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Ingersoll Watches

Finn Exposes R. R. Law

Hon. Lawrence Finn, of the Kentucky Railway Commission, exposes some of the weaknesses of the new railway law in his illuminating way. He says: "Regardless of prophetic criticism or approval, only actual results will determine the folly or wisdom in enacting the Esch-Cummins Railroad

bill. However, if it does not prove thoroughly satisfactory to the National Association of Owners of Railroad Securities representing, as they claim, twenty-eight billions of "the investing resources" of the nation, that organization can only have itself to censure, as the bill was framed October 9th, 1919, and then read primarily to meet its demands. In confirmation of this statement read the letter of the Organization's President, Mr. S. D. Warfield, dated the bill.

"Why are not the same newspapers and magazines which criticized the burdensome rates imposed by the government" now criticising a continuation of these same rates or proposed increased rates? It is because the increased revenues go to the "wards of Wall street?"

"The Louisville Courier-Journal of February 26th carried a special dispatch from its Washington Correspondent headlined: 'PUBLIC OPINION BEHIND PASSAGE OF (ESCH-CUMMINS RAILROAD) BILL. GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP FADES AS CONSERVATISM COMES TO THE FRONT.' A paragraph from the news item reads as follows: 'If the railroads under private ownership create an impression of being better managed than has recently been the case, government ownership ought not again to become an issue for many years.'

"From Director General Hines' recent letter addressed to the newspapers, we lift the following extracts: 'Local managers of (railroads) are the same skilled railroad officers who operated the railroads prior to federal control and will still continue to operate them after federal control is ended.'

"The Central Administration at Washington has been using its au-

thority as well as its influence to stimulate local managements to avoid all unnecessary employment.'

"Why was it necessary to stimulate these same 'skilled railroad' officers operating the railroads for the government and who will continue to operate them after federal control is ended 'to avoid unnecessary employment?'

"Why should railroads after March the 1st., with the same skilled railroad officers 'create the impression of being better managed than has recently been the case?' The Courier-Journal correspondent gives the answer: 'So that government ownership (will) not again become an issue for many years.'

"Thus the whole truth will finally dawn upon the public, awakening them to realize that so called government operation was but an inspiration to inefficiency, extravagance and waste by those who operated the railroads for the government and at the same time desired private ownership. The Director General's statement is a strong indictment against railroad management.

"The necessary inference is that during a national crisis, when winning the war largely depended upon properly mobilizing labor, railroad managers were employing unnecessary labor. "Why?" the question may be asked, "the inspiration to employ unnecessary labor?" The answer is, "To dissipate government revenues and prevent a financial success of government operation, which financial failure could be advertised to discredit government ownership." Read again the Washington dispatch. What will now become of the two hundred thousand extra railroad employees who were employed during so-called government operation? Some are already being discharged, while the rest will soon drift (?) from the ranks of railroad labor.

"Friends of private ownership, in order to discredit the eight-hour law and force its repeal, are charging this law with having necessitated 200,000 extra employees under so-called government operation. But the statistics which reveal this army of unnecessary employees were obtained by comparing December 1917 (under private operation) with December 1918 (under so-called government operation). In December 1917 the eight hour law had been in effect twelve months, and by that time all of its evils (?) should have developed.

"The conclusion is inevitable therefore, that if there is an organization in this Republic so powerful that in times of war it can have its returns guaranteed, assume the role of the government and commit depredations upon the public that would not be tolerated if true conditions were known, then such an organization ought to be and must be destroyed.

"Again, if there is a private enterprise in times of peace so necessary to the general welfare that service without cessation is essential, and the enterprise cannot be maintained except as a necessary monopoly under the fostering care of the government's purse, such an enterprise ought to be and must be owned by the government.

MAINE DEMOCRATS REJECT WET PLANK

A Bangor, dispatch, dated March 31, says: The Democratic state convention yesterday selected four delegates at large and eight district delegates to the national convention. The majority were believed to favor Attorney General Palmer for the presidential nomination. The convention voted down a resolution offering a wet plank for the state platform.

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