what is still more important, rates charged are the lowest and the service rendered admittedly the best in the world. It is also pertinent to remember that the charge of watered stocks, after all, can be made against but very few American railroads—the lion's share of them having been managed without a breath of scandal or criticism.

In this connection, a statement contained in the last annual report of the Deutsche Bank of Berlin, which has a paid-up capital and reserve fund of \$75,000,000 is interesting: "American railroads need higher rates. The present rates are the lowest in the world—representing but a fraction of the English railway rates, for instance—and this in the face of the fact that wages in the United States on the average are fully twice as high as in Europe." Certainly this view of the privately owned lines of the United States, coming from Germany, which has the most successful state owned system of transportation in the world is worthy of grave consideration.

In further confirmation of this statement we quote the following statistics: It costs 7 mills per mile on an average to haul a ton of freight in the United States while in England it costs an average of 2.33 cents, in France 1.41 cents in Germany 1.42 cents. The average daily wage paid to American railroad employees is \$2.23, in England it is \$1.35, in France 88 cents and in Germany 81 cents. Are American railroads therefore entitled to the wholesale abuse and denunciation which has been heaped upon them from all sides in recent years?

Letting Well Enough Alone.
In view of these facts, the average citizen may well ask himself whether it is not best to let well enough alone rather than to invite other ills we know not of—whether it is not wiser to cure such defects as may encumber the present system rather than run the danger of plunging this mighty industry into the whirlpool of party politics for all time, with its attendant opportunity for evil of which the past affords such rich variety of experience. The United States is still a young country, and in many sections only partially developed. Many new lines and extensions are needed here and there to give a wider opportunity to expanding agriculture and commerce, and nothing could be more unfortunate or disastrous than that these favors could henceforth be obtained only by leave of the dominant political factions which will reign at the national capital in the years to come. Political parties are intensely human institutions, and the average cautious citizen will prefer to leave the railroad expansion of the future to the economic law of supply and demand of the different communities rather than to place such a temptation for power in the hands of those who rise and fall in the field of politics. Furthermore, should the time ever come when the government takes over the railroads, it means that the people will have to forego the millions of taxes which they now pay and which help to support the public schools, public highways and other public expenses—and that henceforth these millions of revenue would have to come out of the pockets of the people.

Many other things could be said upon this phrase of the question, but space forbids. For some time, the government, through the Interstate Commerce Commission, has been engaged in making a physical valuation of all our railroads as a matter of guidance for future rate adjustments. Again, we repeat, since the people ab-

solutely control and regulate the railroads, is that not enough? Will it not be better to let well enough alone—to cling to that which is good and eliminate that which is bad in the present system which, with all that has been said against it, furnishes the best and cheapest transportation service in the world?

Increased Cost of Operation.

We now wish to refer briefly to another phase of the problem. For a number of years the cry of the "high cost of living" has been everywhere abroad in the land. Time was, not so many years ago, when the farmer sold his corn at 25 cents per bushel. Now it brings from 50 cents to 75 cents. So, too, he sold hogs at 3 cents per pound, which now readily bring from 7 cents to 10 cents—while a good steer calf which used to bring from \$10 to \$12, now sells for from \$20 to \$25. Nobody who knows anything about present land values or the farmers' cost of production will contend that he is not entitled to these increased prices. As a matter of fact, unless he is an exceedingly good manager and utilizes the best of modern agricultural thought he is by no means getting rich at present prices—high as they may seem to people in the cities who do not understand the cost attached to present-day farming. To go back to the old prices he used to receive would bankrupt, in a little while every farmer in the country—and the tendency of the future will be for the prices of farm products to go still higher rather than lower. Agriculture is the nation's greatest fundamental industry and society must make the farm game sufficiently profitable to justify the man who is on the farm today and the farmer boys of the future to stay by the plow. Much has been said recently about the fact that the farmer does not receive enough for what he produces—that there is too big a waste in the channels through which his products must pass before they reach the consumer, and that he has some cause for complaint in this respect is undoubtedly true. However the railroads can face such an inquiry with a clear conscience—for an exhaustive investigation conducted by the Lehigh Valley Railroad some time ago shows that the farmer gets 50 cents out of the average dollar's worth of products he sells; the packers, local shippers, distributors and retailers get 4 1/2 cents between them while the railroads receive only 5 cents, or one-twentieth of the dollar, for the transportation services they render.

So, too, there has been a steady advance in practically the entire realm of the merchandise and manufactured products, whatever their nature, and the ever increasing toll in the cost of labor, steel products, lumber cars, locomotives, and other supplies has levied a tribute of untold millions upon the railroads, which have not only been forbidden to increase their rates, but, on the contrary, in many instances, compelled to lower them.

Big Increased Cost of Labor.
To give the reader an extra idea of how the cost of labor has advanced in the operation of railroads we quote the following in the daily wage from 1900 to 1914—a period of only fourteen years: In the case of engineers it increased from \$3.68 per day to \$5.76 or an increase of 56 per cent; firemen from \$2.21 to \$3.62, or 64 per cent; conductors \$3.31 to \$4.83, or 45 per cent;

station agents from \$1.98 to 2.16, or 9 per cent; other station men from \$1.62 to \$1.90, or 17 per cent; ordinary trainmen from \$1.97 to \$3.36, or 70 per cent; machinists from \$2.72 to 3.52, or 29 per cent; carpenters from \$2.31 to \$2.50 or 12 per cent; other shopmen from \$1.03 to \$2.20, or 15 per cent; section foreman from \$1.51 to \$1.83, or 21 per cent; trackman from \$1.15 to \$1.42, or 23 per cent; telegraph operators and dispatchers from \$2.25 to \$2.65, or 17 per cent. This means a general average increase in wages of 52-100 per cent—and all other classes of railroad operatives and employees in a more or less similar degree. While these advances have proven a great boon to the nearly two million men employed in the railway service and increased their capacity to buy from merchant and farmer, they have exacted many millions annually from the railroads themselves—all of which made the general public richer, but the roads poorer. In 1900 the railroads paid \$1.44 per ton for coal. Now they pay \$1.81. Then they paid 38c for ties. Now they pay 52c.

Other Increased Costs

But there are many other items which have enormously increased the cost of railroad operation which we cannot go into because of a lack of space. The public is constantly demanding a more efficient and a safer service, and hence the railroads had to spend vast sums in installing block signals, steel passenger cars, doing away with grade crossings, straightening lines, heavier locomotives, better roadbeds, and supplying many other precautions protecting both their operatives and the public—all things very necessary, yet very costly. So, too, numerous states have passed "Full Crew" laws which without benefiting the public have compelled the railroads to pay a toll of millions to useless employees.

Now, while labor, farm products, merchandise and manufactures and supplies of all kinds have steadily increased in price, the railroads, as stated before, have been compelled to reduce their rates in the face of this avalanche of ever-advancing cost of operation—and that all but the most powerful lines find themselves in an exceedingly critical condition is not to be wondered at. The farmer, the merchant, the manufacturer and the laborer justly insist that they would not be able to get along on the prices they received ten or fifteen years ago. How, then, can the railroads, which are the largest employers of labor and buyers of material in the United States, be expected to exist on less than they received ten or fifteen years ago? In view of these facts, it is no wonder that President Wilson and other patriotic and careful students of the situation are speaking words of kindly admonition to the American public—to the end that the railroads through whose giant arteries the very life blood of the nation flows not be wrecked and destroyed.

The Public and the Manager.

On the one hand for the last twenty five years the public has demanded the best and highest efficiency in service and lower rates in one and the same breath. On the other hand stand the thousands of men and women who have invested their money in railroad securities and who, in common with the farmer, the manufacturer and the merchant, believe they are entitled to a fair profit. Then come the hundreds of thousands of employees who are continually clamoring for an increase in wages, as well as the cost of all manner of railroad supplies which is constantly advancing—and between them, as arbiters, stand the managers of the road—the big "hired men" who have descended upon their heads from every quarter they find themselves in the mental attitude of the fiddler in the Western mining camp when he yelled out, "Please don't shoot, boys; I am doing the best I can." Paid adv. To be continued next week.

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