

injustice which extortion puts upon the whole public. Students of the rate question must bear in mind that rate regulation is one thing, and rate reduction another of much more importance. To regulate rates as between shippers, so that each will have the same equal chance in business competition, is rendering justice between the shippers, but is no relief whatever to the freight-robbed public which must bear the whole burden of rate extortion after the discrimination has been adjusted between the shippers. The shippers want regulation. The public wants reduction.

The whole trend of discussion which the senate committee has brought out has been to the effect that if the secret rebates between shippers and the discrimination between shipping points could be abolished, the whole rate question would be solved. Behind all this manipulation of the rate question the railroad hand is plainly visible. This is the view of the case which the railroad managers are trying to impress upon the public mind. If they can persuade the public to see the railroad question in that light, they can easily arrange with congress for a law that will appear to abolish discriminations between the shippers, but the public will continue to bear its burden of extortion, which in Nebraska amounts to over \$7 per capita annually.

Not regulation alone, but regulation and reduction, is the battle cry that must be shouted from neighbor to neighbor, from town to town, and from state to state.

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP COMING

It is well for the people of the United States that they have declared in no uncertain terms for government regulation of railways. Government regulation of a satisfactory character they will never obtain, but it seems certain at this time that government ownership is to be established only after government regulation has been tried and found wanting. Not that government regulation is to bring the people absolutely no relief. In the beginning the people will probably feel much encouraged by the good accomplished.

When the interstate commerce commission was instituted it fixed rates in a number of instances and the railways acquiesced, but soon the powers of the commission were tested and it was found that it merely had the right to propose a rate. But even this power had a corrective effect for a number of years and is still not wholly useless.

The same kind of evolution will probably be observed when a railway commission is given the power to fix maximum and minimum rates. At first the rulings of the commission will be obeyed. Then clever methods of evasion will be discovered. Some of these will be failures and others will succeed. In the long run, however, the great railway trust will shake off government control and will control the government. In those days the power of money will be demonstrated more plainly than ever. Concentrated wealth will be wielded with greater effect in national elections. It has been possible in the past to place in the presidential chair men who have not been elected, and it will be not impossible in the future. The railways will employ every plan that cunning can devise and money can execute to control the rate-making commission. In the gigantic struggle that will follow, the triumphs will not always be on the side of the trusts, but the conditions produced will become insufferable and government ownership will be the result.

It has been argued that popular government must be deemed a failure if it cannot control the corporations it has created. But here the word control is evidently used in the sense of regulate. As a matter of fact the people can and will control the railways, but this will be achieved only by public ownership. And when the people own the railways the problem of regulating private corporations will be greatly simplified.

The evolution which is now going on in the business world will give possession of the railways to three or four financial interests. At the present time less than a dozen financial interests own three-fourths of the railways in the United States. When the number has diminished to three or four the time will be ripe for government ownership and the task of acquiring the roads will not be as stupendous as many people now imagine. The statement that the government will be required to pay \$10,000,000,000 or \$12,000,000,000 for the railways of the country is apt to dismay the ordinary man. But when the government buys it will not pay a cent for the water in the stocks. Moreover, it will acquire the roads gradually. At first the trunk lines will be acquired and the profit made by the government will be used to buy the local and connecting lines.

While not abating a jot in their demand for government regulation, the people should realize that it is little more than a means to an end. It will, no doubt, correct some abuses and remove some discriminations. If regulation could be made to work satisfactorily government ownership would not be necessary. But there is little faith among the reform element in this country that the nation will be able to stop short of government ownership. The date at which government ownership will become an accomplished fact will depend largely upon the measure of success attained by government regulation.

CIVIC AWAKENING NEEDED

That a railway can obtain as a gift what the ordinary citizen would be expected to pay for was again attested when the Lincoln city council gave to the Burlington about 2,500 square feet of Q street. The reason assigned for this action is said to have been that the Burlington wants more space in that particular locality because it is to build a larger passenger station. This excuse has not even the merit of the excuse offered by the hotelkeeper who explained his extortionate charges by saying that he

"needed the money." If the street was valuable to the Burlington, that road was able, and should have been required, to pay a fair price.

Undoubtedly there are men in Lincoln who would have paid gladly \$3,500 or \$4,000 for the land the city gave away. A warehouse on this strip would be of great benefit to any one of a dozen wholesale or manufacturing firms in Lincoln. If any of these firms had asked the council for the land as a gift the city fathers would have been amazed at such presumption.

When the city gave to the Burlington that strip of Q street it gave away a portion of the people's money. If it had sold the land for \$4,000 the taxes of the people would have been reduced by that amount. And now that the Burlington has secured the land the citizens must pay \$4,000 additional taxes.

Everywhere in the United States the railways show the same disposition to secure free of cost valuable lands and franchises, and in every state of the union they refuse to bear their just share of taxation. The citizens of Lincoln and of many hundred other cities in the United States need an awakening that will make it impossible for the railways to take the people's property without paying for it.

CRIMINAL INDIFFERENCE

Many men are enthusiastic advocates of reforms that have no local application. They are willing to give good advice to them that dwell in darkest New York or Pennsylvania. They take a deep interest in the purification of the slums and the building of model tenements in London, but when they are urged to raise their voices in protest against abuses at home they shackle themselves to silence. They may be dissatisfied with railway domination in Nebraska, but they never display enough interest in the matter to join hands with those who are fighting to free the state from this iron tyranny. Dr. Washington Gladden, speaking of this fatal indifference a few years ago, said:

"I am afraid there are some of us who really feel that we could not afford to have good government. Some of us are interested in franchises which could never have been obtained from an honest government at the price we paid for them. Some of us would be a good deal troubled in our minds by the thought of the election of an honest assessor in our ward. A great many of those who are spoken of as belonging to the best class are not, at the bottom of their hearts, hungering and thirsting for good government."

But there is another view of the question which probably strikes nearer the truth. The kind of government is merely a surface indication. The trouble lies much deeper. In a great measure our government has ceased to be representative. The people do not see to it that they retain control of their legislatures and common councils. They permit the corporations and the corporation-ruled bosses to select their councilmen and legislators, forgetting that they have the remedy in their own hands. If they find that they can not secure honest councilmen by present methods of election in cities, they can adopt better methods. If they find that they can not keep the bosses from gaining control of conventions they can nominate at the primaries. These powers the people possess, but they must not permit them to go to waste. They must understand that if they would secure reforms they must be strenuous and untiring in the pursuit of them.

CAUSES OF THE POSTAL DEFICIT

It is reported from Washington that the postal deficit for the current year will be about \$15,000,000, the largest in the country's history. "To the extension of rural free delivery and other branches, but particularly the former, is the increased deficit attributed," adds the dispatch.

Apparently it has not occurred to the postmaster general that extortionate freight rates should be assigned as the principal cause of the deficit. It is to be expected in a rapidly growing nation that there will be many improvements of the postal service. The people, therefore, will be surprised to hear that the government is too poor to keep the service up to date.

Should the postmaster general find it necessary to economize, he will doubtless strike his first blow at rural free delivery. No attempt will be made to secure lower rates from the railways, which, by combination, are able to carry the mails at their own prices.

Here is another case where an interstate commerce commission with power to fix maximum rates will be of advantage to the country. If the commission is successful in enforcing its schedules, the efficiency of the postal service will not be limited by the ability of the government to meet the extortion of the railways.

The railways have decided to establish two literary bureaus to conduct a campaign of education against government regulation, rate reduction and other popular reforms. The motto of these bureaus will doubtless be, "Truth for truth's sake."

The Japanese have attributed every victory on land and sea to "the illustrious virtue of the emperor." Americans will give considerable credit to the "illustrious" marksmanship of "the man behind the gun."

As soon as a treasury deficit appeared the government dodged the tariff, but the plain citizen who is afflicted with a deficit can only dodge his creditors.

John D. Rockefeller, jr., does not approve of Standard Oil methods. He will probably decide, however, not to refuse the "tainted income."

We have heard no rumors lately that the Black Sea fleet would pass through the Dardanelles en route to the Orient.

Out of respect for historical tradition the president should have placed Bonaparte at the head of the army.