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OWN THE TELEGRAPH

Judge Maxwell Introduces a Bill for Government Ownership of Telegraphs and Telephones.

LET EVERY ONE READ IT

See What an Easy Thing it Would be to Copy "the Most Enlightened Nations."

This is Populism.

Judge Maxwell has introduced a bill in the house of representatives providing for the constructing and maintaining of telegraph and telephone lines and to authorize the purchase of such lines as are now in existence and to fix reasonable rates for the use of the same. Judge Maxwell's great learning and long experience upon the bench eminently qualifies him for the task of drawing such a bill. The mountains of difficulties that loom up in the minds of men when they contemplate the taking over of the telegraph system of this country and making it a part of the postal system will disappear when they read Judge Maxwell's bill. All that is needed is that the "be it enacted" shall be sanctioned by our representative and senators and then we shall have a telegraph and telephone system after the pattern of "those enlightened nations" of whom the republicans used to talk so much. The bill is herewith printed in full.

A bill to construct and maintain postal telegraph and telephone lines, and to authorize the purchase of telegraph and telephone lines now in existence, and to fix reasonable rates for the use of the same.

Whereas the means of communication by telegraph and telephone within the United States are insufficient and many important portions of the nation are without adequate means of such communication; and

Whereas it would be attended with great advantage to the nation, as well as the merchants, business men, commercial agencies, and the public generally, if a cheaper, more widely extended, and more expeditious system of telegraph and telephoning were established in the United States, and to that end it is expedient that the government of the United States construct, purchase, own, and operate the telegraph and telephone lines in the United States: Therefore

Be it enacted by the senate and house of representatives of the United States of America in congress assembled, That the postmaster-general is hereby authorized to construct, purchase, and maintain a system of electric telegraph and telephone lines along the sides of the streets, public roads, and highways of the United States, either upon poles of sufficient height to render the same free from obstruction to those passing along such streets, roads, and highways, or who may have occasion to pass under the wires; and in all cases where it shall be deemed inexpedient to place the wires upon such poles or the safety or convenience of the public or individuals may suffer or be in danger from the same, the postmaster-general is authorized to have plans and specifications prepared for the construction of subways in or through any city or village or between different points in the country in which the necessary wires shall be placed. No single contract for the construction of a subway shall exceed one mile in length, and shall be let to the lowest bidder under public notice of four weeks to be affixed, such notice to present with the bid a bond in a sum to be stated in the notice with good and sufficient securities for the performance of the bid in the time and manner specified. Any bidder, however, may put in separate bids for each mile to be constructed. The postmaster-general may reject any and all bids if in his opinion the public interests will thereby be subserved.

Sec. 2. That every post-office where the gross receipts for the preceding year have not been less than three hundred dollars shall be entitled to telegraph or telephone connection, as may be deemed most expedient: Provided, That a majority of the inhabitants within the post-office delivery present a petition to the postmaster-general setting forth the necessity for such line and their desire for the construction of the same.

Sec. 3. That where a new line is to be constructed, and it is probable that real estate of any person will be taken or damaged by the construction of such system, and the parties are unable to agree upon the amount of damages, it shall be the duty of the United States district attorney of the district in which the property is situated to file a petition in the United States district court of that district describing the different tracts of land affected and stating the names of the owners thereof with whom no agreement has been made as to damages, and thereupon it shall be the duty of the court to appoint six capable, fair-minded, and impartial men, not interested in the case, who shall fix a time and place when they will view certain described specified tracts which will be affected by the proposed system and will make their award.

Sec. 4. That personal notice of the time and place so fixed shall be given each person who can be found or whose residence is known and whose property will be taken or damaged and with

whom no agreement has been made at least ten days before the time designated to view the property specified. In case the person whose property is affected is a non-resident of the state he may be served by publication of the notice in some newspaper of general circulation once in each week for four weeks and a copy of the petition to be sent to the owner's last-known place of residence.

The postmaster-general may from time to time make regulations for determining the hours which the offices designated for the receipt and the dispatch of messages shall be open for the transaction of telegraph and telephone business, and fixing the sums that from time to time be paid for the transmission of messages, and for services rendered in connection therewith, and for the general conduct of the telegraph and telephone business: Provided, however, That the charges for the transmission of messages by telegraph throughout the United States, without regard to distance, be at a rate not exceeding twenty cents for twenty words or part of twenty words of each message and not exceeding five cents for each additional five words, and that the names and addresses of the senders and receivers of the message shall not be counted as part of the words for which payment shall be required.

That the sums charged for the transmission of messages shall be held to cover the costs of delivery within the limit of the town postal delivery of that office, and in case the person addressed does not reside within such delivery and the sender desires to have his message delivered by special messenger the charge to him shall not exceed fifteen cents per double mile or any part thereof beyond such limits.

When the person addressed does not live within the above described limits and the sender does not desire to incur the cost of special delivery his message shall be delivered free of extra charge by the ordinary postal delivery next following the arrival of his message, and if there is no postal delivery such message shall be placed in the postoffice of that place in an envelope addressed to the person to whom the message was sent.

Sec. 6. That the postmaster-general may from time to time make contracts with the proprietor or publisher of any public newspaper or the proprietor of any news agency for the transmission and delivery of any telegraphic communication at rates not exceeding twenty cents for every hundred words transmitted between the hours of six o'clock post-meridian and nine o'clock antemeridian, and at rates not exceeding twenty cents for every seventy-five words transmitted between the hours of nine o'clock antemeridian and six o'clock post-meridian to a single address, with an additional charge of five cents for every hundred words or seventy-five words, as the case may be, if the same telegraphic communication is so transmitted to other addresses: Provided, however, That the postmaster-general may from time to time let to any such proprietor, publisher, or news agency the special use of a wire for the purpose of such newspaper or news agency, at a rate not to exceed one thousand five hundred dollars per annum: And provided further, That no such proprietor or publisher of such newspaper or proprietor of a news agency shall have any undue priority or preference in respect to such rates over any other proprietor or publisher of a newspaper, or of a news agency, for the use of the telephone any distance by one person for five minutes the rate shall not exceed twenty cents, and to the proprietor or publisher of a newspaper, or of a news agency, in obtaining or transmitting news not to exceed one-third of that rate.

Sec. 7. That copies of all contracts and arrangements for the transmission of news at special rates shall be transmitted to congress within ten days if congress is in session, and if not in session shall accompany the next report of the postmaster-general, and shall at all times be open to inspection; and copies of all regulations made by the postmaster-general from time to time shall be reported in the same manner.

The postmaster-general is hereby authorized and required to purchase all the telegraph and telephone lines in the United States at their fair cash value, and the United States, by and through the postmaster-general and his agents and employees, shall, from and after the passage and taking effect of this act, have the exclusive privilege of transmitting telegrams or communications by telephone within the United States except as hereinafter provided, and shall also, within the United States, have the exclusive right and privilege of performing all the incidental services of receiving, collecting, or delivering telegrams and telephone messages except as hereinafter provided.

There is hereby excepted from said exclusive privileges of the government the following:

First. Telegrams or telephone messages in the transmission of which no charge is made, being transmitted over wires maintained solely for the private use and relating to the business or private affairs of the owner thereof.

Second. Telegrams or telephone messages transmitted by wires maintained for the private use of a corporation, company, or person, and in respect of which, or of the collection, receipt, and transmission or delivery of which no money or valuable consideration shall be procured to be made or given.

Third. Telegrams and telephone messages transmitted with the written consent of the postmaster-general and relating to the business of the postoffice department.

Fourth. Telegrams and telephone messages transmitted to or from the United States.

Fifth. Telephone systems wholly within a city or village: Provided, That such systems may connect their lines with

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

Mr Sheldon gives some Dictionary Definitions of the Ancient Cult.

THIS IS A POPULIST PAPER.

The Haverhill, Mass., Reformers are Denounced by Socialists as Populists.

Can't Serve Two Masters.

Editor Independent: The editorial attacks upon socialism in recent issues of the Independent are, I believe, wrong, both as matters of fact and as matters of policy. So believing I desire briefly to criticize them and to present socialism as I understand it—and as I know very many populists voters in the state of Nebraska understand it. For a text covering part of the field of controversy let me quote the following paragraph from the last issue:

"There will be no more football games after the socialists, the trusts, and the corporations get through with us. 'Competition' is to be eliminated from the field of human activities. Of course, if it is wrong to enter into competition for property, it is also wrong to compete in a foot race or for a prize at college. The trusts are down on competition. It thinks that if some other fellow should build another line and compete with it for passengers, that it would be all wrong. The thing that is wrong is not competition. In very few occupations is there any chance for competition. The monopolists and socialists work together in such a way as to completely destroy it."

It may be said in reply to the above paragraph that the system of using prizes and "head marks" in school work as a means of stimulating scholarship is disappearing. The philosophical reason for this is that it only stimulates the very few who are in the front and discourages the many who know from the outset that they are not in the race. The philosophy that underlies the best education today is that of broadening the knowledge of all—not of hanging up prizes for the feverish competition of the few.

So with regard to the illustration of building another railway line in competition in carrying passengers with those already built. If the line parallels a previous one certainly the people don't want it built. The building of the Nickel Plate railroad was a public loss. To parallel the Lincoln street railway would be another. The first road can do the business it is very poor economic sense to build another. What the public needs is railway service at cost.

The law of competition as it exists in the world today is the law of flesh and blood selling itself at a continually cheaper price year by year. To partially protect themselves from its destructive effects labor combines into unions and capital into combinations. Both acts are as natural and necessary for self preservation as the herding together of buffalo. Neither is against interest until it seeks to do injustice to others—as for instance the buffalo to gather in herds for the purpose of driving the elk from the feeding ground.

To come directly to "the thing" which means the name and theory seems to frighten my friend—bliss—What is socialism? There are three answers which I give in order.

First—Webster's definition: A theory or system of social reform which contemplates a complete reconstruction of society, with a more just and equitable distribution of property and labor.

Next the Standard dictionary: "A theory of civil policy—that aims to secure the reconstruction of society, increase of wealth, and a more equitable distribution of the products of labor through the public collective ownership of land and capital as distinguished from, and the public collective management of all industries. Its motto is 'Everyone according to his needs.'"

Socialism, as claimed by its advocates, is distinguished from communism in not demanding a community of goods or property and from nationalism in not asking that all individuals shall be rewarded alike.

And third, the Century dictionary: "Any theory or system of social organization which would abolish, entirely or in great part, the individual effort and competition on which modern society rests, and substitute for it co-operative action, would introduce a more perfect and equitable distribution of the products of labor, and would make land and capital, as the instruments and means of production, the joint possession of the members of the community."

Now, take any one or all three of these definitions, and I affirm that they present nothing that is horrible to contemplate. I further affirm that it is the aim of the people's party—so far as I understand its aims—to do es-

entially the very things set forth by these authorities as defining socialism—to substitute co-operation for competition in the production and distribution of wealth and thereby to secure a "more perfect and equitable distribution of the products of labor." I know personally hundreds of populists who understand these things as I understand them and fortify their understanding with the same arguments here presented and more besides. We are populists who believe in socialism—who openly avow its doctrines as herein defined—and believe in securing its blessings as rapidly as we can. We do not yield to Brother Tibbles nor to any other man our right to understand socialism as defined by the highest authorities upon the English language nor to defend its doctrines when so defined.

But, perhaps, the claim may be set up that it is socialism as bounded by the socialist party that is so objectionable. I have never been a member of that party, and cannot speak for its organization. I take notice, however, that the socialist party in this fall's elections made surprising gains in all the eastern states and that in Haverhill, Mass., a socialist mayor—the first in the history of this country—was elected over both old parties upon a platform which I here present as a sample of the tenets of the socialist party. The platform reads as follows:

Article 1. The acquisition by the municipalities of the public utilities, such as street railways, gas and electric light plants and all other utilities requiring a franchise, the same to be operated by the operatives, co-operatively, subject to direct vote of the whole people; the employees to elect their own superior officers, but no employee to be discharged for political reasons.

Article 2. We demand the abolition of the contract labor system on all public works.

Article 3. We demand that eight hours constitute a day's work with a minimum wage of \$2 per diem.

Article 4. We demand that all salaries and wages paid by the municipality be in proportion to the services rendered.

Article 5. We demand that the city, when necessary, furnish proper food, clothing and shoes to all children who are kept at home on account of a lack of proper food, clothing and shoes.

Article 6. We demand that the full powers of the municipality be exercised for the relief of the unemployed, not by charity, but for the establishment of public works for their employment.

Article 7. We demand the abolition of grade crossings and every other menace to human health and life.

Article 8. We demand that the burden of taxation be distributed in proportion to the holdings of each citizen.

Article 9. We demand the abolition of all secret sessions of the city council and that a public record be kept of the vote of each member on all questions.

Article 10. We demand the adoption of the principles of the initiative and referendum and proportional representation.

Article 11. We demand that all officers be subject to recall by the respective constituencies.

Article 12. We demand the abolition of the secret balloting in the city council.

Now read this platform over from beginning to end and point out the plank in it that the progressive populist in Nebraska cannot subscribe to.

There is, it seems to me, no good cause either in fact or in theory for attacks upon socialism. I think the effects of them is to weaken the attachment to the populist party of that body of actual socialistic thinkers who have done as much as any class to make the people's party a power for the present and a prophesy for the future.

A. E. SHELDON,
Lincoln, Neb., December 20, 1898.

Reply by the Editor—It will not do to take refuge behind the dictionaries. The definition that Webster give of republicanism is as follows:

"Republicanism—1. A republican form or system of government; the principle or theory of republican government. 2. Attachment to, or political sympathy for, a republican form of government."

If a man proclaims himself a republican, will Mr. Sheldon accept that as a definition of his political principles? There is not a word in it about "intrinsic" value, the gold standard or protective tariffs.

The socialism that the editor of the Independent opposes is the socialism of the present leaders of that party, which Mr. Sheldon says is organizing in every state in the union. Their papers and their leaders announce populism with more hatred and more vehemence than the republicans do. The very example he gives of socialism in Haverhill, Mass., is denounced by them as populism and not socialism at all. Yet Mr. Sheldon insists that it is socialism. Who is the most authoritative exponent, Mr. Sheldon or the socialist leaders and newspapers? The New York People, the leading socialist newspaper in the United States, denounces the Haverhill leaders and declares that they are not socialists, but populists. The People declares that the leaders of the Haverhill movement "are preaching all the absurdities of populism." The Independent is a populist paper. It believes in and advocates every plank of the platform of the populist party. There is another

(Continued on Fifth Page.)

"EXPANSION" IN RUSSIA

Peopling the Plains of Asia—Railroad Building Through the Veld Region.

GREAT EASTERN MIGRATION

Views of John W. Bookwater, a Well-known Nebraska Landowner and Free Silver Champion

A Government Railway System.

The historian of a hundred years hence will note two great landmarks of the last quarter of the Nineteenth century—the signing of the treaty of peace between the United States, and the building of the trans-Siberian railroad.

These two events mark the entrance of the two great future world-powers upon an era of world wide influence and control. The only two nations that have the territory and the people capable of expansion are Russia and the United States. Fifty years from now they will so completely overshadow the other nations of the earth in all the elements of material strength as to make the disarmament proposal by the present czar not only possible, but enforceable by their own mutual agreement.

Several times in the past year the columns of the Independent have referred to the opening of the great Siberian empire by the Russian government and the prospective incoming of its mighty rivalry in the production of grain and live stock. Additional information and prophecy is given by John Bookwater, whose residence is in Ohio, but who is an extensive landowner in Nebraska. Mr. Bookwater is not only a land owner, but is an original and energetic thinker on economic questions. His little book, "Free Silver or What?" printed two years ago is not merely a campaign document, but a piece of literature that will be read with interest long after the other writings of the campaign of 1896 have ceased to be considered.

Mr. Bookwater has just returned from a trip of 17,000 miles in Russian territory. He was allowed to go everywhere, to see everything and to take hundreds of photographs, thanks to special permits issued to him by the minister of the interior on the application of the United States ambassador at St. Petersburg. During his journey he conversed with the governors of provinces and with military and civil officers of all ranks.

In his interviews he speaks some momentous truths. Among other things he said:

"Everywhere I found the kindest and most friendly feeling toward America and Americans and heard many expressions of satisfaction over America's success in our war with Spain. To this there was not a single exception. Wherever I went everything was thrown open to me simply because I was an American.

"America's best open door to central Asia and China is through Russia. Already all the locomotives and rolling stock on the railways are of American manufacture. Central Asia will, in the near future, be the greatest market in the world for manufactures of all kinds and our obtaining the virtual monopoly of this market only depends on our retaining the friendship Russia has now for us. A great surprise to the world is in preparation in that part of the earth and it will come, I believe, very soon.

RUSSIA WILL SEEK ALLIANCE.

"Not many years will elapse before the world will see Russia, England and China combining for the partition of Asia. The very force of circumstances will bring this about. England and Russia will never be able to agree on a partition between themselves. Still less will they allow the other powers to share with them in the spoils of that empire. They will be forced to defend China, which alone is helpless against the rest of the world and share with it the domination of Asia.

"The alliance of England and Russia and China, of two-thirds of the human race, will be such an alliance as history has not yet seen. It will be one that will give peace to the world for centuries. All its interest will make for peace and it will be able to dictate terms to the rest of the world.

The free silver scholar and Nebraska landowner is shrewd enough to see and say what some of our American politicians and business men will not see—that there is little for American labor or interest to gain by the opening of China or the speculation of the Malay regions. He says on this point:

"America has very little to gain by an 'open door' in China. That country is an industrial one, and what we may now be able to sell to the Chinese they will soon be able to make for themselves. One day—and that day is near at hand—whatever China buys from the rest of the world, will reach it through Russia and Central Asia.

"Russia, in the last thirty years has done more to open the doors of China

than England and all the rest of the world has done in fifty years. No one, unless he has seen it with his own eyes, can have the faintest conception of what Russia has done and is still doing in Central Asia.

"I have traveled over 1,200 miles of railway which that country has built from the Caspian sea to Tashkend, in Turkestan, over a branch of this line which runs to the northern frontier of India, over another branch which goes from Mery to the border of Afghanistan. This last branch was not completed when I was there, but it will be open to traffic next week. There are also Russian lines along the Persian frontier and penetrating into that country, either completed or rapidly approaching completion. All the work on these lines has been done by the soldiers, who, in that way, are not in Russia as elsewhere, non-producers.

Another matter of mighty moment to the American people that Mr. Bookwater saw and recorded is the agency of the government in this vast enterprise of opening up and settling a continent. He says:

"All this tremendous Asiatic railway system is owned and operated by the government. All the lines are admirably built and splendidly equipped. Why, I saw a bridge across the Amudaria in Central Asia, at point where the river is three miles wide, that cost 20,000,000 rubles and is the greatest piece of engineering work ever accomplished. There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world, the celebrated Fifth bridge, near Edinburgh, not excepted.

"Wherever I went I saw cities and towns springing up, such as Ashgabad in Turkomania, for example, which already has 25,000 inhabitants. Near Mery the czar is building a magnificent palace. New Bokhara, twelve miles from old Bokhara, has 102,000 inhabitants.

"The Russian policy in Central Asia is not to bring the new and the old in too close a contact, and so it builds the railway stations a few miles away from the old centers of population, thus forming new and entirely modern centers.

"Where do the people come from to inhabit these towns? Why, from European Russia. The government is turning its surplus European population into Central Asia just as the United States turned its surplus population of its Atlantic States into the great western territories. What I have just seen in Central Asia is almost an exact reproduction of what I witnessed years ago in Illinois, Indiana and Missouri, when the emigrants from the east were pouring into the west. No human power stay the onward march of the Slav through Russia, which will be the feature of the twentieth century, just as the march of the Anglo-Saxon through America has been the feature of the nineteenth.

No man who intelligently studies present events can doubt that the Russian and American nations are the coming powers in the world. Though widely differing they have yet many traits in common—among them great power of endurance, tremendous energy and colonizing ability—love of freedom and mechanical ability. When the Russian people shall achieve constitutional liberty—which is certain to come in the next quarter of a century—we may look for the long repressed energies of that people to go forward with great bounds. America and Russia will be the rulers of the world's destinies in another fifty years. America is more than a hundred years in advance of Russia in civil liberty and organized progress. How important to the world's welfare that she shall take no backward step.

Bryan's Opening Speech.
CINCINNATI, Ohio, Dec. 29.—Colonel William Jennings Bryan will be present here at the Jackson day banquet of the Daugherty club. The date of the banquet has been changed to Friday, January 8, to meet his convenience. The speech of Mr. Bryan here is expected to be his opening of the campaign against expansion.

Brewers Must Pay the Tax.
WASHINGTON, Dec. 29.—Acting Attorney General Richards has rendered an opinion in which he holds that retail dealers are not required to pay the additional tax of \$1 per barrel on beer purchased by them prior to June 14, 1898, the day the war revenue act went into effect and held by them on that date.

Wife of States Dead.
HELENA, Mont., Dec. 28.—Mrs. Julia W. Flak, wife of the editor of the Helena Herald, died today of gastritis. She was the daughter of Paymaster Walker of the United States army and a niece of James G. Blaine.

Millions to Feed Millions.
CLEVELAND, Ohio, Dec. 29.—Local newspapers announce the engagement of Mrs. Neville Richards, widow of the late Colonel James Richards and sister of Senator M. A. Hanna, to Mr. Jay C. Moore of Chicago, former president of the Illinois Steel company. The Richards interests and those of the Illinois Steel company have been recently consolidated by the Federal Steel company, and it has been estimated that the holdings of Mrs. and Mrs. Flak in this big steel trust will amount to \$10,000,000.

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