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We may come to government ownership of the railroads in this country, but if we do, it will never be by ownership by the states. The railroads are no longer state institutions except in name. They have become trans-continentals systems and must remain so. People will never put up with any system that shall divide these systems again into separate lines, thus destroying that unity which is so essential to rapid and cheap transportation. The country suffers already too much from conflicting laws passed by the various states in regard to corporations. The trust problem and the railroad problem can not be solved on lines of states' rights. They must be met by federal enactments, if at all. Mr. Bryan's idea that the railroads could be owned by the separate states, and then a board composed of representatives of the various states could deal with the joint traffic of the lines, is not a satisfactory solution of the difficulty presented by ownership of the railroads by various states.

We do not believe that government ownership is necessary in the United States, and we do not believe it will be favored by the people, if the railroads will themselves, in the interest of fair play and of public protection, favor a policy of the widest publicity of their affairs and of a reasonable government regulation of rates.—Wall Street Journal.

### Government Ownership.

If the question of whether the government should take over the railroads of the country could ever be submitted to a popular vote in this nation it would overwhelmingly carry; not particularly because there is any great desire on the part of the people to undertake this quasi-public function, but simply and solely because the railroads, by their indefensible and unpatriotic acts, have so exasperated the people that they would favor the plan as a matter of self-defense.

The railroads of the country today hold the people in a despotic grip. They charge whatsoever they please for the carriage of freight and passengers, they build up one town at the expense of another, just as the selfish interests and investments of their officials dictate, they debauch and corrupt not only our politics but our professional men.

Here in Nebraska we have had such numerous and striking examples of the power of the aggregated railroads that public sentiment is pretty well crystallized in favor of the government owning them. There is scarcely a business man in the city who has not felt the iron hand of the road, reaching out each year to grab more of his legitimate profits, simply because they feel the need of more money. In the last ten years the capitalization or bonded indebtedness of the railroads has been doubled without any corresponding increase in mileage, but simply and solely because there were excellent opportunities for stock jobbery and big rackets. The people are left to foot the bills in the shape of highly increased rates.

In order to entrench themselves against legislative restriction, which has proven a farce and delusion with federal judges selected by the railroads to enjoin all laws enacted, the roads have undertaken to run our politics. In each state they select the dominant party for their favors, and as the dominant party is usually in the hands of a machine, or at least of an aggregation of selfish politicians, they are all the more ready to accept the proffered aid and to promise in return indulgences in the shape of "proper" legislation or shaved taxes. It does not matter what political party is concerned. The roads are ready to do

business and the politicians meet them around the corners.

Just now it presents the spectacle of the railroads, forced to face a just assessment of their property before the state board of equalization and wrested in the republican state convention of their usual power to nominate governors and United States senators, conspiring with the reform party leaders to take the state away from the republicans—and the reform party leaders are looking as pleased and tickled as though they had drawn a prize. It is safe to say that if the railroads wish to make a bargain with the fusion leaders the bargain can be made, because party success and not the people's real welfare is the politician's ideal of government.

The cry of paternalism and socialism, of interference with legitimate business, will be raised whenever public ownership is broached. We will be told of the great dangers attaching to putting railroad employees upon the government payroll, in spite of the fact that the postal department experiment has proven false all theories of the great political power this would give the party in control. These cries and arguments are losing their force; municipal ownership is proving their absurdity.

The first great task before the people is to loosen the grip of the railroads upon the men they send to congress and to the legislatures of the states. Most of them are recipients of railroad aid if not absolutely picked out by the roads, and against their inertia and disinclination to act a tremendous force must be exerted. It will come in time, just as all reforms have, but the task is greater than even that involved in getting the Australian ballot, which was adopted by this country after practically all other countries employing the ballot had put it in force.—Lincoln, Neb., News.

### Bryan Sounds The Tocsin.

Already has Wm. J. Bryan thrown down the gauge of battle in the approaching campaign, to be begun at the close of the present presidential

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"Do you know what kind of a building a tannery is?" asked the teacher. "Sure!" responded the boy who had been tanned with a shingle. "It's another name for woodshed."—Chicago Daily News.