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A FARMER'S EXPLANATION OF WHY FREIGHT RATES ARE HIGH.

Prof. H. Clyde Filley of the Nebraska College of Agriculture writes in the Farm Bureau Review of the causes of high freight rates. Here is his article:

The total revenue of all the railroads from July 1, 1914 to June 31, 1915 was \$3,182,000,000 and the operating expenses were \$2,139,000,000 according to reports filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission. The difference between the gross income and the operating expense was approximately \$1,043,000,000. Out of this sum, \$144,000,000 was paid for taxes, \$574,000,000 for interest on bonds, reserves, etc., and \$328,000,000 paid out as dividends.

In those days we thought railway freight rates were high and objected as strenuously as possible to any increase proposed by the railroads. They were high enough to permit well organized, well managed roads a good profit, but apparently not high enough to permit profits that would stimulate railway development. Capital seeks profit, and as a result, for several years preceding the war, railway development did not keep pace with increasing traffic demands.

Railway rates have nearly doubled in the last five years, with a resultant increase in railway revenues. The Railway Age says: "Total operating revenues for the year 1920 were \$6,225,402,762, the largest in the history of the railroads. Operating expenses consumed \$5,826,197, 474, and taxes \$287,980,620. After deducting for uncollectable revenues and for equipment and joint facility rents this leaves a net operating income or profit from railway operations of only \$62,264,421."

As the revenues preceding the war were not great enough to enable the railroads to sell stock, and they were compelled to resort to bond issues to secure more capital, it can be readily seen that the railroads cannot now receive more capital by selling stock.

The Interstate Commerce Commission used a valuation of \$18,900,000,000 for the railroads in the rate case. The net revenue for 1920 gave them a return of only about one third of one per cent upon this valuation. Some men have claimed that this valuation is too high. Suppose it were cut in two, which is certainly lower than the majority of the railway opponents have suggested. Upon such a valuation the railroads would earn about two-thirds of one per cent. We must reach some other place than capital account and dividends to learn the cause of the railway difficulties.

A study of railway wages furnishes at least a partial solution to the question. The average employee received \$34 following the Labor Board's wage award in 1920, where he had received but \$1.00 in 1914. The cost of living at this time was less than double the cost in 1914.

It has been argued that high wages and efficiency go together. The reverse is true in this instance, because more employees were required in 1920 in proportion to the labor performed than were required in 1914. The number of railway employees has increased more rapidly than has the movement of freight and passengers.

W. W. Atterbury, vice-president of following testimony before the Labor the Pennsylvania Railroad, gave the following testimony before the Labor Board: "A very large part of the increase in the amount of wages paid to each class of employees was due not merely to the advance made in wages, but to an abnormal increase in the number of employees.

"This increase in the number of employees, in turn, was due to rules and working condition which destroyed the efficiency of labor, reduced the output per man, and rendered it necessary, if needed maintenance work on the railroads was to be done, to employ a much larger number of men. The increase of over 140,000 or 47 per cent in the number of certain classes of employees in the shops is especially significant."

"The total number of railway employees increased under government control by 261,000. It is fact of the highest significance in its bearing upon the matter of agreements, rules and working conditions, whose publication we have asked the Railroad Labor Board to approve, that of this increase, 232,563 occurred in shop employees, clerks, and maintenance of way employees, with whom the Railroad Administration made the three principal National Agreements."

The railway executives submitted ample evidence as to effect of the present "rules and working conditions" under which the roads have been operating. It is stated that a car repairer was paid \$1,000 for work which he never did. When work was slack he and other employees were laid off. When he was reemployed under his seniority rights, he received back

pay and overtime. Because of the rules and working conditions" agreement, the same company was compelled to pay four men for 112 hours who had actually worked only four hours and 33 minutes. "The shop crafts agreement provides that when employees are required to check in and out on their own time they shall be paid for one hour extra at the close of each week no matter how few hours they have worked. This rule, is the first six months of 1920, is alleged to have cost the railroads \$6,600,000.

"An engine was placed in the Baltimore and Ohio shops for certain repairs. Because of the national agreements, the railroads claim, it is necessary for members of five crafts to perform parts of the work, whereas formerly the entire operation was performed by members of two crafts. A leak in the boiler requires the sheet metal worker to loosen the jacket, the locomotive repairer to remove the lagging, the boilermaker to calk the leak, after which the locomotive carpenter replaces the lagging, and the sheet metal worker tightens the jacket. As these employees usually have a helper, six men are employed on a trivial job that should have been done by a boiler maker and his helper."

So many similar examples are given that the reading of them becomes tiresome. That such ridiculous rules should ever have been made, let alone are permitted to continue to be contributing cause to higher railway rates, is enough to excite the man who is accustomed to milking cows, feeding hogs, and caring for horses before breakfast, who repairs his own machinery as well as operates it, and performs nearly every day work of a dozen different types. Suppose that a farm were operated under such ridiculous rules? Does anyone imagine that under such conditions it would be possible to produce wheat for less than \$5 a bushel, or milk for less than a dollar a gallon?

The classification of employees resulted in some ridiculous wage schedules. The following incident is no worse than many others.

"A young woman in the shops of a New England road has been cleaning brass since 1917. She formerly worked at twenty-two cents an hour and is said to have been quite contented. The shop committee—without consulting her—demanded that she be classified as a mechanic. The management had no alternative and conceded the demand. Instantly her wages were more than trebled and she continued her occupation at sixty-eight cents an hour instead of twenty-two. The shop committee also extracted from the railroad treasury back pay to the amount of \$227.75. Soon another increase lifted her to eighty-five cents an hour, nearly four times the wage of four years ago."

A young farmer who lives about twenty miles from Omaha found, as many other farmers have done, that with farm products at present prices he was receiving nothing for his work, and only a small return upon his investment. He therefore secured a job in the shops at Omaha and hired a man to do farm work. He now drives to the city each day to perform eight hours of work, for which he receives about four times the daily wage that he pays his hired man.

High wages, inefficiency, and absurd operating rules are not the only cause of the increased cost of railway operation, even though they are of first importance. Claims or damages are more numerous than in prewar days, and the value of nearly all goods damaged or lost in transit is greater. Fuel, rails, ties, cars, locomotives—in fact nearly everything that the railroad buys—have increased in price.

Many complaints have been made that the valuation upon which the railroads are permitted to earn dividends is too large. I can only say that it was fixed by the Interstate Commerce Commission who are in a much better position to judge than any other body of which I know. Even if they fixed the value \$5,000,000,000 too high and were permitted to earn six per cent, the interest charge upon this theoretical excess value would not account for the high freight rates.

The only logical conclusion is, that rates, the railroads must receive much greater service for each dollar expended for labor. To this end all men who either buy or sell products that are shipped by freight should unite in a campaign for action. We cannot permit a favored group to profit at our expense.

LOCAL AND PERSONAL

Paul Nickerson has accepted a position in the music department at the Dixon store.

Mrs. Soehl of Ogallala underwent an operation at the Platte Valley hospital Wednesday.

J. F. Buss left Wednesday for Maxwell where he will make his future home with his daughter.

Miss Bettie Turpie has accepted a position at the North Platte Credit Association and began duties this morning.

Mrs. J. Pierce returned Tuesday from San Francisco where she spent the summer months. She spent Wednesday in Maxwell visiting.

Ed Kierig, Auctioneer.

General Farm Sales & Specialty, also Real Estate. References and Data: First National Bank. North Platte, Nebraska.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS Estate No. 1831 of Josie O'Hare, deceased, in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

The State of Nebraska, ss: Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation and filing of claims against said estate is December 13, 1921, and for settlement of said estate is August 9th, 1922; that I will sit at the county court room in said county, on September 13, 1921, at 9 o'clock a. m., and on December 13, 1921, at 8 o'clock a. m., to receive, examine, hear, allow, or adjust all claims and objections duly filed. WM. H. C. WOODHURST, County Judge.

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(John Grant, Attorney.)
NOTICE TO CREDITORS Estate No. 1825 of George Lannin, deceased, in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

The State of Nebraska, ss: Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation and filing of claims against said estate is November 30, 1921, and for settlement of said estate is July 29, 1922; that I will sit at the county court room in said county on August 30, 1921, at 10 o'clock a. m. and on November 30, 1921, at 10 o'clock a. m., to receive, examine, hear, allow, or adjust all claims and objections duly filed. Dated July 29, 1921. WM. H. C. WOODHURST, County Judge.

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NOTICE OF FINAL REPORT Estate No. 1809 of Alice R. Heyes, deceased, in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

The State of Nebraska, to all persons interested in the said Estate take notice that the Administrator has filed a final account and report of his administration and a petition for final settlement and discharge as such administrator, which have been set for hearing before said court on September 13, 1921, at 10 o'clock a. m., then you may appear and contest the same. Dated August 19, 1921. WM. H. C. WOODHURST.

SHERIFF'S SALE By virtue of an order of sale issued from the District Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska, upon a decree of foreclosure rendered in said Court wherein Continental Guaranty Corporation, a Corporation, is plaintiff, and Fred J. Bremers is defendant, and to me directed, I will on the 19th day of September, 1921, at two o'clock P. M. at the east front door of the Court House in North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, sell at Public Auction to the highest bidder for cash, to satisfy said decree, interest and costs, the following described property, to-wit: Lot Ten (10) of Flatteview Subdivision, Lincoln County, Nebraska. Dated North Platte Neb., August 15, 1921. A. J. Salisbury, Sheriff.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION OF HEIRSHIP. In the County Court, Lincoln County, Nebraska.

In re Thomas M. Dawson, deceased. Notice is hereby given to Charity J. Dawson, John V. Dawson, Charles L. Dawson, Frank G. Dawson, Guy T. Dawson, Laura J. Moon and to all other persons, both creditors and heirs interested in the estate of Thomas M. Dawson, deceased, that a petition was filed in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska, August 15, 1921, in which was set out as facts that Thomas M. Dawson died July 31, 1902, that at the time of his death he was a resident of Lincoln County, and was seized in fee of 41 North-east Quarter of Section 26, township 9, Range 26, West of the 6 P. M. in Lincoln County, Nebraska. The petitioner Arthur D. McNickle now the owner in fee of the said premises and prays for a determination of the time of the death of the decedent and a determination of the heirs of said decedent, the degree of kinship and the right of descent of the property belonging to the decedent. That the time for hearing said petition has been fixed at September 8, 1921, at 10 o'clock a. m. by the City Court. WM. H. C. WOODHURST, City Judge. (SEAL) WELLS C. JONES, Attorney for the Petitioner.



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