

RAILROADS PLEAD POVERTY.

While the railroad magnates feel that the situation does not warrant a reduction in freight rates to the seaboard on wheat destined for export, they might have spared us some portions of their argument in support of that situation. One paragraph of the letter sent by the railroad presidents to the Omaha committees reads:

"Since the passage of the transportation act of 1920, the carriers in the western group have earned far below the rate of return contained by the law. Thus the actual rate of return has been for the year 1921, 3.58 per cent; for the year 1922, 4.03 per cent; first five months of 1923, 3.6 per cent."

The Bureau of Railway Economics, which analyzes returns made to the I. C. C. by the railroads of the country, states that the rate earned by the lines reporting for the twelve months ending December 31, 1922, was 4.14 per cent on the tentative valuation. This includes all Class I lines, strong and weak, rich and poor, good and bad, and certainly is no worse a showing than the farms of the United States, taken as a whole, would make.

Returns for January, 1923, show that Class I lines earned 5.56 per cent on their tentative valuation, while for the same month the earnings of carriers of all classes was 5.38 per cent on the tentative valuation, and 4.77 per cent on their book value. In February, 1923, the Class I lines show up for two months with 4.66 per cent; for March the figure for three months is 5.13 and for the four months ending with April 30, the rate of earning was 5.49 per cent of the tentative valuation, 4.89 on the book valuation, and for all railroads of every class the earning rate was 5.22 on the tentative valuation and 4.72 per cent on their book valuation.

The figure quoted by the presidents in their letter surely is a mistake, for there was not in May such a falling off as is indicated by the statement that the net earnings for the first five months of 1923 is but 3.6 per cent.

In the press news reports of Thursday appears this dispatch:

"Washington, Aug. 2.—Railroads established a new record for freight during the week ending July 21. The total number of cars loaded with revenue freight, the American Railway association reported today was 1,120,927, as compared with the previous record of 1,021,770 cars set during the week ending June 20."

Farmers will have to look elsewhere than to the railroads for any relief they may get in the present emergency, but they will not be content with being told that the transportation industry is in such plight that it can not afford to give assistance to agriculture to the extent of a slight temporary reduction in the rates on export wheat.

JUST A MINUTE, MR. DRIVER.

Who in good health would not trade a few seconds of time for his life? Yet 35 lives were lost in nine grade crossing accidents in different parts of the country on Sunday last. The sad part of this dreadful display is that all of these accidents might have been avoided had the drivers of the automobiles taken just a few seconds of time to discover whether they were safe in proceeding. One train hit two automobiles within a few miles.

Fourteen thousand people were killed in automobile accidents in the United States in the year 1922. Practically every one of these mishaps could have been averted had a little care been exercised. A majority of them were accidents at railroad crossings, and many of these were due to the foolhardiness of a driver trying to beat the train over the crossing.

Sunday's dreadful record is proof that the crusade for careful driving, especially at grade crossings, is making slow headway. This statement may also apply to the other accidents listed. No ordinary business in life is so important that it is necessary to risk life or limb to save a few seconds to take care of an engagement.

A minute or two of life may well be balanced against eternity, if one is not in a hurry to die. A little time spent in making sure if all is safe is more profitable than many days in a hospital recovering or forever in a coffin.

BATTLE OF THE BUGS COMING UP.

"And these have smaller fleas to eat 'em and so on, ad infinitum," wrote the poet in a couplet that is deathless, because it jingles and has in it something of eternal truth. During the war farmers in Massachusetts discovered that a new pest had invaded their fields. Soon it was examined and labeled a corn-borer, a bug from Europe, which may have come on a returning transport, with some forage, or otherwise. Anyhow, it was one of the least welcome of the very few immigrants coming in from Europe during that time.

However, the new arrival lost little time in getting down to business. The corn fields of the Old Bay state were soon very liberally infected, and the westward progress of the pest has been steady ever since. It is credited with having ruined \$1,000,000 worth of corn in Massachusetts alone last year. At that rate it will soon become a very expensive boarder, unless looked after.

Now the arrival of a shipment of a million wasps is announced. We do not vouch for the accuracy of the count, for taking a wasp census is not a business to be set about lightly. The point is, these wasps diet on corn borers, and the game is to turn the new arrivals loose in the infected area, so that they can eat themselves out of house and home by destroying the bugs on which they thrive.

What will happen then is not disclosed. One thing may be assured, that no more corn borers will be imported to feed the wasps, which have the mellifluous name of babrobracons. However, this land of the free and home of the brave has gotten pretty well fed up on Europe's ills and undesirables, and maybe the government will put an embargo on the importation of any more insect pests from the old country. We have paid pretty dearly for the gypsy moth and the white pine scale, the gray rat and a few other costly nuisances of the sort that have come to us from across the Atlantic.

Unseasonable and unruly weather is doing quite a bit to decide the wheat surplus. Between hailstorms and snowstorms, the crop is having a hectic time.

FRANCE ON A LONELY ROAD.

Until the full text of Premier Baldwin's address to parliament is at hand, we will not know the exact terms on which he rests his case in the reparations matter. That his viewpoint is fundamentally different from that of Premier Poincare is admitted, while his confidence in the position he has taken is shown by his challenge to France and Belgium that he be given permission to publish their notes in reply to the late secret note from Great Britain. Publication, we take it, of any of the communications will include all.

The breach between England and France is widening. Perhaps it might be better said, the breach between France and those Allies who have stood so close to her through all these years of stress. Poincare's policy is certain to isolate France if pursued to the logical end. His demand that Germany pay the utmost farthing, backed up by occupation of the Ruhr and consequent paralysis of German industry and commerce, thereby making it physically impossible for Germany to pay anything, has lost for France sympathetic support that freely went out to her during the war and while negotiations for peace were under way. When Briand resigned, just before the Genoa conference, he was in hearty accord with the Allies; his successor soon developed a different line of policy, and has been ever since in a dispute with those whose support he should rely upon, until finally he has come face to face with either retracting some of the steps he has taken, or going it alone.

At no time has there been shown any disposition on part of either England or Italy to relieve Germany of responsibility for war damage. Some difference of opinion as to the exact amount to be paid by her, and the method of payment, still exists, but this is subject to adjustment. Since going into the Ruhr France has steadily pushed forward, clamping down harder and harder on the Germans, until the life of the nation is generally deranged and in a large measure cut off. It is to prevent the utter collapse of the nation that Premier Baldwin now asks for a consultation and which Poincare refuses to grant.

Italy and Spain are in full harmony with England, and Belgium, not willing to withdraw from the occupation of the German industrial region at present, is willing to discuss with the others the question in all its bearings. The United States has been invited to come in, but so far has declined. Baldwin's appeal to the world is especially directed at this country.

To get the proper perspective on this situation, it will be well to keep in mind that property to the value of \$6,500,000,000 was seized from Germany and divided among the Allies. Of this the United States got nothing. This was aside from the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, restored to France, which brought nearly 2,000,000 inhabitants, with great resources and industries. When the United States presented its claim for cost of maintaining the army of occupation, a few months ago, the validity of the claim was allowed by the reparations commission, but we were told we would have to wait for our money.

When we were loaning money during the war, it was in good faith, and with no mention of who might be victorious. Now, it is openly suggested in connection with reparations that we cancel those war debts. People of the United States expect the nations of Europe to repay all we loaned them. Most of the people of Europe have the same thought. Some politicians at Paris seem to think otherwise.

Poincare insists that France will go his way, if she goes alone. The Baldwin policy will soon develop whether Poincare is going to have his own way to the extent of utterly crushing Germany, as he appears to be bent on doing, or plunging Europe into another war, as some think he may.

ONE ATMOSPHERE—ONE LANGUAGE.

Maybe the radio will succeed in doing for the world what advocates of Volapuk and Esperanto have failed in. Maj. Gen. George O. Squier, chief signal officer of the United States army, says that radio engineering is driving the world in the direction of an universal language. He points out that the automobile has compelled the adoption of traffic lanes; that aviation is developing air lanes, and so on. International communication has overtaken the cables and the wireless telegraph, and now the radio must have its day. Its chief difficulty is the lack of a common means of expression. Dots and dashes are easily translated into the words of any tongue, but the spoken word can not be so handled.

General Squier elaborates his idea in a lengthy written discussion, in which he deals with some other phases of the science of which he is so eminent an exponent. He does not suggest a form for the language that is to become the common possession of all nations and all peoples, but he does say that scientists in all countries are giving the matter their attention, and that a solution may yet be reached that will solve the problem for the world.

If the radio gets us back to the happy condition that prevailed on earth before the days of Babel, it will greatly facilitate the ordinary interchange of thought and opinion, the details of business and politics, and all that. It will also provide occupation for a lot of translators, bringing the literature of the world into the new language. More than all, it will permit the extinction of a world of written stuff that for the good of all might be decently interred in oblivion at any time.

Credit will not make a market, but it will help the farmer to get along until the present market has improved materially, and that is the real objective.

Homespun Verse

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THE QUEERNESS OF LIFE.

Some fallers are constantly hunting for wives—I've noticed their letters a lot! They speak of the splendid examples they are, but seldom of what they are not; They blather and mumble and grumble away: Good women ain't living, but then It's funny there's ever so many of these immaculate unmarried men. They seem to be taking their sorrow to heart, and telling how women don't know The joy they are missing, the love they are spurning by passing the bachelors' row; And after they've spoken their loveliest phrases and nothing is garnered, they tell That women are foolish, hard-headed and shallow—and that doesn't go with a gal. They wander around till they're two score and ten and whistlers reach most to their knees. And then they decide to get married; of course, they're generally easy to please— But logic is logic and life is love and love isn't always a rhyme— The train doesn't wait if you happen in late—you've got to be ready in time.

"From State and Nation"

Editorials from other newspapers.

How Much Longer?

From The Omaha Daily Tribune. Minnesota election results reflect the farmers' state of mind. Chicago wheat dropped below \$1.00, less than since 1914. That means, at most, 85 cents on the farm. Average farm wages have doubled since wheat last sold as low as \$1.00. All of the farmers' necessities have risen not less than 50 per cent, therefore, their claim that the present wheat price does not cover the cost of production is understandable. Also, that farmers commence to search for the cause of the price slump, and the answer is little inclined to the farming population for the party it deserted in Minnesota. The reason is plain. There is no remunerative market for our wheat surplus. Since the war, the wheatlands of Europe have increased production. Their cost, on account of lower wages, is below ours, making for lower offerings in the world markets, and thus, naturally, leaving the American farmer in the rear.

Our farmers have been urged to reduce their wheat acreage, but that is poor advice. It is essential for the healthy growth of agriculture that every available area of productive soil be cultivated. The proposed reduction of crops would be a serious obstacle to the farmer's welfare, and regarded as a most mistaken policy for lifting the mortgage burden from our farmers, or for insuring their healthy prosperity. There are better means for helping them, and more effective ones. In central Europe there are 300,000,000 people who have scarcely enough to eat, and would be grateful for our wheat surplus. France means for helping them, and more effective ones. In central Europe there are 300,000,000 people who have scarcely enough to eat, and would be grateful for our wheat surplus. France means for helping them, and more effective ones. In central Europe there are 300,000,000 people who have scarcely enough to eat, and would be grateful for our wheat surplus. France means for helping them, and more effective ones.

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"THE OLD GRANGER."

"Near the tracks of the railroad newly laid The farmer leaned on his earth-worn spade; While his taxes were high and his crops but slim, The charge for freight played the deuce with him. So he gazed with a frown at the train's sharp din: 'I'll gather ye in—I'll gather ye in! 'I've borne ye long, and hope now Your railroads to beat some way of how. I'll get up a law, by the great horned owl, To cut down your profits and make 'em you how! And little or nothing I'll ship from bin. Of hoarded corn, till I gather ye in! 'We'll rise in our granges, bold and free, And 'down with freights!' shall our war cry be— 'Not a partisan crew nor a party hack Shall help us to gain our birthright back. For the battle is ours, to lose or win, And we'll gather them in, we'll gather them in! 'Now a gaunt politician came that way, 'O'erhead the old man's angry say, And he gave his head a knowing screw. And said to the granger, 'Count me in, 'With a thought to himself replete with sin, 'I'll gather them in, I'll gather them in! 'Then a twist to his eyes, to seem acute— 'The farmer's tongue has too long been mute; I am just your man, if it suits your mood. So place me where I can do most good: If an office fit you'll help me win, We'll gather them in, we'll gather them in! 'Touching hand to hand in a warm exchange, 'They take a walk to the farmer's grange. Where the stranger speaks with a rural air, And sprinkles hayseed in his hair. 'Let railroads quail when our blows begin! We'll gather them in, we'll gather them in! 'So they voted for him at the coming polls. These simple, rural, honest souls, Never dreaming that they of the iron horse Are voting too for the man, of course; Upon him also their faith they pin. To gather them in, to gather them in. 'When election is over the railroads run 'A score of trains where they once had one. While a ditch by the track is found to hold A poor old granger, stark and cold: Had the chap he'd helped to office win, Had gathered him in, had gathered him in!'"

Peace a la Poincare.

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