



George Burnham, Jr., vice president of the Mutual Reserve Funds Life Insurance company, has been sentenced to two years in the penitentiary.

London cablegrams say that James Bryce is to be made ambassador to the United States.

Assistant Attorney General Lake of Missouri says that in the event the Standard Oil trust is convicted in the Missouri proceedings against it, the property of the trust will be confiscated.

Bishop Charles C. McCabe of the Methodist church died in New York, aged 70 years.

The coal famine in the northwest has reached a serious stage; many towns report that they are practically out of fuel and supplies. The famine is due to an alleged shortage of freight cars.

As a result of the election for the control of the New York Life and Mutual Life Insurance companies, Mr. Untermyer claims a victory for the policyholders. He says their ticket received 159,150 votes, while the administration ticket received 140,750. The officers of the company claim the administration has won.

Edward H. Harriman bested James J. Hill in a contest for the control of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad.

Secretary Leffingwell of the San Francisco board of education takes issue with Secretary Metcalf. In an Associated Press interview, Mr. Leffingwell says: "The report made by Secretary Metcalf as exploited before congress contains many assertions and inferences which are surprising and inferences which are surprising to say the least, since they are in error and are therefore unfair, as they are applied to the members of the board of education. When Secretary Metcalf reached this city on his mission for President Roosevelt and the object of his visit was made known the board of education did all in its power to equip him with the facts surrounding the new order made in regard to the schooling of Japanese pupils. When Secretary Metcalf asserts that the Japanese and Korean exclusion league directed the board of education to enter the ruling concerning the Japanese pupils, he utters that which we say is an error. The members of the board of education were especially careful to explain the origin of the matter to Secretary Metcalf. The board acted upon its own initiative and merely proceeded to enforce a state law."

Negro citizens are somewhat disturbed by the president's message on the discharge of negro troops. An Associated Press dispatch under date of Boston, Mass., December 19, says: "At a meeting of the suffrage league of Boston and vicinity (colored) held tonight, resolutions in relation to the message of President Roosevelt on the Brownsville affair were passed. The resolutions are in part as follows: We denounce the language of the president in his official answer to the Foraker resolutions as the most extraordinary language used by a presi-

dent of a Christian republic. One who is familiar with the tyrants of the past would think it was the language of Nero or the Duke of Alva. In his message inciting race hatred and mob violence against ten million of innocent citizens, he has shown himself to be a mere politician and not a great statesman. In accusing all colored persons who object to his unlawful and summary punishment of 170 colored soldiers without trial of court martial or examination by a military court of inquiry of a desire to shield murderers, the president misrepresents ten million of as law abiding and patriotic native born American citizens as the country possesses."

The steamer Scoville was destroyed by an explosion near Vicksburg. John Quackenboss, captain of the vessel; Wade Quackenboss, clerk; Joseph Smith, clerk, and Lavell Yerger, a traveling salesman, were killed. A defective boiler caused the explosion.

A Columbus, Ohio, dispatch to the New York World says: "Cassie Chadwick is going south for her health, although she is in the Ohio penitentiary. She will go under guard. Mrs. Chadwick has complained to the United States authorities of ill-treatment, and inspectors sent to the prison have recommended her removal to Atlanta, Georgia."

The interstate commerce commission is making an investigation into the car shortage. It develops that the cattle men as well as the coal consumers have been greatly inconvenienced. H. C. Jett of Fort Davis, Texas, testified that not ten per cent of the cattle are being moved.

Governor Higgins of New York has commuted to life imprisonment the sentence of Albert T. Patrick, the New York lawyer who was to have been electrocuted.

The trial in the federal district court of Bartlett Richards, president; William G. Comstock, vice president; C. C. Jameson, secretary and treasurer and general manager of the Nebraska Land & Feeding company, controlling the 400,000 acre "Spade" ranch, and Aquilla Triplett, their agent, ended in the conviction of the four defendants on thirty-six counts of an indictment which charged conspiracy to defraud the government of public lands and subornation of perjury.

The democrats of the Sixth congressional district of New Jersey are justly proud of the triumph of William Hughes in the recent election. He has been before the voters of the district as a candidate for congress three times and the runs he has made have been phenomenal, considering that formerly the normal republican majority was over 5,000. In 1902, he was elected over Colonel William Barbour, a millionaire manufacturer, by 3,848. In 1904, although President Roosevelt carried the district by 8,338, Mr. Hughes was beaten by but 510, and this year he has been elected by a majority of 2,103. He has been prominently mentioned as a candidate for governor next year, and as New Jersey has been showing signs of swinging back into the democratic column, his chances for election would be good.

Bryanism in an Early Massachusetts Report

Senator Lodge speaks in high terms of the Massachusetts system of public supervision of railroads, and he refers to Mr. Acworth, the English railroad authority, who thinks the Massachusetts legislation a model of its kind. What is meant by the Massachusetts plan is the exercise through a commission of advisory instead of arbitrary powers, or the power to enforce its recommendations.

It is commonly claimed that this Massachusetts method has worked to perfection. But it would probably be nearer the truth to say that, in relation to the steam roads and their charges, it has not worked at all—at least in late years. The value and efficiency of the state railroad board have been best shown in relation to street railways since their conversion to the use of electric power some fifteen years ago; the board here has been an active and strong influence not only in keeping capitalization within honest bounds, not only in regulating and improving transportation facilities, but in occasionally moderating rates of fare.

But as to the steam roads? They opposed the law of 1869 creating the commission, and then they fought the commission and successfully. The very first question the original commission took up was that of passenger fares and freight rates with the view of securing a reduction. But the roads interposed so stout and general a resistance that any substantial effort in this direction was abandoned and never resumed. The Massachusetts steam railroads have been practically free to charge just what they please throughout the thirty-six years covered by the legislation which Mr. Lodge and Mr. Acworth regard as a model. So great indeed had become the inattention of the commission to the steam roads and their rates that when the legislature, at the time of authorizing the Boston and Albany lease, wanted some information on this subject the commission had to go to the company, and the company had to admit that its freight rate schedules were not only a secret of its own for the most part but without rule or order at that. From the standpoint of the roads, the legislation of 1869 and its commission regulation had been a great success.

It is a somewhat curious fact, conveniently overlooked by Mr. Lodge, that the original commission conceded in advance that it was bound to be a failure in the effective regulation of rates. As then composed the board consisted of James C. Converse, a Boston merchant, Edward Appleton and Charles Francis Adams, who later became chairman and who was then the dominating spirit of the commission. And this is what the commission said in its second annual report:

"Should the legislature delegate a power in this regard (specific rate regulation) to the present or any other board of commissioners, it would simply destroy it in so doing. A responsibility would be imposed unsustained by any executive power. An authority to regulate fares and freights over roads owned, controlled and operated by others, would place those in whom such authority was reposed in an entirely false and impossible position. Those managing the roads could produce what results they saw fit; they could easily demonstrate, by apparent practical workings, the absurdity of anything which was distasteful to them. They could reduce to real failures the most correctly reasoned theories. It is useless for the legislature to look for satisfactory results from the labors of any board

which can work only through reluctant agents, and the position of one who can direct but can not execute is in the last degree unfortunate. It resembles nothing so much as that of a military commander, all of whose subordinates feel a direct and lively interest in his failure."

This argument appears to weigh as strongly against effective rate regulation by a commission of arbitrary powers as against one with only advisory powers; and accordingly it tells against the present plan of national rate regulation as well as against the Massachusetts plan. The point is that in either case the orders or recommendations of the commission remain to be worked out by hostile agents (the railroads); and it will have to be said that so far in the experiment of public regulation that forecasts of largely futile results, made by the early Massachusetts commission, has been borne out not only in Massachusetts experience but in federal experience and in that of states which have employed more arbitrary powers.

We are now to make a new trial on a national scale; and it is to be said that if there are those like Bryan who think it foredoomed to continued failure, this is no more than what the pioneer commissioners in American rate regulation also thought. They considered as necessary for effective state regulation that the state itself should be the agent for carrying out its ideas of what a railroad should do, and this could be done only through the ownership and operation by the state of some line of road to whose example and standards the private-owned roads would be forced to conform. This was how they came to advise the state purchase and operation of the Fitchburg road, then about to be extended through Hoosac tunnel to New York state, in which the state owned a large interest.

Thus if Bryan were to reduce his plan simply to the initial experimental one of having the national government acquire a single through line from San Francisco, to Chicago, New York and Boston, he would occupy a position on all fours with that of the early Massachusetts commission. But it would be a far stronger one practically; for the state acquisition of the Fitchburg, or even of the Boston and Albany, would almost certainly have been doomed to failure since the all-important western connections would have been controlled by private-owned roads interested in killing the Massachusetts state road. A national road, however, stretching clear across the country by way of the greater centers of population and commerce could not possibly be choked to death by other roads. It could only fall through a failure to do business better and more cheaply than other roads similarly situated.

This second Massachusetts railroad report forms indeed a veritable campaign document for the Bryan agitation. It holds the same view regarding the ineffectiveness of rate control through the commonly adopted methods, and presents substantially the same alternative method of dealing with the problem. Mr. Lodge will not be hurting the Bryan agitators as much as he thinks he is in directing their attention to Massachusetts experience.—Springfield, Mass., Republican.

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