

## Washington Letter

Washington, D. C., June 10.—What a state may do in the direction of enforcing its laws against even the greatest monopoly the nation knows has been magnificently demonstrated by Texas. Last week the Waters-Pierce company, an offshoot of the Standard Oil, was found guilty of a number of violations of the anti-trust law of that state, fined \$1,600,000 and ordered to discontinue doing business in the state.

Of course like other lawbreakers, the criminal corporation had taken steps to make the fine assessed against it uncollectible by disposing of its property, and had planned to make the verdict unenforceable by making trade arrangements that would enable it to continue business without its identity being disclosed. The vigor, however, with which the state administration has pressed this suit gives every reason to believe that Standard Oil has been deprived of this great part of its territory. Moreover Missouri has closely followed Texas, while Arkansas has entered into an agreement with Texas by which the testimony taken against the giant corporation on one side of the state line shall be taken cognizance of on the other.

As against this positive accomplishment by one state court and the activity of the courts of neighboring commonwealths, is to be noted the seeming apathy of federal officials. The United States statutes which would be applicable against the Standard are quite as vigorous as those of either Texas, Arkansas or Missouri. Federal commissions are always investigating and making reports upon Standard Oil, but thus far nothing more than literary triumphs have been won. This may be one reason why this great corporation, like the railroad corporations, is coming to look with growing favor upon the assumption by the federal government of all powers for the regulation and control of trusts and monopolies. As the charges against the Standard Oil company closely parallel those made against railroads, so the success of the state attack upon the Oil company adds force to the growing belief that the states themselves can cope with the railroad problem.

President Roosevelt for his part has discovered in that clause of the constitution, empowering congress to establish post roads, a phrase which he thinks can be construed so as to permit the federal government to supervise and control all railroads, or other roads, that carry the mails. This doctrine he enunciated in his Memorial day speech at Indianapolis. It is a sweeping doctrine, for if it means anything, it means that as post roads have ceased to be mere ordinary highways like the old national road begun in Jefferson's administration, the nation has the power to establish railroads of its own. As a matter of fact, little as the railroad managers will like it, this Rooseveltian doctrine proceeds logically out of action taken at the request of railroad managers in 1894, when that "undesirable citizen," Mr. Debs, succeeded in tying up most of the railroads entering Chicago. The railroad managers were very sure then that the fact of their carrying the mails authorized the United States government to step in and see that their business was not interrupted. From protecting the railroads against aggression to protecting the people against railroad extortion seems to be only a step and not a particularly radical one at that. But who would have thought that the formal suggestion for it would have to come from the president who only a couple of years ago was asking Mr. E. H. Harriman to run down to Washington and discuss politics with him in a friendly way?

Mr. Roosevelt is unquestionably right. The issue involved is not the constitutional right or power of the national government to regulate, control or for that matter own and operate railroads. It is, for the present at least, the question as to whether federal or local authority is the most effective to accomplish what the public welfare demands. There has been a mighty amount of outcry concerning the so-called anti-railroad legislation of the Roosevelt congress. But as Mr. Bryan pointed out in his speech at Norfolk, thus far the effect of this legislation has been chiefly to advance the financial interests of the road without protecting the people. Even the triumphs of the federal law officers in the rebate cases were not won under the rate law of the Fifty-ninth congress, but under the old Elkins law which was really prepared by the president's dearest enemy, Senator Foraker. Meantime state after state has passed laws re-

ducing the rates of fare, and in many instances they have been successful in enforcing them.

The railroads in the United States have very little reason to complain of the character of the legislation directed against them, although their presidents express much dissatisfaction. About a week ago James McCrea, president of the Pennsylvania, returned from a month's sojourn in England, loud in his praise of things English, and louder in his denunciation of what he called "too much law making in the United States." He spoke with feeling of the calm deliberation with which Englishmen made their laws, and of the apparent haste with which we made ours. And that is as far as he went.

There are a few comparisons, however, which Mr. McCrea did not care to make. He did not state that we kill three times as many passengers per million train miles traveled, and twelve times as many per million passengers carried as they do in England; that we kill twenty times as many trainmen per million miles traveled, and nine times as many per thousand men employed as they do in England; that we injure per million passengers carried nearly eleven times as many as in England, and that we injure per thousand men employed nearly five times as many. In 1905 one trainman was killed to every one hundred and twenty-three employed, and one injured to every nine employed on our railroads. During the year ending June 3, 1905, nearly ten thousand people were killed and ninety thousand injured on our railroads, and the percentage is steadily increasing. Nowhere in the world is there such an appalling death and injury rate incident to railroad transportation as in our country. There is a reason, but President McCrea said nothing about it.

No nation in the world has shown the inventive genius or patented so many safety appliances as ours. And no nation has incidentally been so slow to enforce the use of these same safety devices as ours. Our federal government has only concerned itself with accidents to trainmen which result from coupling cars, falling from freight trains and being hit by overhead obstructions. So far as protection to the traveling public is concerned our federal law was silent until in the last session of congress Senator LaFollette passed his railroad hours of labor bill against the strong opposition of his fellow partisans. England has long since forbade the overworking of her railroad employees. She has some regard for human life which we seem to hold so cheaply.

Westinghouse invented the continuous train brake, or airbrake, and the automatic coupler in the late 60's or early 70's. Not until twenty years later did the agitation that railroads be forced by federal law to use these appliances bear fruit in a recommendation from the interstate commerce commission to that effect. Then nearly ten years elapsed before this recommendation was enforced. Grab irons on freight cars were not compelled by federal law until 1895. Automatic couplers and airbrakes were not absolutely demanded by federal statute till August 1900. Thus a hiatus of nearly thirty years occurred between the life saving invention and its compulsion by law. Too bad, isn't it, that we don't legislate here with the calm deliberation exercised in England?

Our early safety appliance acts were wonderfully successful, but they did not seem to argue the compulsion of other devices by law. The success of automatic couplers did not seem to prompt laws that would relieve our trainmen of the necessity of going between cars to couple and uncouple steam hose—a hazardous work that accounts for many accidents. It did not prompt a compulsory block signal law. England has had such a law since 1870. Our official reports for September, 1906, show that only one-fifth of our total railway mileage is to be equipped, and of this fifth only a seventh has automatic block signals. It is conceded that a block signal system materially lessens railroad accidents, yet the two bills introduced into congress that compelled their use on all our railroads, still slumber in the committee rooms. England moreover does not allow grade crossings. Over eight hundred people were killed and twice that number injured at grade crossings in the United States in one year. England insists on the best safety appliances being used as fast as they are invented. She has a thorough system of government inspection, to see that the devices used are up to standard and kept in perfect working order. The United States has the ridiculous number of eighteen federal railroad inspectors, to see that appliances compelled by federal law are installed and kept in good order on a quarter of a million miles of railroad. Is it any wonder that in spite of the installation of safety appliances a number of frightful accidents have occurred

on our railroads from safety devices which, when relied upon in an emergency, would not work?

It is high time our nation woke up and acted. Is not human life as important as railroad rates? Until the present awful death and injury rate, due to train operation in America is lowered, but one conclusion can be drawn; and that is, that legislation along the lines of protection of life in our country is still inadequate. The trouble in the United States has not been "too much law making and too little deliberation in law making," but too little law making and too little enforcement of such laws as we have upon our statute books.

WILLIS J. ABBOTT.

### THE SIMPLE LIFE

Just leave the city's heated air,  
And seek both joy and rest  
By casting all your load of care  
On Nature's loving breast.

Then visit each remembered nook  
You haunted years ago—  
The pasture green, the pebbly brook,  
The field you used to hoe.

Again you'll see the rustic gate  
Where you were wont to lean  
With her you deemed your chosen mate—  
A lass of sweet sixteen.

How like your boyhood days 'twill seem,  
As leisurely you stroll  
Down by the dear old silver stream  
With bait and fishing pole.

The bank of yielding moss will be  
A cool and restful bed,  
With Nature's azure canopy  
Suspended o'er your head.

The birds will twitter all day long  
The notes you love to hear;  
The bees will drone a harvest song  
Familiar to your ear.

The aster and the golden rod,  
Each butterfly's retreat,  
Will seem to give a friendly nod  
When e'er you chance to meet.

A zephyr will your senses steep  
With incense from the flowers,  
And give to you refreshing sleep  
Through summer's golden hours.

And when at last you must depart  
To join the din and strife,  
There'll be a yearning in your heart  
To lead "the simple life."

—Susan Fisher Milner.

### LOVE LED THE WAY WITH ROSES

Love led the way with roses and the sunshine  
in her hair,  
And her lilting songs were blended with the  
perfume in the air.  
One by one she dropped her blossoms, drenched  
with dew drops, at my feet—  
Throwing backward smiles and laughter, just  
for me, alone, to greet,  
And the way grew sweet to wander, for we'd  
said good-bye to care—  
When she led the way with roses and the sun-  
shine in her hair.

Love led the way with roses, and the roses,  
whisp'ring said:  
"With our petals we will paint her lips and  
cheeks a blushing red;  
We will keep her like the lily, keep her heart  
as pure and white  
As the dew sent down from heaven through the  
shadows of the night."  
And her cheeks, they found the color of the  
blossoms, rich and fair,  
And the dew drops found her heart—the day  
love led the way with care.

Love led the way with roses, and she laid them  
at my feet  
Till her arms were empty, lonely, with no smiles  
for me to greet.  
The blossoms took the blushes that were mir-  
rored in her face,  
And left her with the whiteness of the lily in  
their place.  
Love led the way with roses—and the way was  
sweet we pressed—  
So love must sleep with roses—sleep with white  
ones on her breast!

—Will F. Griffin, in Milwaukee Sentinel.