

HARRIMAN AND HILL

Quite so. Mr. Henry M. Whitney, of Boston, director in the Boston & Maine railroad, is entirely right. Mr. Harriman and Mr. Hill by the consummation of their monarchical schemes are doing more for the government ownership of railroads than all the writers and orators in the country. The principal economic reason for leaving the roads in private hands is the expectation that the public will thereby enjoy the benefits of competition among them. This expectation is illusory at best, but Hill and Harriman have definitely destroyed all rational hope of competition. They may assert that it still exists, but the public looks rather at what they do than at what they say.

The people are also jealous of the existence of this imperial power in the possession of one or two men. It looks dangerous. The opinion is becoming common that, if economic power must be so concentrated, the concentration should be where the voters can control it. Hill and Harriman have also by their action refuted the objection that the railroads cannot be managed by a single bureau. They are so managed now, though it is done rather badly, with waste, wreck and great loss of life. The people are inclined to believe that it could be done better by a government department which would attend to the business strictly and not divert needed time and attention to speculations in stocks.

The fear that government ownership would lead to the creation of a great political machine has also lost its point. Civil service rules together with labor unions put such a possibility out of the question. And even if this were not so the public finds the present political activity of the railroads more dangerous than any such machine could be. The corruption of government which they accomplish by their inveterate lobbying, by issuing passes and by other well-known methods, surpasses anything which a mere political machine could cause. Thus Mr. Whitney was exceedingly well advised in remarking that Mr. Harriman and Mr. Hill are in reality the most effective promoters of government ownership.—Portland Oregonian (republican.)

THIEVES AND THIEVES

Four Nebraska cattlemen who conspired to steal 200,000 acres of government land have been condemned to pay the penalty for their crimes. Two of them are to pay a fine of \$1,500 each and serve one year in a county jail; two of them must pay \$800 each and spend eight months in jail. It cannot be said that this is an excessive punishment for the theft of 200,000 acres of land.

Suppose that these men had been convicted of stealing \$200 in cash or that by force they had held up a citizen and taken a dollar from his pocket they would not have got off so easily. There is a defect in the laws when greater thieves escape with penalties mild in comparison with those imposed upon lesser thieves. If the man who stole \$173,000 from the subtreasury is found to be a trusted employe of the government no greater punishment can be inflicted upon him than upon a sneak thief who takes an overcoat worth \$15, while the minimum penalty in the latter case is one year and in the former case six months.

Whether viewed from the standpoint of punishment or warning the penalty inflicted upon the land thieves is not likely to have a great deterrent effect. To serve one year in a county jail, where money will procure luxuries and where there is no hard labor to per-

form, is little enough to pay for the use for years of 200,000 acres of land. The government is making a good beginning in prosecuting the men who seize the public domain, but the next convicted criminals should be given the extreme penalty of the law if the practice is to be rendered unpopular.—Chicago Tribune.

INLAND WATERWAYS

We have simply failed to realize the possibilities of these three or four trunk streams, their innumerable tributaries and the smaller rivers which Providence has planted as potential highways in nearly every state in the union. We have, instead, permitted the annual appropriation for rivers and harbors to degenerate into a mad scramble for local favors, the upshot of which is influenced more by political pressure or favoritism than considerations of the national welfare. These river systems should be, today, auxiliaries to the railroads of the country. They should be more. Furnishing cheap transportation to finished or crude products to the ports of the Gulf of Mexico or those on either the Atlantic or the Pacific coast, they should, a decade ago, have constituted a checkmate against the rapacious aggression of the rail lines.—Atlanta Constitution.

TIMES NOT GETTING WORSE

No one, indeed can view the spiritual life of the time without feeling that it is one of high activity and not of somnolence. This, combined with the practical testimony that we have in all that we are doing both in an official and an unofficial capacity for the general uplift, must bring comfort and assurance that whatever shape passing developments take, there is no decrease of real faith, of real hope, of cheerful endeavor, of high resolve; and no diminution of the spirit of human brotherhood. And this surely is to have the face set toward the light.—Indianapolis News.

THE FAIRBANKS BOOM

Mr. Fairbanks is both nurse and nursed. A neat-fitting nurse's cap is hardly needed to complete the solicitous make-up with which he attends to his own presidential boom. His boom really ought to be called only a ripple; there is nothing loud-sounding about Mr. Fairbanks. With cat-like tread he passed from one meeting to another in Chicago the other day, winding up with an address to the university students, whom he thrilled by affirming his belief that "knowledge is power."—New York Evening Post.

STAND PAT FOR SHARP PRACTICE

There has never been in the legislation of this country a sharper practice than that of the introduction of the reciprocity feature in the Dingley law and the subsequent repudiation of the whole matter. It is the conspiracy of the trust that did it, and it is time it was undone; it is time we were having a prosperity that was not turning out multi-millionaires by the score.—Ohio State Journal.

VOTES IN FRANCE AND PHILADELPHIA

In France a man may, in certain instances, vote as many as five times. In Philadelphia the number of times depends upon the size of the majority the machine is figuring on and the population of the graveyards.—Washington Herald.

WHO SAID TALK IS CHEAP!

Congressmen spoke 9,000,000 words and appropriated \$1,000,000,000 at the short session of congress. If congressional words are going to cost \$11 each the country may find it necessary to send a bunch of deaf mutes to the national legislature.—Omaha Bee.



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