

Government Ownership of Railroads

BY GEORGE BAILEY.

Our revolutionary fathers in 1776 declared to the world that all men are endowed with certain inalienable rights. Then they proceeded to establish upon this continent a government founded upon that principle, a democratic form of government. Webster defines democracy as government by the people. "A form of government in which the supreme power is in the hands of the people and directly exercised by them."

Now it seems to me if there is any one principle which this great American people should guard with more care than all others it is this foundation principle of government by the people; the whole superstructure of our government rests upon that one idea and it ought to be our highest ambition as a people to not adopt any policy which will conflict with this great central thought.

The first question to be considered in deciding whether the government should own and control the railroads or not is this: Would not the policy of government ownership and control of the railroads be more in harmony with the principles of a democratic form of government than the policy which we have adopted of farming out this great government function into the hands of private corporations? I propose to affirm the question. Democracy—A form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people—is not the above standard the effect one by which to measure a pure democracy? If it is a correct standard would not any policy tending to expand the powers of the people be a true policy to adopt? If so, would not any policy that would be of a nature to restrict the powers of the people be undemocratic?

The question of government ownership of these great industries is rapidly getting beyond the stage of experiment into the realm of successful certainty.

All civilized nations are demonstrating their ability to successfully manage great industries upon sound business principles.

England, Germany, Russia, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, Australia and almost every civilized nation on earth, are rapidly taking advanced ground upon this very important question and many of them are owning and controlling their railroads. It is estimated that outside of Canada and the United States fully 95 per cent of the civilized governments own and control their telegraph and telephone lines. But it is not necessary for me to introduce to your notice examples from foreign nations to prove the feasibility and practicability of government ownership, for our people have pursued two policies upon this question and have developed both plans sufficiently for my purpose: one policy has been in harmony with the principles of the Republic, while the other has been antagonistic to said principles.

The old policy of surrendering up government functions into the hands of greedy corporations for the purpose of robbing and plundering the people is growing more and more into disfavor with the masses as they contrast the workings of the two systems. I find by consulting Chambers Encyclopedia that in England corporations are of two kinds, either aggregate or sole. A corporation aggregate is a society of persons authorized by law to act as one, a corporation sole consists of one person and his successor who are by law invested with the same capacities as a corporation aggregate. The Sovereign is a corporation sole. The king being a corporation sole we find that our forefathers in their struggle for independence were fighting to prevent a corporation from saddling burdens upon them without their consent. This corporation sole (viz. the king) would in the olden times mobilize an army of Pinkertons and drive the common people from their lands and homes, then parcel out said lands and their favorites; and the land in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales is possessed by descendants of the king's favorites; and the common people have sunk into the lowest depths of ignorance, poverty and degradation. It remains to be seen whether this fair land (a land in which the light of civil and religious liberty shines upon us more brightly than it ever shone upon any land before) will suffer this relic of the old feudalistic times to get such a foothold as to obliterate this glorious light handed down to us as an eternal inheritance by those old heroes of Lexington and Bunker Hill.

We are told that history repeats itself, with a difference; let us hope that difference in our case will not be in giving this glorious light of civil and religious liberty to contract under this old policy of corporate feudalism until it gets so fine a point that the eye of a prophet cannot discern it. Rather, let it expand under the blessings of a pure democracy until the mountains of the house of our Lord will be bathed in this glorious light, and all nations and people shall be allowed to bask in its glorious effulgence.

Corporations in these latter days, instead of gaining their ends by force of arms, resort to other methods equally as successful, for instance: instead of mobilizing large armies of men they mobilize large armies of dollars; then they take a very large division of said army of dollars and he themselves away to the halls of legislation, and by placing said division where it will do the most good, they generally are so successful in their maneuvers that our legislators surrender to them certain privileges which will generally enable them to rob the public of thousands of dollars for every dollar which they invest in legislation. Then perhaps they will take another large brigade of dollars and move upon the free press and capture that, also, and make of it a willing tool to cover up the iniquity of their doings, and thus make the people believe that they are philanthropists and patriots and all that sort of thing. Then they will take another corps of dollars and go among the people and they will be Republican in a Republican district, a Democrat in a Democratic district,—but they will be a corporation dog or devil all the time.

In proportion as a government undertakes functions vitally affecting and coming close to the daily concerns of the people, will public opinion arouse itself and insist on good government

Famman never yet was strong enough to dare mismanage the fire department; neither will political jobbery ever be strong enough to mismanage the public transit system as the Goulds have done.

The rapidity with which the cities in this country are endorsing government exercise of government functions by adopting the same policy in regard to electric light plants, gas works, street railways, water works, etc., constitute one of the strongest arguments that could be adduced in favor of government ownership and control of the railroads. The municipalities all over this broad land are moving in this matter in a way that can lead to but one conclusion, and that is that this great policy is feasible, practical and one well worthy to be adopted by the nation.

The postal service as managed by the government at cost to the people is also another bright and shining light which is lending our people on to greater achievements in the same line. Compare the above policy of postal service to the people at cost, and the telegraph system run by corporate extortion. The Western Union has realized \$100,000,000 of net profits in twenty-five years by its high charges. These figures are incontrovertible statements made to the committee of the last Congress before whom that company was represented by its president.

One objection to the government ownership and control of the railroads is that corporations do not pay their employees as big wages as the government does, consequently corporate control of the transit systems is cheaper than government control of said systems would be.

The above policy of the present control of railroads may allow its managers to declare larger dividends on watered stock, but that the present system is cheaper to the people than government control at cost to the people would be, I am not prepared to admit.

I believe if the government owned the railroads the eight-hour system of labor would be adopted as far as possible. If an employee was disabled while on duty he would receive a pension. If he should be killed his family would receive a pension. And if this nation should adopt public ownership of railroads the public would be better served at half the cost than they are under the present management. We would have none of those great strikes, costing the country hundreds of millions of dollars, simply because the public transit system would be managed upon a basis of justice to all parties concerned.

Wheeler, Ohio.

That New Carol County Justice.

Last week he tried his hand. The couple had procured their license—they were from the country—the lady was a young widow, sweet, fat, and plump; born and raised in old Arkansas on good fat corn-bread, buttermilk, pumpkins and country bacon. The gentleman was lean, lank, and redheaded—lately from the grasshopper region, and sockless Simpson's retreat—as they entered the J. P. shook hands with them, and thinking he had to serve papers legally, he exhibited to them his commission; then trembling stepped back to take a rest, when he remarked, join hands; they did. The widow looked pleased, the jayhawker sighed, the "Squire cast his eyes upward and said: "Our Father who are in heaven join this couple, let them fuse in love, combine them forever, monopolize them in all things, encircle them toward one another by day and by night, revive their hopes enlarge their desires, stuff their ballot box, increase their majority, cement them together during life and their generations after them into one grand democratic household. In the name of Gorman, and of Brice, and of Grover Cleveland. "Dear lady what do you say," said he to the woman. "Oh," said she, "anything, oh Lord!" "What do you say," said he to the excited Kansan, "well" he remarked, "I accept the amendment."

"Then said the Judge, by virtue of my commission and the great seal thereon and under the authority of William Fishback, the governor of Arkansas, I declare that your name is Samantha Loomis, and your name is Samantha Loomis. I'll be at your house for dinner on Sunday; my fee is 35 cents.

You are a husband, She likely will be a mother, Cain was a wicked man, Case he killed his brother.

Amn.

Always keep in the house a bottle of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, for throat and lung troubles. Your druggist has Ayer's Almanac.

A Woman Murderer Insane.

PERRY, Ok., Jan. 14.—Miss Sarah Alred, who shot J. T. Lucky dead near Cleveland Tuesday during a quarrel about some corn, attempted suicide yesterday while being guarded in a room at Cleveland, but was prevented by one of the guards. Later she slipped out of the room and is now at large. Lucky and Miss Alred owned adjoining claims and the two were engaged.

Attack on Wolcott.

DENVER, Col., Jan. 14.—A resolution has been introduced in the house which will be taken up for consideration Monday declaring that no person should be sent to the United States senate from Colorado who would not pledge himself to sever all relations with corporations and trusts. The resolution is aimed at Senator Wolcott and will, it is said, receive the support of some Republican members.

Croker's Horses Sent Abroad.

NEW YORK, Jan. 14.—Nineteen thoroughbreds belonging to Richard Croker were shipped on the steamer Mississippi for England to-day. Stonenell, Harry Reed and Montauk are entered in various events in the early spring meetings in England and Mr. Croker has already received the weights they will have to carry in the events.

Shot as the Result of a Quarrel.

PERRY, Ok., Jan. 14.—Philip Sunfield, saloon owner and politician, and Jim Harding, who runs a feed store here, had a difference about a settlement. Early this morning Harding left and it is said came back with a pistol and shot Sunfield in the head. Harding was arrested.

Rheumatism, which is a blood disease, is radically cured by Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

Monopoly and the Pulpit.

The picturesque and somewhat hysterical declaration of a St. Louis clergyman that "the University of Chicago has been founded in blood and will fall," has naturally awakened some discussion in the religious denomination which controls that institution and to which its assailant belongs. The meaning of the St. Louisian was clearly that the Standard Oil money upon which the great university is founded were gathered by methods of injustice and even spoliation, and carry with them a curse like that which the fable attaches to Judas' ten pieces of silver. The latter part of Dr. Boyd's theory is scarcely to be taken seriously. Men thrive and grow fat upon very dirty money. The odium attaching to evil ways of making a fortune seldom descends to him who inherits that fortune—does not often, indeed, cling very pertinaciously to the one who originally garnered the ill-gotten wealth. "The jingling of the guinea helps the hurt honor feels," and the highest places in society in the state, and even in the church, are open to him who has successfully acted upon rare Ben Jonson's advice:

Get money; still get money, boy, No matter by what means.

Society will not exact heavier penance of an institution which has profited by money acquired in dubious ways than it exacts of the individual who rolled up that wealth. The sins of the Standard Oil trust will not be visited upon the Chicago university, even though the noble gray quadrangles of that college stand forever as a monument to the triumph of wealth over the commonwealth.

It is entertaining, however, to note the line of defense taken up by the clergymen who hastened to repel the assault upon the almoner of the Standard Oil funds. Says Dr. Lawrence, vice president of the board of trustees of the university:

"John D. Rockefeller has not wrung money from the people. He may have crushed smaller competitors by business methods which all pursue, but if it were not for the Standard Oil company you and I would not have such cheap oil to burn tonight. If the money that he has given to the Chicago university is unclean what is to be said of the thousand institutions founded or supported by men of wealth? Mr. Rockefeller is one of the quietest men in the world."

His family does not go into society, but if there is a hospital to be visited you will find Mrs. Rockefeller or one of the family there."

We may pass over Dr. Lawrence's eulogy of his patron's private virtues. To the serious charges urged against the chief officer of the Standard Oil company it is no defense to plead that he gives lavishly to charity, is a regular attendant at church, and is kindly and loving to his family. That he is "one of the quietest men in the world" is without pertinence. So also was that chief justice of England whom Macaulay described as "rich, quiet and infamous." Sharp issue, however, must be taken with Dr. Lawrence's declaration. "He may have crushed smaller competitors by methods which all pursue." Emphatically all do not pursue the methods of the Standard Oil company. If all did, the state of this nation would be that popularly called anarchy. Bribery of legislatures and courts would be the rule rather than the exception. Business rivalries would be prosecuted with the aid of thugs and incendiaries. Railroads would habitually be employed to build up private monopolies. A score of huge corporations would control all lines of business and the small dealer would be forced to surrender his independence and become an agent for monopoly. It is a queer commentary on the position of ethics in a church that a leading divine can say with entire complacency that the methods of Standard Oil are the ordinary business methods of the day.

But the most curious error in the clergyman's defense of the monopolist is his statement that but "for the Standard Oil company you and I would not have such cheap oil to burn tonight." Doubtless he has never investigated the subject about which he speaks so positively. Had he done so he would have discovered that the great reduction in the cost of kerosene oil was made before the Standard Oil company secured its monopoly of refining it. Under the sway of this monopoly reductions in price have been practically checked, improved processes for increasing production and cheapening the cost of refining have been suppressed. Monopoly has not only crushed its rivals but has taken its toll from the public. It is for that monopoly exists, and not all the eloquence of subsidized clergy men can convince the people that the greatest monopoly in the country is other than a menace to public safety or that its methods have been other than immoral and despicable.—Chicago Times.

An Oklahoma Postmaster Involved.

PERRY, Ok., Jan. 14.—Deputy marshals arrested Thomas J. Mann, postmaster at Cleveland, and brought him here this morning on a charge of having tampered with letters in his office. He is a leader in Grant county.

Major Padlock Seriously Ill.

DENVER, Col., Jan. 14.—Major James Padlock of Omaha, government director of the Union Pacific railroad, is lying dangerously ill in his private car at the Union depot in this city.

Advices to the treasury department from the sub-treasury of New York report the withdrawal of \$2,300,000 gold for export. This leaves the amount of the gold reserve \$77,474,409.



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ARMAGEDDON is the name of a new song book published by "The Wealth Makers Publishing Company," of Lincoln, Neb., at 35 cents a copy. Armageddon is by far the best book of its kind it has ever been our pleasure to examine. The book contains 70 songs, 57 of which are set to music, and every one is a gem. There is no chaff in the whole book. The songs are strong and ably written, while the music is of the very best. George Howard Gibson, editor of The Wealth Makers, is the author. His name is never attached to any second class literary production. There is ever an elevated tone to his writings. His newspaper is one of the very best reform papers in existence and Armageddon is, we think, decidedly the best book of songs any Alliance or labor organization can possibly find.—The Sledge Hammer, Meadville Pa.

Now is the time to make good use of Armageddon. It ought to be in every Populist's home. If our songs are everywhere sung, made popular, our cause will speedily succeed. Let singing clubs be formed to master the music of this book. None finer or more effective has ever been written. "God Save the People" is a mightily stirring piece in both music and words. "Our Line of Defense" is another thrilling song set to the finest patriotic air of Germany, "Die Wacht Am Rhein." But we have not space to tell of the merits of each one of the 70 songs which the book contains. Humorous, pathetic, thrilling, awakening, en- thusiasm, calling forth all that is manly and noble, all love of right and justice, and marshalling the hosts to battle,—it should be sent for and made use of by all earnest men and women now. Get ready this winter to sing these industrial gospel songs everywhere.

Snobocracy.

Governor Morton of New York has appointed John Jacob Astor, the multimillionaire, his aide-de-camp. The Governor is the Republican standard bearer of New York state and the Republican party is a laboring man's party. See?—Industrial News.

The new song book, now ready for delivery, is immense. Fire in your orders. Thirty-five cents a copy.

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We offer One Hundred Dollars reward for any case of Catarrh that cannot be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure.

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