

RAILROADS AND POSTOFFICES

Express Matter Carried at One-Tenth the Cost of Mail on the Same Trains Everywhere

It has been announced that Congressman Loud who fought for so many years for the interests of express companies as against the post-office system and who was beaten by an overwhelming majority for re-election, will at the end of his term be appointed fourth assistant postmaster, which office has charge of the mail carriers whom he accuses of having planned his defeat. In that way he proposes to get even with them. The Independent long ago declared that it was not the mail carriers who beat Loud, for they were too few in numbers and too closely confined to their duties. Others are taking the same view of the matter. A letter in the Springfield Republican discusses that matter in a way that is interesting to the general public, and therefore it is reproduced.

In your recent editorial bearing the above title, did you not perhaps give the letter carriers too much credit for the defeat of Congressman Loud of California? Is it not just possible that Mr. Loud's defeat may have been due to the fact that in his political life he appeared to be the servant of certain private corporations rather than of the public whom he was sworn to serve? One thing is quite certain, the letter carriers make up but a very small part of the voting population of Mr. Loud's congressional district. I recall an incident that occurred during the railway mail pay investigation in the latter part of December, 1893. Mr. Ernst of Boston was on the stand. Mr. Loud was the general manager of the committee and chief examiner. Mr. Ernst's testimony did not please the chairman. It went to disprove his theories as to railway mail pay, and he became very discourteous, interrupting the witness continually and trying to trip him. Finally, Senator Chandler, vexed by the honorable chairman's rudeness, said to him: "Let the man alone, Mr. Loud; let him give his testimony as he pleases." "It strikes me that the senator is acting as counsel for the witness here," replied the chairman. Quick as thought, the sarcastic voice of the senator rang out: "It strikes me that some folks are acting as counsel for the railways here." Had a bomb exploded in the chamber the result could have hardly been more startling. The members of the committee jumped to their feet, and one of them said, "If that be the case then I think I had better leave." The witnesses were driven out of the chamber; Senator Chandler left quickly and the witnesses followed him to his room and thanked him for defending them. I was one of those wit-

nesses. Some hours passed before quiet was restored and the hearings begun again, but from that time forward the witnesses received somewhat more courtesy.

Now it may be that the voters of Mr. Loud's district had come to Senator Chandler's conclusion as to their representative and had determined to make a change. Certainly the people of the United States are to be congratulated on the defeat of a man who openly declared himself an inveterate foe of the postoffice and who in his office as chairman of the house postal committee used all his power not only to prevent the advancement of the postoffice, but to transfer the business to private corporations. If anything were lacking to warrant the necessity of an organization like our postal progress league to protect and to advance this most wonderful public service, it is the possibility of such offices as that of chairman of the house postal committee falling into the hands of a man who holds such views as Mr. Loud's respecting the postoffice.

In each of the reports on his three successive bills attacking the organs of public intelligence and aiming at the destruction of the liberty and independence of the American press; in each of these reports, he declares that the public sentiment for the postoffice is "a maudlin sentiment;" that the postoffice is not a public necessity; that it ought to be turned over to private corporations, and finally that its very existence is a "wrong" because the cheapness and beneficence of its operation implies its extension over the whole field of transportation and transmission. What wonder that there is a deficiency in postal revenues while the business is under the control of men bent on turning it over to private corporations? I recall the fact that in 1899 Senator Wolcott of Colorado—now seeking re-election—was chairman of the senate postal committee and at the same time, as I am credibly informed, counsel for several important railroads. May not the devotion of the chairman of postal committees to private corporations account for the fact that the railroads tax the government from 8 to 10 times as much as they tax the express companies for similar services? and may not this unnecessary burden be the real cause of all the annual deficiencies in the postal revenues?

I have before me one of the Adams express books. It advertises to carry newspapers—collect and deliver—between all points on the 50,000 miles of its Adams and Southern express combination for one cent a pound, and this even on special mail or newspaper trains; and where there is no wagon service—the rate, station to station, within this 50,000-mile combination is one-half cent a pound, except within New England, when it is considerably less—I think rather less than four-tenths of a cent a pound. Now the haulage of newspapers costs as much as the haulage of other kinds of merchandise—"A pound is a pound for a' that and a' that." And if newspapers can be transported between any two stations in this great area by the express companies for half a cent a pound then general merchandise can be transported for the government by the railroads as express or mail trains at similar rates. Yes, and at lower rates; for do not the railways accept from the express companies 40 per cent of their receipts as the railroad share of the business? and 40 per cent of half a cent is a fifth of a cent a pound or 20 cents a hundred.

Now there is steady move on the part of the railways and express companies to increase transport rates, and this with no good reason; for their increased earnings at present rates quite suffice to meet their tardy increase of wages and the improvements in their machinery and tracks more than meet any other increased cost of operations. And this increase in railroad taxation is evidently to go on until it has reached "what the subject will bear." There is certainly no limit to their power of taxation and in the determination of this taxation—over \$1,200,000,000 annually—the public have no representation whatever on the tax board.

JAMES L. COWLES,
Farmington, Conn.

A Monetary Congress

In a personal letter to the editor of The Independent, the Cambridge Encyclopedia Co., (240 West 23rd st., New York.) say that Hon. Alex. Del Mar is now engaged in writing a book entitled "History of Money in Italy," including the republics of Venice, Genoa, Florence, Pisa and Lucca, which upon completion will be published by the Cambridge people. Readers of The Independent are doubtless familiar with Mr. Del Mar's "The Science of Money" and some of his other

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books on the question of money and the precious metals.

Alexander Del Mar was born in the city of New York, August 9, 1836. After graduating at a polytechnic, he was educated as a civil and mining engineer. In 1857 he formed the design of writing a history of the precious metals. This led to his study of money. In 1862 he published "Gold Money and Paper Money," and in 1865 "Essays on the Treasury." In this year he was appointed director of the bureau of statistics, at that time a board of trade, with executive functions, among others the supervision of the commissioners of mines, commerce, railways, immigration, etc. In 1866 he was appointed the American delegate to the international congress which met at Turin, Italy, and in 1868 delegate to The Hague. In 1872 (Greeley campaign) he was nominated by Mr. Greeley's friends for secretary of the treasury. In the same year he represented the United States at the international congress in St. Petersburg, Russia.

In 1876 he was appointed mining commissioner to the United States monetary commission; 1878, clerk to the committee on naval expenditures, house of representatives; 1870, he published his "History of the Precious Metals" the labor of twenty-two years; 1881, he published "A History of Money in Ancient States;" 1885, "Money and Civilization, or a History of Money in Modern States;" 1889, "The Science of Money;" 1895, his crowning work, "A History of Monetary Systems in Various States;" 1898, "The Science of Money," 2d ed.; 1899, "A History of Monetary Crimes;" 1900, "The Science of Money," 3d ed.; 1900, "A History of Money in America;" 1901, "A History of Monetary Systems," 3d ed.; besides several historical works and archaeological treatises of great interest, all of which have been reviewed with the highest commendations by English, French and American critics. Mr. Del Mar is likewise the author of numerous pamphlets and other minor publications chiefly on politico-economical topics.

For the past twenty years, Mr. Del Mar has given practically his whole time to original research in the great libraries and coin collections of Europe on the subject of the history of money and finance. His future works, both of which are well advanced toward completion, will be a new edition of the "History of the Precious Metals," in two volumes, and "The Politics of Money," in one volume.

The Cambridge Encyclopedia Co. say further: "He (Mr. Del Mar) intimated that a monetary congress, similar to the Memphis convention of 1895, might usefully be called next summer, in one of the western states, to outline those principles and policies concerning money, which should be offered to the suffrages of the people

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