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Small Men in Big Places

During the past week the Epworth Assembly has been having its annual outing at Lincoln park. The attendance has been fairly good and most of the people are having an enjoyable time notwithstanding the incompetent management. It is strange that small men, men incompetent to manage their own business affairs, are so frequently chosen as the chief managers and promoters of such enterprises. The best explanation seems to be that after they fall in their own undertakings such men have nothing to do but work overtime while pulling to secure the position. When chosen they lose sight of the responsibilities connected with the place and immediately devote their time to studying methods for profit-making for themselves. The public are forced to endure the loss and suffer the incompetency. It is unfortunate that so worthy an organization as the Epworth Assembly should be burdened with so monstrous an impostor as L. O. Jones among its managers. As a clothing dealer he was a total failure. His business is transacted, according to the best information obtainable, in his wife's name. So far as known he has no property of consequence in his own name except his pull with the Assembly people. It is impossible to tell what percentage of his profits from the Assembly encumbrance are turned over to her. In justice to themselves, the business men of Lincoln should make some effort to protect visitors from such parasites as Mr. Jones. It would be well if men with more business integrity and less pretended religiosity were put in charge of such public enterprises.

Small Net Earnings

The farmer who farms his own farm (not the sort of farming done by J. H. Mickey) as a rule does not know what his net earnings are upon the farm. If at the end of the year he has \$500 or \$800 of available cash on hand as the result of his year's work, he calls this his net earnings. So it is; but it represents the earnings of his investment in the farm and the earnings of himself. How much is due to himself and how much is due to the farm, he seldom takes the trouble to inquire. But railroad corporations do not run business that way. If a stockholder does any work for the road, he demands and gets good pay. George Gould acts as president for a lot of little lines of road in the west (parts of the Missouri Pacific system) and from each and every one of them he draws a salary. Some of these lines are in Nebraska and are held up by the railroad tax bureau as examples of roads being operated at a loss for the sake of the people of Nebraska. If these high-salaried artists would forego their \$10,000 a year salaries, perhaps there would be no loss. At present the railroads are making the greatest gross earnings in their history, and as soon as the present bumper crops begin to move, these earnings will increase still more. The tax agitation has made them vary.

ing their accounts that the net earnings will be less than last year. This is done by making vast improvements and charging the cost to "operating expenses." If the old farmer should build a house or barn and insist that it was part of his "operating expense" for that year, every mullet head in the state would join in the cry that he is crazy. But railroads do just such illogical tricks and their managers get credit for being financiers. The following from the Brooklyn Eagle's Wall Street column touches upon this phase of the railroad question: "Developments of note during the week have been the announcement of the sale of the Chicago & Eastern Illinois and the Rock Island readjustment plan. Although there have been various rumors that the Rock Island would control the enlarged St. Louis & San Francisco system, there have been almost as many reports that the deal named has been undertaken with the view of eventual control by the Southern Railway. Official denials of this project have been plentiful, but are regarded as technical. This would be a most important addition to the Southern Railway, which has recently extended its system through the joint control of the Chicago, Indianapolis & St. Louis with the Louisville & Nashville; the latter important system being also controlled by the financiers dominant in Southern Railway. Considerable stress is laid in some circles on the decreasing ratio of railroad earnings for the month of June. On the whole, however, the railroad industry shows unparalleled prosperity and in the large majority of systems the gross earnings are well over last year's, while the smallness of the net increases and the few losses are largely traceable to the expenditure of profits for improvement and betterment."

Error

An exceedingly annoying error crept into our article last week comparing the assessment of 1876 with 1901. It occurs in the third line (column one, page 7) of the paragraph beginning "The grand assessment roll for 1876," etc. The line reads "1,115,467 miles railroad at," and should read "11,625,763.44 acres at \$3.49, \$40,589,284.98." It was an error of correcting proof and was not discovered until too many papers had been run to justify making a new matrix. Our readers should pray for the editor—it is greatly feared that he said some naughty words when he discovered the error.

J. C. L. Wisely, editor of the New Era, at Sargent, seems to be about all that is worth mentioning in the socialist party out in western Nebraska. He has called a Sixth district congressional convention for Broken Bow, August 30, to put up a man to assist Moses Kinkaid in the campaign against General Barry, besides calling a senatorial, a representative and a county socialist convention. Without entering into any discussion of the merits of the socialism Mr. Wisely contends for, it is evident that in practical politics he expects to help the republicans by alienating a few populists who would otherwise vote the populist ticket.

SOME COMPARISONS

A Little School District in Lancaster County Where the Railroad Pays Nearly Half the Taxes, Yet Shirks to Beat the Band

The 'steenth bulletin "issued under authority of the railroads of Nebraska" makes a showing of the assessed valuation of Lancaster county in 1893 and 1900, and gives as "horrible examples" certain school districts where in the railroad valuation runs from 45 to 60 per cent of the total assessed value. The tax bureau and Colonel Brown rub their hands delightedly and say, "Have't we fixed 'em? That ought to stop their noise."

Suppose the railroads do pay 50 per cent of the taxes in a certain school district—what does that prove? Nothing, except that they pay half the taxes. That is fully as wise an argument as the report for a dollar containing a hundred cents. Suppose the railroads do pay half the taxes paid in a certain school district—what of it? It might happen that they ought to pay 60 or 75 per cent instead of 50. Let us investigate.

School district No. 53 is a little district lying just east of Havelock, in North Platte precinct, Lancaster county, Nebraska. Its entire area, including railroad right of way, is 3,120 acres. Of this, 2,480 acres are deeded lands and taxed as such, and 640 are state lands (saline and common school) under contracts of sale in lease, the holders of which are assessed as having "investments in real estate," the same thing counted as personalty. The B. & M. railroad ("main line" of the C. B. & Q. system in Nebraska) runs through the district, having 1.03 (one and three-hundredths) miles assessed for taxation in the district. This line is the highest assessed piece of railroad in Nebraska, and any comparison of taxes where it runs will be giving the railroads every advantage.

Our calculations will be made for the year 1901, because the railroad tax bureau has kindly furnished a published statement of railroad earnings for that year. The assessment roll of district No. 53 for 1901 is as follows: ASSESSMENT ROLL—1901. 2,480 acres at \$4.15.....\$10,282.50 Personal property.....1,130.00 1.03 miles B. & M. railroad at \$10,580.....10,897.40 Total.....\$22,309.90 The B. & M. property amounts to 48.8 per cent and all other property 51.2 per cent.

The tax levy for 1901 was 7.5 mills for state purposes, 16.6 for school, and 12 for school, making a total of 36.1 mills on the dollar valuation, or \$3.61 to each \$100. The entire taxes charged against the district are as follows: TAX LEVY—1901. Railroad.....\$393.40 Lands.....371.21 Personalty.....40.80 Total charged against prop. \$805.41 Labor tax, 10 at \$3.....30.00 Total taxes.....\$835.41

Now, the tables given by the railroad tax bureau show that the B. & M. extends from Plattsmouth to Kearney, a distance of 191.61 miles—a trifle less than 192. Their own statements show earnings as follows: B. & M. EARNINGS—1901. Gross earnings.....\$3,985,355.93 Operating expenses.....1,487,049.56 Net earnings.....2,498,306.37

A simple problem in long division (using 191.61 for divisor) will give the earnings per mile as follows: EARNINGS PER MILE—1901. Gross earnings.....\$20,799.31 Operating expenses.....7,760.31 Net earnings.....13,038.50

And another little problem in multiplication (using 1.03 for multiplier) will show the following earnings for the 1.03 miles of road in district No. 53: EARNINGS IN DISTRICT 53—1901. Gross earnings.....\$21,422.25 Net earnings.....13,429.66

Now, it will be observed that the B. & M. was charged with a total of \$393.40 taxes in district No. 53. Accordingly, the road was taxed 1.8 (one and eight-tenths) per cent of its gross earnings, or 2.9 (two and nine-tenths) per cent of its net earnings for taxes. If we do this comparison with the taxes paid by other taxpayers in the district? We are now coming to the real question.

Catherine A. McDevitt, the largest land owner in the district, has 449 acres assessed in her name, the total valuation being \$1,580, or at the rate of \$3.59 per acre; just half of the acreage assessed in 1901, and this is valued at \$4.41 per acre, the improved being assessed at \$2.77 an acre. 220 acres were in corn, 130 in meadow and 90 in waste land and pasture in 1901. She was charged with taxes as follows: State.....\$11.85 County.....26.23 School.....13.96 Total.....\$52.04

income would have been only \$1,440. Suppose the B. & M. did pay nearly half of the taxes in district No. 53—what of it? Three dollars an acre is the outside figure Mr. Moore could rent his land for, and the B. & M. would mean a net income of \$720 for the 240 acres. Accordingly he paid at least 6 per cent of his net earnings as taxes, while the B. & M. paid less than 3 per cent.

David Blume of Havelock owns a quarter section in the district. It was assessed at \$660. He had in 90 acres of corn, 6 of potatoes, 60 in meadow, and 4 in waste. His personality was assessed as follows: 3 horses, \$20; 1 cow, \$5; 2 carriages and wagons, \$5; agricultural tools, \$5; household goods, \$5. His taxes on lands and personality amounted to \$25.27 and "labor tax" \$3—the latter being a punishment to Mr. Blume for being a man instead of a soulless corporation. Nine other men in the district were similarly punished, but the B. & M. having no soul, was not called upon to pay "labor tax." Mr. Blume paid all told \$28.27 taxes. If he and the B. & M. had been taxed equitably, his gross earnings must have been \$1,570.55. Every acre of his land should have brought him in nearly \$10. Did it do it? If his taxes had amounted to 2.9 per cent of the net earnings—2.9 per cent, that is, Blume must have had clear, after paying all his farm labor and everything, except taxes and interest on his mortgage (if he has one), including reasonable wages for his own labor—he must have had as net earnings \$974.83. Did he have it? Let him answer. He did well if he had half the amount and kept out nothing as per his "operating expenses" personally. The B. & M. railroad paid 6 per cent of his net earnings in taxes—the Burlington paid less than 3. Suppose the B. & M. did pay nearly half the taxes in district No. 53—what of it? The fact is, it should have paid at least fifty per cent more than it did.

But, urges the special pleader for the railroads, the state constitution requires that by valuation—not on earnings. Dear friend, the capacity to produce income is the basis of value in nearly every taxable thing. This is especially so in the district under consideration. Land values are booming because prices of farm crops are good, but nine-tenths of the recent rise is speculative—counting on bumper crops and driving prices up. Suppose we do make a comparison on "values." What is the B. & M. worth? We cannot count the cost of right-of-way and rails and ties, because if we do that we must count the cost of the farms, and some of these were home-steaded. The 1.03 miles earned \$13,429.66 in the year 1901. That is a 5 per cent return on \$268,593.20. That is the sum of \$268,593.20. Now, let us place an extravagant valuation on all the other property: 3,120 acres at \$60.....\$187,000 52 horses at \$100.....5,200 2 mules at \$100.....200 103 cattle at \$50.....5,150 70 hogs at \$20.....1,400 20 wagons at \$50.....1,000 8 sets household goods at \$300.....2,400 1 organ at \$25.....75

Total.....\$204,225 Even at these exaggerated values of farm property in the district, the assessed valuation is nearly 5.6 per cent of the true value, while the railroad assessment is almost exactly 4 per cent of its true value.

Lands in Lancaster county rent on the average at not more than \$2.50 an acre; \$3 is considered a top price, except for small areas near town, used for gardening. Little more than half of the lands in district No. 53 are improved, but let us give the owners \$3 an acre for the whole 3,120 acres. That would be \$9,360 net earnings for the lands. Add the net earnings of the \$17,222 of personal property—\$861.25. A comparison of net earnings would show as follows: Railroad.....\$13,429.66 All other property.....10,221.25 Railroad taxes.....\$393.40 All other taxes.....442.01

In district No. 53 the B. & M. paid 2.9 per cent of its net earnings in taxes; the other taxpayers paid at least 4.3 per cent of their net earnings in taxes. Suppose the B. & M. did pay nearly half the taxes in district No. 53—what of it? Does any sane man believe it paid more than its share? Does any sane man believe it paid as much as it ought?

CHARLES Q. DE FRANCE.

Tax Shirking a Fine Art

You no doubt have noticed during the past six weeks the articles we have been publishing regarding railroad taxation, which are marked "issued under authority of Nebraska railroads" and which is paid for as advertising by said railroads. They are running the same article in from one to three newspapers in every county in the state at a cost of something like \$1,000 per week. The purpose of these articles is to convince the people of the state that the railroads are, and always have been paying their just proportion as compared with other property. This may be true as regards the larger cities of the state, where tax shirking is considered a fine art, but it is different when you come to the farmer and citizens of the smaller towns. The farmer cannot have his property listed at one-tenth of its actual value as the railroads and people in the larger cities do. The people generally do not ask for anything but justice from the railroads, and when they will not do it, they will not do it. It is necessary for the railroads to spend thousands of dollars in explaining it.—Tribune, Imperial.

Rough on the Reorganizers.

Giving aid and comfort to the enemy is treason, according to the constitution of the United States, and treason was never committed except for a consideration either in right or promised. Attacking the principles of the party to which you profess allegiance is certainly giving aid and comfort to the enemy, and everybody knows that this is not done for strictly sanitary reasons.—Xenia (O.) Herald.

Fellow Servant Law

Editor Independent: What is the fellow servant law what is denounced in the democratic platform? WILL FERGUSON. Hartington, Neb.

(This is "court-made" law governing the relation of master and servant—a vexed question when applied to a corporation, where every human being connected with it is in a certain sense a servant. Even the president of the road is employed. Hence, who is master and who is servant depends considerably upon their relations to each other in the line of their employment. For example, the brakeman on a train is undoubtedly a servant to the conductor, and the latter is the "master" (that is, represents the master—the soulless corporation) so far as the two are concerned. But the conductor is obliged to obey the orders of the superintendent; and as between these two the conductor is servant and superintendent the master.

Now, the courts hold that every person assumes the risks incident to his employment, and that unless the injury complained of is shown to be the result of negligence on the part of the "master," and without "contributory negligence" on the part of the injured person, there can be no recovery. For example, some courts hold the conductor to be the "master" of his train, and the brakeman, fireman, and engineer are all servants of his, and, consequently, all "fellow servants." Unhappily, if Brakeman Doe is injured through the carelessness of Engineer Roe, say, by a sudden and uncalled for quick shunt of the engine in making a coupling, Doe cannot recover damages from the company because the injury was caused by the negligence of a "fellow servant" and not by the negligence of the "master."

The populist and democratic planks differ in language, but mean substantially the same: That where an employee engaged in the operation of "dangerous machinery" is through no fault of his own, injured because of the carelessness or negligence of another employee, he may recover damages. The distinction is to be abolished between those injuries which are caused by negligence of the "master" and those which are caused by the negligence of a fellow servant. There is no master to be negligent, because the master is a corporation; and every employee is a servant, although to a greater or less extent representing and impersonating the master. And who are "fellow servants" and who are not has been a mooted point with courts for years. The Gordian knot can be cut by holding the corporation responsible in damages for all injuries occasioned by the negligence of any employee (other than the injured himself), whether he be the "master" or "fellow servant."—Ed. Ind.)

The Mullet Head Idea

The news that the Argo starch factory at Nebraska City is to be closed down, probably for good, has increased the feeling against the trusts in the bosoms of the plain people. The closing of this factory has been threatened several times in the past, but when J. Sterling Morton was alive he always ridiculed rumors of the kind, and assisted in restoring public confidence. His influence probably had something to do with staying off the calamity, but he is here no longer. The west is dotted with decaying factories which were once great helps to the towns in which they were located, and which were closed by the trusts. Beatrice has a big stately building which was once a starch factory, doing a big business, employing many men, and turning out starch which was celebrated for its excellence. The trust closed it in the same town there was a prosperous oatmeal mill, which appeared to have a glorious future. But the oatmeal trust bought it up and locked the doors. If the packing houses combine, as they threaten, it will mean disaster to many towns which now owe much of their prosperity to the presence of packing houses. These big combine trusts mean the abandonment of the smaller plants, and that means hard luck to the towns in which they are located. There is much discussion of the trusts by the peerless leaders and little giants of politics, but it will be a long time before relief comes from that direction. Some day an infuriated people will rise as one man and settle the trust question; possibly by means of the ballot; possibly by more strenuous means; but when the people are thoroughly aroused, there is no doubt that it will be settled some way.—Wait Mason in Lincoln Evening News (rep.).

The peerless leaders and the little giants are at least offering what they believe to be a solution to the trust problem. They tell the story of trust-wronged cities and people in no stronger language than does Mr. Mason; but they offer a remedy. They do not sit back and suggest that the people may some day settle the trust question by a bloody revolution, because they still have faith to believe that the American people are wise enough to settle the trust problem by legislation instead of assassination. Perhaps Mr. Mason is a better prophet than the gentlemen he sneers at; perhaps he knows that the percentage of mullet heads is so large that nothing but absolute starvation will induce them to act—and then any one can predict what a mob of hungry people will do.

Railroad discrimination is the backbone of such trusts as the corn products company. With freight rates the same to the little manufacturer of starch as to the corn products company, the people of Nebraska City might start another factory and successfully compete with the trust. But it would be little short of insanity to attempt it now—the corn products company could haul corn to the Atlantic coast from Nebraska, make it into starch, ship the starch back to Nebraska and drive the Nebraska City people out of the market in every town in the state fifty miles distant, not because of supposed "economies" in trust production of starch, but because the trust would get a freight rate that the local company could not possibly secure.

The tariff helps many of the trusts, but railroad discrimination helps all of them. There can be no satisfactory solution without public ownership of the railroads.

Nebraska Horticulturists

The summer meeting of the Nebraska State Horticultural society was held in Tecumseh, Neb., July 29 and 30. Many of the citizens of Johnson county had come together to attend a Chautauqua association in their beautiful park on the edge of the town.

The Tuesday afternoon session was held in Chautauqua park that all might have the pleasure of listening to the very interesting memorial address on the life and character of J. Sterling Morton by ex-Governor Robert W. Furnas of Brownville, Neb.

Governor Furnas related many interesting incidents of their lifelong friendship and work in the upbuilding of the state. In 1866 J. S. Morton started a democratic paper at Nebraska City and a year later Governor Furnas started a republican paper at Brownville. Party feeling ran very high in those days, each paper abused the other. After about a year of this the two editors happened to meet at a public meeting, were mutually attracted and then and there all personalities should in future be left out of their respective papers. Thus commenced a warm and enduring friendship. These two gentlemen had an important part in the development of the agricultural and horticultural interests in the state of Nebraska. Ex-Governor Furnas' address was filled with apt stories illustrating the private and public life of his friend, Mr. Morton.

R. A. Emerson of Lincoln, professor of horticulture in the state university, discussed the renovation of an orchard. T. E. Snodgrass of Johnson county, small trees and illustrated with trees in hand his idea of the proper method of pruning the orchard. That is, to commence while the tree was quite young and so shaping the tree and guiding its growth that heavy pruning would not be needed.

Mrs. E. G. Jury of Tecumseh read an excellent paper on the adornment of the farm home. Mrs. O. A. Corbin of Tecumseh gave a very interesting and fully prepared paper on small fruits for profit and home table. Dr. Hungeate of Weeping Water gave his experience with one thousand strawberry plants and stated that strawberries could be grown at the rate and value of \$500 per acre. The veteran horticulturist, Rev. C. S. Harrison of York, was present and gave most exact information in regard to growing evergreens from seed.

Prof. Lawrence Bruner of Lincoln discussed the ravages of insect enemies and the very great value of our friends, the birds. Among other figures by Prof. Bruner he mentioned that we have 100 different insect enemies to the strawberry, 100 insect enemies to the orchard, 150 different insects work on corn and 30 or 40 on watermelons. Each female grasshopper deposits an average of 100 eggs. Plant lice not only lay eggs, but in addition produce their young alive. He gave some very surprising figures regarding the increase of many of our insect enemies indicating what might happen in case they were not kept in check by our friends the birds. The birds eat weed seed in the winter and prey on insects in summer. A robin eats ten quarts of cut worms in a season. A robin will eat as many canker worms as would be sufficient to destroy all the foliage and fruit of three apple trees. It has been ascertained that one chickadee would eat 1,000 canker worms eggs in one day, also that one robin would eat 100 female canker worms in a day. Prof. Bruner urged the value of feeding the birds with millet seed or grain at times when other foods were scarce. On an average each bird eats 25 insects daily. Reckoning 120,000 insects to the bushel the birds of Nebraska eat more than 16,000 bushels of insects daily, more than two million bushels. In the average year the birds eat an increase of double the number of birds would enable our feathered friends to be very much more effective in holding our insect enemies in check. A bird can destroy more insects than a man, the man using only his hands and feet.

Teach children to recognize birds as friends. Prof. Bruner mentioned his mother's influence; that she had taught him that he had no more right to kill a bird than a playmate. The birds have as much right to life as we. He suggested that birds often eat fruit for want of water. Place water within reach and save a portion of the fruit. Birds in large numbers, mean insects would be present in small numbers. Mr. Dunlap made inquiry regarding the parasites on grasshoppers. Prof. Bruner made answer that certain grasshopper eggs, which are hatched, these hatch and the grub destroys the grasshopper. These grubs then leave the body of the grasshopper, enter the ground in 6 or 8 days emerge as a fly and again prey on the grasshoppers. Prof. Bruner mentioned the work of grasshoppers in South America where the Argentine confederacy offering a bounty has secured the destruction of 30,000 tons of grasshoppers and 9,000 tons of grasshopper eggs. Mention was made of one farmer at Lebanon, Neb., who using a hoppodizer destroyed 80 bushels of grasshoppers on 80 acres.

In further discussion of the birds as a friend to horticulturists Hon. Silas Wilson of Atlantic, ex-lieutenant governor of Iowa and a prominent horticulturist, of that state gave his experience. He plants Russian mulberry for the birds; they ripen during the cherry season. He provides water. He would teach horticulture and love for the birds in the public schools. Hon. R. W. Furnas mentioned that the snakes and toads were among the greatest insect-destroyers we have. In France toads are grown for sale to gardeners.

Prof. Emerson discussed ridge versus hill culture of sweet potatoes, showing that at the state farm they had found that on dry land level culture gave the best percentage of crop. They had tested high ground ridged and level, lower land ridged and level, also by cultivation, by mulching and by irrigation. The subject of organization for marketing fruit was assigned to E. F. Stephens of Crete. This gentleman had during the present summer traveled some 4,000 miles investigating methods in use in other districts. That in districts where fruit growers were thoroughly organized they secured much better facilities and much lower freight rates in markets than their products. In the course of the discussion Mr. G. S. Christy of Johnson men-

tioned that there would be more than 500 carloads of apples in Johnson county and that freight rates was a matter in which they were much interested.

The close of the meeting such members as desired were driven to the orchards about Tecumseh. The association was invited to hold their next annual meeting on the state farm near Lincoln. E. F. STEPHENS. Crete, Neb.

Mr. J. F. Ericson of West Lincoln, one of the organizers of the populist party and for twenty-nine years a resident of Lancaster county, died at his home in West Lincoln July 29, of pneumonia. Mr. Ericson was 66 years of age and leaves a wife and son to mourn his loss. The populists of Lancaster county will feel the loss, as Mr. Ericson was ever prominent in the party councils, and a good friend and neighbor.

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