

TO OWN RAILROADS.

DETAILED ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP.

Questions of Objectors Fully Answered How to Pay for the Properties—Earning Capacity Would Increase—Effect upon Railway Labor.

Under the caption of "Government Ownership" the Chicago Tribune of Sept. 18 publishes a long editorial which contains in a nutshell the arguments generally used by those opposed to government ownership of railroads and other quasi public properties.

While not a member of the Illinois Federation of Labor or any other labor or socialistic organization I am an advocate of government ownership of railroads, mines and telegraphs and therefore assume to attempt to answer some of the questions The Tribune asks:

First.—"How shall the general government acquire possession of the railroads, mines, etc., now belonging to private individuals or corporations organized in accordance with existing laws?"

By the right of eminent domain, the same right by which much of the property now owned by the railroad corporations was seized from individual owners and turned over to said corporations. The rule of eminent domain is a high governmental function, but it will not be questioned that it can be invoked against a railroad corporation as well as against a private individual.

Formerly Brown considered it a great hardship for the Great Central railway to take a strip through the center of his farm and build a railroad track thereon, but his poor, unimportant rights had yielded to the supposed advantages to be gained to the general public, and the general public may in turn require the Great Central Railway company to surrender the same tract for the same reasons and upon the same process, however inconvenient and annoying it may be to the company.

Appraisers would determine the value of the property and the respective interests of bondholders and stockholders the same as various interests in real property are usually determined under the exercise of eminent domain. The actual value would, of course, be determined and not the fictitious or book value at which the present owners might invoice their property.

Second.—"Where is the money to come from to pay for these immense indebtednesses, estimated by The Tribune at \$1,000,000,000, or four times the national debt at the close of the war?"

Who own the railroads? The people who own the railroad bonds. True, the stockholders of the roads have an equity in the property which may or may not be of value, according to the amount of the bonded indebtedness of the road, but the real owners of the road are, as a rule, the owners of the bonds issued by the railroad company.

What is it that gives value to these bonds?

They are valuable: (a) Because they are secured by mortgages on real estate and personal property presumed to equal or exceed in value the face value of the bonds issued; (b) because the railroads have an earning capacity sufficient to pay the agreed rate of interest on the bonds above running expenses; (c) because the bondholders have confidence in the integrity of the railroad management and believe the bonds and interest will be paid promptly when due.

These are the essential elements which give value to the bonds. Now, in case the government should acquire some great railroad system, say the Pennsylvania Central, and should issue bonds to the same amount per mile that now stand against that railroad, would the same three elements exist which are now necessary to give value to those bonds, and which would be necessary to give value to the bonds the government might desire to issue against its newly acquired property?

Let us see.

(a) Because secured by mortgages. The bonds could be issued pledging the roadbed, rolling stock and equipment for payment of principal and interest, the same as is done now. The property is there just the same. Only in the government instead of in the stockholders. Gradually, one by one, the present railroad systems would be absorbed by the government. Bonds based primarily on the railroad property and secondarily on the good faith of 75,000,000 of Americans would be issued as needed to buy railroads, making use of the endless chain so successfully manipulated by the brokers during the last administration, with this difference that the government would issue bonds for money, use the money to buy railroads, then pay the money back getting the same result as now, but without buying more railroads, and so on.

Possibly the government might be, as you estimate, some three or four times the national debt at the close of the war, but we would have a dollar's worth of property for every dollar's worth of debt. The property would be productive, as it is now, and pay its own debts as it does now. The security would be immensely greater than now, having in addition to the mortgage property, the good faith of the nation.

(b) Because earning capacity. Freed from all the taxes and the weight of existing railroads, the property of maintaining the same, a large dividend net and a large amount of litigation, the earning capacity of the road would be greatly increased and rates would be raised to the level of the

material reduction of rates. Unproductive lines of roads, now necessary as "feeders," or for the purpose of occupying territory, would be unnecessary when the government owns all the lines. Less rolling stock per mile would be necessary if the government owned all the roads, as rolling stock could be sent from every part of the country where a congestion of business might be feared. Then, again, by a centralization of manufacturing establishments, such as car shops, machine shops, etc., a great saving could be effected. Fewer agents to solicit business, sell tickets, etc., would be needed. In scores of ways expenses could be curtailed under government ownership, thus enhancing the earning capacity.

Confidence in the integrity of the management.

From the days when Alexander Hamilton persuaded the United States to assume the entire debts of the several states incurred in the Revolutionary war bond purchasers throughout the world have shown the greatest confidence in the promises of the United States to pay money. The integrity of the nation has never been questioned. The people have never shown themselves incompetent to manage any business entrusted to them. Our postoffice department stands a constant proof of the ability of the people, the nation, to conduct a large business successfully, economically.

With government ownership of railroads the bondholders would have nothing to fear from the actions of the "bulls" and "bears," the stock manipulators and railroad wreckers. We find, therefore, that the bonds of the railroad owned by the government would possess in an increased degree all the elements which go to make bonds valuable, and consequently the same class of people who now invest their money in railroad bonds would gladly continue to do so.

Third.—"How would any honest laboring man profit from the change?"

This is easy. If he should travel, he would not be obliged to pay two prices for a seat in a common car in order that another man might ride in the Pullman free of charge. If he should have any freighting to be done, he would not be required to pay extra or on a higher classification in order to enable the railroad to pay a rebate to his wealthy neighbor. If he should work for the company, he would know that his wages would not be subject to sudden and unreasonable reductions, that he would not be obliged to contribute to the support of any labor organization in order to protect his rights, and that no strikers would ever be permitted to drive him from his government employ. He would also feel a greater political freedom than at present.

Fourth.—"How would the whole people be better served by the walking delegates who would expect to be in control under the orders of the Debeses, the Sovereigns, the Altgelds et al. than they are under the present condition as regulated by law and under the existing status of civilization?"

Why do you presume that the Debeses, the Sovereigns, the Altgelds et al. would have the control? In advancing this argument you proclaim that government by the people is a failure. You presume that the American people will elect a president who would select for his cabinet officers and heads of departments men unworthy of confidence. If the Debeses et al. (assuming with you that these are dangerous people) should be in control of the railroads under government ownership, they would also be in control of the postoffice, the treasury, the interior and all other branches of government.

This is the argument of the Tories in the days of the Revolution, of monarchists of the days of the French revolution, of the Stuarts and Bourbons and the advocates of the divine right of kings. It is not an argument that has any force in a republic and is quite unworthy so illustrious an American paper as The Tribune.

It is but fair to presume that in this branch of government, as in all others, the men best qualified for the particular business would be selected therefor. The secretary of transportation, or whatever his title might be, would be selected by the president from that class of men who have had wide experience as managers of railroads. A Tom Scott or a Jim Fisk or a Marvin Huggitt would be selected to manage the railway branch of the government and would be no less worthy, no less competent and no less successful as a manager because he received his authority rather than from a board of directors in New York.

As to the constitutional limitation of the various states on state and city indebtedness, I would only say that there is nothing sacred about a constitution. It is a law adopted by a majority of the people and is subject to change by the same power which made it, and if necessary, in order to carry out the wishes of the people, the constitution should be so changed as to admit of a contracting of debts in excess of the present limits for the purpose of buying street railways, waterworks, electric light plants, etc.

But in this connection it should also be borne in mind that if the municipal liabilities are greatly increased the assets are increased to at least the same extent and the net indebtedness is no greater than before the purchase of the property.

The power wielded in America today by the great corporations and trusts is admitted by every one, is condemned in a perfunctory manner by all political parties and all the politicians, but whenever a remedy is suggested the person or party proposing the remedy is met with most intense opposition, generally coupled with abuse. Government ownership is a remedy believed in by thousands of American people and is at least worthy of serious discussion. Let us treat the proposition and its advocates with respect.—Louis S. Cull in Chicago Tribune

VOTE FOR YOUR FREEDOM

"Peace," says the gormand, "until I am full." "Peace," says the drunkard, "until the last pull." "Peace," says the ax, "till the forests are felled." "Peace," says the pick, "till the coal mines are mined." "Peace," says the hoarder, "until I've stored." "Peace," says the spendthrift, "until I've no more." "Peace," says the miser, "I feed you with bread. You are my servants until you are dead."

This do the tyrants hold sway in our land. Dealing out death with a merciless hand. Ask for protection, you're given a stone. Ask for your rights, you are told you have none. Thus are the servants kept under the lash. Subjects of misrule and counted but trash. Bow to superiors and cringe at their feet. Prudence will dictate a wise and discreet.

God of the universe sees from on high All things terrestrial that goth awry. In his good time will the wrong be made right And your oppression arise and take flight. Pray, then, have patience, forbearance and trust. Strive with the demons of Mammon and lust. Keeping the law. When election arrives, Vote for your freedom, your homes and your lives.—"Good Will" in Johnstown Democrat.

Why Is Action Not Taken?

The Journal of the Knights of Labor claims, what we have stated previously, that free coinage of silver is now the law of the United States. The law of 1839, which provided for such coinage, it states, was repealed in 1873, but re-enacted in 1878 with a new clause requiring the purchase and coinage of 2,000,000 to 4,000,000 ounces of silver per month. It was this clause and not the law of 1837, which was repealed in 1893, which also repealed the purchase clause of 1890. The Journal attributes the failure to act on this view to the fact that owners of silver bullion are also the largest gold and bond owners in the world, so that they benefit \$10 by gold appreciation for every dollar lost by silver depreciation. But it is strange that others interested in silver mines and prominent silver advocates don't have the case brought to a test.—San Francisco Star.

Well, some of the prominent silver advocates have said that they thought "the enforcement of the free coinage law at this time would kill the political agitation for free silver."—Journal of the Knights of Labor.

When We Have Postal Banks.

The temporary return of prosperity among the wheat and produce farmers of this country caused by the failure of the foreign crops is looked upon by the speculating banks throughout the country as the approach of a great boom. These banks are beginning to make things a little better by investing depositors' money in various kinds of speculations. It will be a sorry day for depositors in these banks, however, should the government establish postal savings banks at the next session of congress. Should this be the case, everybody will be in a hurry to have their money deposited with the government, and these banks will find it mighty hard to meet their deposits upon demand. The days of the speculating banks will be short should the people succeed in establishing the postal savings bank where they can deposit with the government and know that it is safe.—Denver Road.

A Massachusetts Populist.

I make no apology for the action of our party in 1896. Mr. Bryan was worthy of the support we gave him then. He and others not in our party are teaching our principles today. But between now and 1900 either William J. Bryan and his followers will degenerate into partisans and surrender to the conservatism which framed that financial plank in the Chicago platform or they will bring the Chicago platform up to Bryanism. Failing in that, their duty as patriotic political leaders is to be true to their political convictions and to align themselves with the party which fearlessly writes in its platform, "Money by law and no corporation credit to circulate as the currency of the people."—E. Gerry Brown.

Corporations and Their Tools.

Corporations that were to be servants and begged the privilege of supplying cities with conveniences or of serving the country at large have become masters. We have had 30 years of colorless politics in which both of the political parties were simply conveniences for organized greed. There was nothing to arouse the deep slumbering patriotism of the masses, and a race of politicians came to the front, many of whom had no convictions, but straddled every proposition and then waited to be seduced. They were men who made every promise to the laborer and then betrayed him. These men became instruments through which the corporations worked.—Ex-Governor Altgeld.

The First Step.

There are hundreds of thousands of old Republicans who are right at heart, but who are influenced by party loyalty into clinging to an organization that has degenerated into a corrupt political machine engineered by venal and ambitious tricksters and demagogues. The first step to take is to step out of the old organization. Throw off the party harness, take a free breath, look around you, study the situation and then be man enough to put your shoulder to the wheel and help build up another grand old party which shall do as much for the white slave as the old Republican party did for the negro slave.—S. F. Norton.

Who Make a Country?

For me the real making of one's country is done out of sight—in garrets and workshops and coal pits—by people who die every minute, forgotten, swept into heaps like autumn leaves, their lives mere soil and foothold for the generations that come after them.—Mrs. Murphy Ward.

Dominant Law.

No law, whether good or the reverse, can safely be frustrated by its friends in the tender mercies of officials who are bitterly hostile to it, but laws enacted in the interest of the people are daily trusted to the lackeys of corporations and the paid servants of monopoly, who are placed in power for the purpose of being servicable to their masters. That is why laws and institutions are of such very slight advantage to the masses. We must learn the great lesson that the spirit is even more important than the form. Every day we are assured by sycophants that our best laws are failures or that they lie dormant upon the statute books. When we have succeeded in obtaining law officers and other officials in harmony with the spirit of these laws, they will be dead no more, but spring to life.—Twentieth Century.

Irresponsible Prosperity.

We are eating the fruits of an irresponsible prosperity which has grown rich and luxury loving with a fine indifference, too often, to the processes by which our wealth has been gained. What it has cost, what it is costing others, has, at the best, very little concerned us. But a day of reckoning will come, and the awakening of the privileged classes to conditions in the life of working people which they ought long ago to have recognized may easily be a very painful and costly one. Surely a wiser and a nobler way will be to seek first to recognize and to own the conditions in our present industrial life that need bettering, and then to touch them with a wise and generous and fraternal hand.—Rev. Henry C. Potter, D. D., in North American Review.

Senator Butler Favors Henry George.

A telegram has been received in New York from Marion Butler, the populist leader of North Carolina, and a member of the senate, in which that gentleman unreservedly declares for Henry George. Senator Butler says: "He is the only candidate in the race who stands for the principles for which Bryan so heroically contended in the last campaign. The masses of the people all over the country are with him in his fight. Tammany has made a fatal mistake unless it intends to join the Cleveland and Palmer gold crowd."

BLOOD POISONED.

Fearful Result of Improperly Treating an Abscess.

Mrs. L. E. Browning, of Pueblo, Painfully Afflicted from a Complication of Diseases—Her Remarkable Fortitude.

From the Chief, Pueblo, Col. The hurry and bustle of the housewife is extremely wearing upon the delicate organism of womanhood. Her intense earnestness in whatever she undertakes, keeps her constantly to go beyond her strength.

Read the story of a Colorado woman told to our reporter: "Eight years ago," said she, "my husband died and I was left with three children to care for and educate. About two years ago I was very sick with blood poisoning, caused by an abscess that had not received proper treatment. The disease for a time settled in my throat causing the intense angina. Then inflammatory rheumatism set in. For four months and a half I was a prisoner in my room, most of the time confined to my bed. My hands were swollen so that I could not feed myself, and the swelling in my feet and ankles would have made walking impossible if I had been strong enough.

"One day, after considerable treatment my physician brought me a box of pills. "You need a tonic," he said, "and something that will act at once, and this is the best medicine I know of for that purpose."

"Pills, I exclaimed in surprise, as he opened the box and showed me the little pink globes. These are Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for pale people.

"Yes," but you need not be alarmed, they are not physic, and my word for it they'll do you good."

Before I had been taking them a week I noticed a great improvement in my condition. Soon my rheumatism was gone, I grew stronger each day and now am in the best of health."

"The lady was Mrs. L. E. Browning, of 115 1/2 East 4th street, Pueblo, Colorado. "I consider Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People," she continued, "the best tonic I have ever known."

"A friend not long ago, was telling me of her mother who is at a critical period in her life. She had been subject to terrible fainting spells and the whole family would work over her. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have not only stopped the fainting spells but given her so much strength that she is able to take up life's duties again.

"I recommended the pills also to a young lady whose pale face made one pity her. She looked as though there wasn't a drop of blood in her body. She was so weak that she was not able to attend school, but after taking Dr. Williams' pink pills for awhile, she has gone back to school, and with her rosy cheeks and bright eyes, she looks like another girl."

(Signed) Mrs. L. E. Browning. Subscribed and sworn to before me this 19th day of May, A. D. 1897. GEORGE W. GALT, Notary Public.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, contain in a condensed form all the elements necessary to give new life and richness to the blood and restore shattered nerves. They are also a specific for troubles peculiar to females, such as depression, irregularities and all forms of weakness. In men they effect a radical cure in all cases arising from mental worry, over work or excess of whatever nature. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are sold in boxes (never in loose bulk) at 50 cents a box or six boxes for \$2.50, and may be had of all druggists or direct by mail from Dr. Williams' Medical Company, Schenectady, N. Y.

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