

the managers were peculiarly interested in the corporations or firms which had rebates, but probably in most cases the railroads were sandbagged into the making of concessions by the trusts, and they now find a profit in the law which protects them from the sandbagging process.

It is certain, too, that the pass business was carried to a point where the railroads were greatly annoyed. While they were perfectly willing to give passes to public officials in the hope of making those officials friendly in matters of legislation, the public officials were constantly asking the railroads for passes for friends. The cutting off of passes was a relief to the railroads and a help to the treasuries of the roads. No wonder the railroad managers easily reconciled themselves to a law which increased their freight earnings by the cutting off of rebates and their passenger receipts by the cutting off of passes. But what of the general public? Is it not to have some share in the benefits? Must the people make a long and persistent fight for the control of railroads only to find that the railroads monopolize the benefits?

The federal government so far has not gone very far in the protection of the public, and as soon as the states began to act, there arose a great clamor for an exclusive national supervision of railroads. Let the public beware of any proposition that removes authority from the state to the nation. Every federal measure should be scrutinized to see that it does not limit or reduce the power of the state to control the corporations insofar as their operations are confined to the state. The very fact that the railroad managers prefer to trust the federal government is in itself suspicious. The people who have made so little progress in their fight for the control of railroads ought to be jealous of the rights of the states and carefully guard them from invasion.

REDUCE THE INTERSTATE RATE

The next congress will give the democrats a splendid chance to show their interest in railroad regulation. Several states have reduced the passenger rate to two cents per mile, and by the time congress meets, these state laws will be in effect, and the people living within those states will have the benefit of the two-cent rate when they purchase local tickets, but the railroads, while complying with the state law, are charging the three cent rate on tickets which cover interstate transportation. For instance, Nebraska has a two cent rate, and a person can travel at that rate from any point in Nebraska to any other point in Nebraska, but if he buys a ticket to any point outside of Nebraska, he has to pay the three cent rate on the entire mileage. Those who understand the situation buy only to the state line and thus save one cent on each mile, but those who are not informed pay the three cent rate without knowing it. Congress should pass a law at the next session requiring the railroads to sell interstate tickets at a rate not exceeding the sum of the rates through the states crossed. A very brief statute will cover the case, and the democrats should introduce such a bill on the first day of the session and urge its immediate consideration. If the republicans party dares to oppose it, let it take the responsibility for it. This is certainly one thing that can be done and done at once.

JACKSON ON MONEY

An Oregon reader of The Commoner has a republican neighbor whose son is studying public questions. The young republican has been informed that Jackson's views on the money question were applied with disastrous results by that great democrat. This is incorrect. Jackson opposed the national bank as it existed in his day for two reasons: First, because it violated the democratic doctrine of equal rights to all and special privileges to none; and second, because the bank was attempting to control the politics of the country. Jackson's position was sound on both propositions. No one has stated more clearly than he the fundamental objections to a financial policy that bestows upon the banks the enormous privilege of issuing money. The head of the national bank attempted to intimidate by telling him that the bank could elect him or defeat him. Instead of being frightened into submission, he told Biddle, the bank's president, that if the bank had that power, it had more power than it ought to have and more than it would have long if he could prevent it. When an investigation was made, it was found that the bank had subsidized men in public life by loaning them money, and had subsidized the press. It was a great corrupting institution, and

Jackson's high position in history is largely due to the fact that he had the courage to attack it and overthrow it.

Benton, in speaking of his work, compared him with Cicero, and said that in overthrowing the bank he had saved America as Cicero had saved Rome by overthrowing the conspiracy of Cataline. As Jackson's fame rests upon his successful attack upon entrenched privilege, so the abuse heaped upon him in his life and the calumnies circulated against him since his death have been due to the malice of those who, during his time and since, have represented predatory wealth.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

For the benefit of those readers of The Commoner who are engaged in ministerial work, or especially those interested in religious subjects, attention is called to a book which has recently reached The Commoner office. It is entitled "Intimations of Immortality," and is published by Small, Maynard & Co., of Boston. The book is compiled by Helen Philbrook Patten, and contains opinions on the subject of immortality gathered from prominent thinkers throughout the ages. The author has made industrious research and has quoted from the utterance of some three hundred or more, from Socrates, Aristotle and Plato down through the ages to our own day. The quotations are arranged in six chapters from the bibles of humanity, the testimony of ancients, the speculations of philosophy, the deductions of science, the voice of the church, and the vision of the poet. All will be interested in this volume. Those who are studying Christianity need it, and those who have occasion to speak upon the subject of immortality can hardly afford to be without it.

SURPLUS

The St. Louis Globe-Democrat asks: "What will we do with the surplus in the national treasury, amounting to \$87,000,000?" Well, when the republican party went into power March 4, 1889 there was a surplus of about \$111,000,000—and they spent it.

There need be no worry about surplus under a republican administration. The g. o. p. will contrive to get rid of it.

LOCATING THE BLAME

The National Union of Railway Trackmen—the section hands—have intervened in the discussion as to where the blame for so many disastrous railway wrecks should properly be placed, and the trackmen offer facts and figures to prove that they have located the blame.

The executive committee of the National Union of Railway Trackmen has just issued a letter in which is given in detail certain practices and conditions that prevail in the track department of practically every railroad in the country. These disclosures reveal that a majority of the wrecks, instead of being caused by overworked employes, mistaken signals, or running by blocks, are really caused by improper maintenance of track. Accompanying the report of this committee are a number of photographs of main line tracks in western states, and these photographs show rotten ties that menace the lives of all who ride over them. To the presence of these rotten ties is due in a large measure the numerous broken rails which furnish the excuse for so many wrecks. The men into whose hands is given the keeping and maintenance of safe tracks, thus insuring safety to railroad patrons riding in the heavy and swift trains, receive an average of less than \$1.25 a day, ten hours a day. The foremen of track gangs, "section bosses," receive less than \$50 a month.

The committee further charges that in addition to employing an insufficient number of men and paying them insufficient wages, the railroads refuse or neglect to furnish proper material or equipment, and then lay the blame upon the trackmen if a wreck occurs because of insecure track. The committee further says:

"In addition to not employing enough men, or furnishing sufficient material, the tracks as a rule are not patrolled either night or day. In the early days of railroading when there were not nearly so many trains operated as now, and those that were operated were of much lighter equipment, and run at a lower speed, it was considered necessary for the safety of those who traveled on the railway trains, that good careful men should patrol the tracks during the day

time and at night also, if trains were operated at night. These men, who patrolled the tracks, were required to carry signalling appliances, so that they might notify train crews of danger. They were also expected and required to carry tools with which to tighten loose bolts and spikes. Now-a-days no such thing is done at all, except on some of the eastern roads, although the necessity for patrolling tracks is a hundred per cent greater now than ever before. Trains starting from a station at night plunge off into the darkness, and the men running them and the passengers riding thereon, must trust to blind luck for safety in reaching their destination. In places where there are overhanging rocks and high bluffs along the right of way, safe railroading would dictate that special guards should be provided for these and that they be not left as they now are, entirely unprotected. We ought not wonder at the frequency and serious nature of railway wrecks, the wonder should be, that there are not more of them and with greater fatalities."

These facts have repeatedly been called to the attention of railway managers by the trackmen, but the matter has been ignored by the officials and the unjust and dangerous conditions maintained. The National Union of Railway Trackmen have now decided to appeal to public sentiment for redress of grievances and the enforcement of ordinary precautions for the safeguarding of life and property. They make the following frank and manly statement to the public:

"Ordinarily a labor union, when it fails to secure a redress of the wrong of its members orders a strike. Had we done this, you probably would have criticised us. In the past many of you have said that there was no need to strike, that the contentions of labor organizations, if right, could best be settled by public sentiment. We can not strike. Our people can scarcely live on their present wages and work all the time. We have come to you for help and we are stating our case in an honest and fair way. You and each of you are as much interested in having the dangerous conditions, which we have called to your attention, remedied, as are we. We have inspection by the state almost everywhere for factories and mines. This is done to protect employes alone. In this great transportation industry, with the hundreds of thousands of miles of railway track no one is responsible for their condition. Each railroad system and division thereof is operated in a different way. There is no standard of efficiency required for service in the track department. In some instances the entire section crew of laborers is composed of boys under fifteen years of age. There should be either state or national inspection of railway tracks. As we view it, the most perfect remedy would be to so extend the powers of the inter-state commerce commission that it would have jurisdiction over this matter. Sure it is that something must be done."

The committee proceeds then to offer statistical proof of their contention. They show by the interstate commerce commission records that during the years 1903-1906 there were 22,384 derailments of trains, causing a property loss of \$19,434,095, killing 1,614 people and injuring 17,442 others. These derailments have averaged over 500 a month for the last three years, the death list has averaged over 500 a year, and the injured list has averaged over 5,500 a year—all caused by derailments due, according to the showing made by the trackmen, to the failure to properly maintain tracks.

The National Union of Railway Trackmen deserves the sympathy and support of the general public in their fight for better wages and conditions. Further than that, the general public owes it to itself to assist the trackmen because of what has been called "enlightened selfishness"—self protection.

THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

As this copy of The Commoner may be read by some one not familiar with the details of the primary pledge plan, it is necessary to say that according to the terms of this plan every democrat is asked to pledge himself to attend all of the primaries of his party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention unless unavoidably prevented, and to secure a clear, honest and straightforward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak. Those desiring to be enrolled can either write The Commoner approving the object of the organization and asking to have their names entered on the roll, or they can fill out and mail the blank pledge, which is printed on page 12.