

(the legal rate of interest).

The second railroad charter was for the Missouri River and Platte Valley, "starting at the town of Plattsmouth to Fort Kearney, then to Fort Laramie, then to the western limits of the territory of Nebraska . . . with a branch road from the mouth of the Nemaha, to unite with main track at Fort Kearney." Further power was granted to build a branch from Nebraska City to Fort Kearney.

Each of these corporations was empowered to "take and transport persons, and every species of merchandise or produce, or other property, by the force of steam or other power, and may fix and establish rates of tolls and receive the same for the transportation of persons or property upon said road." Through the shadows of 47 years one can discern the dim outlines of two great systems of Nebraska railroads, and although the legislature has since then at various times attempted to exercise some supervision, the power to "fix and establish rates of tolls" still is exercised by the successors of the paper railroads of 1855.

One thing more and we shall close this investigation. The report of the first territorial auditor is worthy of being reprinted:

"Office of the Territorial Auditor, Omaha City, Dec. 15, 1855.—To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly: In accordance with law, I herewith respectfully transmit my annual report. The whole amount of warrants issued from the 1st of July, 1855, to December 10, 1855, (as shown by statement A) is \$1,971.20. There remain warrants yet to be issued to meet appropriations by the last legislative assembly, say \$1,000.

"It is impossible to make an estimate of the amount of expenditures for the coming year (1856) that will come very near the amount that will be actually appropriated, and the regular and indispensable expenditures are therefore only put down in that table.

"The amount of taxable property for 1855, as returned by the assessors, (as shown by statement C) was \$617,822. In accordance with the present revenue laws, a tax of two mills on each dollar was levied on the above amount for a territorial revenue, and each judge of probate of the several counties, duly notified of the same. As no one of the county treasurers have as yet settled their accounts, I have no means of knowing how much of the above tax has been collected up to this date.

"I would call your special attention to the importance of the passage of a new revenue law. The law should set forth fully, clearly, and in detail, what property shall be liable to taxation, and also what shall be exempt. The passage of such a law will render the duties of the county assessors plain and clear, whilst under the present laws, their duties have been obscure, and the laws thus rendered almost entirely inoperative.

"The revenue derived from the present system is entirely inadequate, and I would recommend that the rate of territorial tax be increased to an amount at least double that of the last year, to cover the debt now outstanding and the expenses of the coming year.

"All of which is respectfully submitted.

CHARLES B. SMITH,  
"Auditor of the Territory."  
STATEMENT A.

Showing the amount of warrants issued from July 1, 1855, to December 15, 1855, and upon what account:  
Legislative expenses, pay of pages, firemen, etc. . . . \$1,454.70  
Salaries of auditor, treasurer and librarian. . . . . 516.50

\$1,971.20

STATEMENT B.

Showing an estimate of the necessary expenditures for the year commencing November 1, 1855, and ending October 31, 1856:  
Auditor, treasurer and librarians' salaries. . . . \$1,100.00  
Stationery, rent, fuel, etc. . . . 400.00  
Incidental expenses of the territory . . . . . 400.00

\$1,900.00

STATEMENT C.

Showing the value of all the property, real and personal, as assessed in the several counties in the year 1855:  
Douglas county . . . . . \$311,116  
Ottoe county . . . . . 85,701  
Nemaha county . . . . . 74,980  
Cass county . . . . . 71,521  
Richardson county . . . . . 26,642  
Washington county . . . . . 20,327  
Dodge county . . . . . 14,455  
Burt county . . . . . 13,006

\$617,822

Such was Nebraska's first "floating debt." After 47 years it is now more than a thousand times as large. The total territorial tax levy for 1855 was \$1,235.64, but the territory had in-

curring nearly three thousand dollars of debt. What was done in the years subsequent remains to be told.

**False on Its Face**

Some days ago the State Journal printed a plutocratic boiler-plate story about 10,000 state railroad operatives down in Victoria, Australia, who have become so powerful that the government is thinking seriously of disfranchising the whole lot. It was such a clumsy lie that The Independent at first thought of ignoring it. But in a recent number of the Appeal to Reason, Mr. Wayland analyzes the whole question so completely that The Independent must reproduce a part of his comment:

"This has been printed in nearly every daily and weekly paper supporting the capitalistic interests. It emanates from the literary bureau established and supported by the corporations to prejudice and mislead the people concerning government ownership of industries, that the said corporations may continue to exploit the people. It bears the stamp of falsehood on its face, as I shall show you by analysis. The railroad men did not strike. They did not need that weapon. 'They fell back on their power at the polls.' There is where they were strong and where they could control. They did that. As the men are admitted to be 'almost irresistible at the polls' how could the government disfranchise them without their consent? Does it seem reasonable that men who have votes and are using them for their benefit would vote to disfranchise themselves? Can't you see the absurdity of the position of the clumsy writers for the corporations? And on the other hand, how can the officials dominate if the men are all powerful at the polls? And if the men are all powerful, doesn't that infer a majority? And if a majority rules, does that show signs of an extinction of representative government? All these articles against public ownership are paid articles—paid out of the money extorted from the public by corporations. Men who will extort, bribe public officials, keep a system of false books to deceive the public, will not hesitate to lie to the public that their profits may continue.

I get papers from Victoria and I have yet to find a single suggestion to disfranchise the government employes.

Again, public ownership of railroads is not socialism. Socialism is a condition in which all the industries are not only public property, but each industry is governed by the workers therein, and nothing is taken from them for either interest, rent or profit. Such a condition is not prevalent in Victoria or anywhere else today."

Every time that a proposition is made to lower the tariff on anything the reply comes instantly: "It will destroy that industry." In the eyes of a protectionist, that is all that is necessary to be said: If the tariff were taken off hides, no more shoes would be made in the United States. All the factories would close their doors and the people would all go barefooted. Oh! the horrors that would follow. The most brilliant imagination could not conceive them. This writer has attended many sittings of the house ways and means committee, and he has never failed to hear a tariff grafter declare most solemnly that if the import duties were not fixed at the rate he demanded that "the industry would be destroyed." That phrase is old and worn, but it is coming into active use these days again. At present it is applied to the reciprocity treaty with Newfoundland. If that treaty is ratified "the fishing industry will be destroyed," and Gloucester, Mass., will be made a howling wilderness.

The British parliament does not take to subsidies, especially ship subsidies. A special committee of the house of commons has just made a report on that subject in which it says that "subsidies restrict free competition and facilitate the establishment of federations and shipping rings and that therefore a general system of subsidies, except for services rendered, and without government control of the maximum rates on freights, is costly and inexpedient." The committee's plan to fight American ship subsidies or those of any other nation, is to pass laws reserving the "coasting trade" of the British empire to British ships, copying for that purpose the laws of the United States which prohibit foreign ships from engaging in the shipping business between any two points on the American coasts. As a law of that kind would prevent any but British ships from engaging in trade between Eng-

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land and any of her colonies, it would be a severe blow to all other nations. Morgan don't find as smooth sailing in British waters as he meets with on this side.

The New York and New England European correspondents of the great dailies seem to believe that the people on this side of the water have no interest in anybody in Europe except the few stupid and degenerate human beings who have royal blood in their veins, so they give us column on column of stuff about kings, dukes and princes, their wives, their cousins and their aunts. Of the great sociological movements, of education, of science, they have nothing to say. Perhaps it is because these correspondents are of the monkey dinner kind themselves and haven't brains enough to write any other sort of stuff than the trash that they send. Then it may be that these correspondents are sent over there for the express purpose of writing such articles as New York's "400" can comprehend.

Phelps is another county that has been snatched as a brand from the fusion burning, and now she is enjoying the fruits. Her election day cornshuckers will have to raise about \$829.62 by local taxation to make up the shortage in her last school apportionment warrant. In other words, it lacks that much of being as big as



the smallest one ever sent her by the fusionists.