

Harding Makes Plea for Railway Merger

(Continued from Page Seven.)
Some ways than it would be in a region possessing fewer lines capable of taking over the public service. A majority of the people tributary to it will, by going a few miles farther, get transportation from other roads. But there is no such solution of the problem for many extensive communities now served by roads in financial distress.

There are some roads—many of the smaller ones in fact—whose continued operation is absolutely vital to many thousands of people, to considerable towns, to large areas of country, whose revenues simply can not provide financial facilities through earnings, pending a considerable growth in community population, say nothing of earning any return whatever on capital invested. No ledgerman of court processes, receivers' certificates, or financial juggling, can save them. They must get more revenue or stronger support or quit operating until the country is more largely developed.

We shall contribute nothing to solving their problem by agreeing that they ought not to have been built so soon. Nor shall we help by talking about the wickedness of men who, years ago, exploited the public, watered stocks, and did other reprehensible things. No peace will be found in statistics proving that some other roads are earning more than they need, unless we find an equitable way to co-ordinate the activities of the strong roads, to develop the weak ones.

The railways have become publicly sponsored institutions, and government must find a way to avoid confiscation, avoid starvation, and maintain service and a proper return upon capital which will assure them a growth commensurate with the country's development.

We are all agreed that to abandon any important share of railroad mileage is inconceivable. We can not do it because people already dependent on the railroads would be ruined; and because, further, in a not very distant future we should be compelled by the country's development to put them back, or their equivalent in capacity for service. They must be saved.

Three Possible Solutions.
There are just three possible ways to do it:

1. For the government to take and operate the weak roads, and thus bear all the loss without any of the profits of railroad management.
2. For the government to take all the railroads, convert them into one gigantic pool, and plunge into the enormous responsibility thus incurred. In the present state of the public treasury and of tax burdens, and in the light of recent sad experience with government management, this is not to be considered. I believe it would be politically, socially and economically disastrous.
3. The plan of consolidations already outlined, bringing economies in operation, financial stability, ability to secure needed capital, adjusting rates and regulations to the necessities of the position, and preserving the real advantages of competition in service, while avoiding the evils of government ownership.

As among these possibilities there can be little doubt of the public preference for the third program. It is not unjust to the strong roads, for the prosperity of these, like the prosperity of all industry, depends on keeping the country as a whole prosperous. Every mile of railroad trackage in the land helps to make business for every other mile. The transportation system must be considered as a unity, precisely as the nation itself must be considered. In this manner we will help to insure the credit of the railroads, assist them to new capital for future expansion, and insure, for the future, against the sort of wildcat and competitive railroad construction which in the past has been responsible for giving us a great share of the trackage which now proves economically unjustified.

There is another particular reason which urges the early adoption of the larger-system plan. It would be a long step toward solving the problem of keeping the railroad equipment adequate. Many financially weak roads are unable to provide all the rolling stock they need. Inadequacy of car service hindered the relief of the coal situation last winter, it denied the farmer a market when prices were most advantageous, and has impeded manufacturing industry time and again. It is fair to say the railways are helpless because they were financially and otherwise unable to

keep up with the demands for service. Prevailing practices further embarrassed the situation. Roads inadequately equipped make up their deficiency by borrowing the cars of other roads. When a foreign car comes to one of these parasite lines it is not returned promptly, but often is deliberately retained. The free movement of cars is prevented; no company can be certain of commanding even its own equipment when it is needed; seasonal congestions or shortages of cars follow; and an unfair burden is imposed on those roads which sincerely try to meet the demands of this deplorable situation.

To meet this condition, the proposal of a nation-wide car pool has lately attracted much attention. The Pullman company fairly illustrates what is meant. This great corporation provides most of the railroads with certain kinds of cars, on a rental basis. Applying the same idea to the provisions of freight cars, you have a rough notion of the proposed pool. It is urged by advocates that it would unify the rolling stock organization; make possible the enlistment of adequate capital to provide for the weak and strong roads alike; place the entire organization under a single centralized control which would insure equity to all roads and sections. There are others who insist it would not correct the present evils, and would di-

vide responsibility and make regulation and supervision more difficult. In any event, the system of consolidation would in effect clear up many difficulties in car distribution.

New Phase of Question.
We come now to an entirely different phase of this transportation question. Quite regardless of its cost, the continuity, the assurance of service at all times is absolutely necessary in transportation. Business that is done today depends on the certainty that the goods can be delivered tomorrow. If there is doubt about the trains running and the deliveries being made tomorrow, there will be unwillingness to buy and sell today. All of which brings us to consideration of the relations between the transportation organization and its employees.

There is no other business, so far as I know, in which suspension of operations can produce such disastrous results as in transportation. The vital importance of this service has brought many people to the conclusion that it ought to be possible absolutely to forbid and prevent railroad employees from striking. I do not believe it possible under our form of government to compel men to work against their will, and do not think it desirable under any form of government. I say this, fully recollecting my vote in the senate in favor of the antistrike provision of the railroad

act of 1920. That was not a provision denying men the right to strike. It was merely a requirement that before the men should strike or the employer should lock them out, both sides should submit their differences to a properly constituted and impartial tribunal, empowered to consider the facts, determine the merits, and make an award.

It was believed that in the vast majority of cases this procedure would prevent lockouts and strikes; and, in view of the enormous loss to the carriers, to their employees, and to the public resulting from strikes, I profoundly regret that it should not have been possible to give the plan a fair trial. When I say a fair trial, I mean a trial under conditions fully and frankly acceptable to all interests. I do not believe that in such a situation a fair trial is possible unless both sides have absolute confidence in the fairness of the tribunal and are sincerely willing to accept its verdict. If human wisdom shall ever be capable of setting up such a tribunal as that, and of inspiring both sides of the controversy with complete confidence in it, we will have traveled a long way toward industrial peace.

Personally, I have confidence that the thing is possible. I believe so firmly in the underlying common sense of both organized industry and organized labor, and in the fairness toward both on the part of the great public on which both of them are finally dependent, that I believe at

last it will be possible to arrive at settlement of industrial disputes in public services by such a method. Let me say so plainly that there will be no misunderstanding, that in most disputes which end in strikes or lockouts I do not believe the difference which at last divides the two sides very often represents any underlying

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(Turn to Page Nine, Column One.)



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PORK CUTS		VEAL CUTS	
Fresh Leaf Lard	12c	Choice Veal Roast	15c
Fresh Pork Butts	14c	Choice Veal Chops	22c
Small lean Pork Chops	18c	Choice Veal Stew	10c
Fresh Pig Hearts, 4 lbs.	25c	Choice Veal Legs, ½ or whole	22c
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Fancy Sweet Pickles, dozen	10c	Big Jack Laundry Soap, 4 bars	25c
Large Dill Pickles, dozen	25c	P. & G. White Laundry Soap, 10 bars	45c
Fancy Cream Cheese	30c	Ivory Soap, 10 bars	65c
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Extra Fancy Steer Round Steak, per lb.	29c	10 bars Ivory Soap for	65c	Pearl White Soap, 10 bars	38c	Dold's Narrow Lean Breakfast Bacon, per lb.	25½c
CANDY		48-lb. sack Pillsbury Best Flour	\$1.98	4 pkgs. Macaroni or Spaghetti for	25c	Fruits and Vegetables	
McComb's home made old fashioned Chocolate Drops, lb.	33c	4 pkgs. Assorted Advo. Jelly	25c	Large cans Del Monte Peas	33c	Fancy New Potatoes, per peck	68c
Our Fresh Crispy Cracker Jack, delicious for hikes, per lb.	33c	No. 2½ size cans Tomatoes	15c	Windmill Evergreen Corn, 10c. Doz.	\$1.15	3 boxes Home-Grown Cherries	25c
Our delicious home-made Salad Dressing, Pint, 40c ½ pt. 20c		Fresh Country Eggs, per doz.	22½c	Remember Our Central Special Coffee, per lb. 30c; 3 lbs. 88c		2 boxes Loganberries	25c
Central Xtra Quality pkg. Butter, per lb.	42c	Real Hot Weather Cookies		Free to the Children Saturday at our Douglas St. Store with each purchase of Zevo Fruit Nectar—Demonstration Balloon free.		2 boxes Gooseberries	25c
		Old Fashion Sweet Crackers, lb.	18c			3 dozen Apricots	25c
		Fruitana Cookies, lb.	22c			3 dozen Plums	25c

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BUTTER	Sunset Gold, Finest, Fresh Creamery; lb.	42c
SUNBRITE	Cleanser, per can	4c
PORK and BEANS	Libby's, Van Camp's, Campbell's	10c
RED GOOSE	PEAS Sifted Early June No. 2 Tins	15c
	CORN Ohio Evergreen No. 2 Tins	10c
LADY ALICE	PEAS Fancy Sifted No. 2 Tins	22c
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QUEEN QUALITY	Flour 48 lbs.	\$1.59
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