"General toning up" may be a good thing, and so too may be "flexibility," but lower freight rates would be much more satisfactory. The writer asks if it is The Independent's intention to "expose the unfortunate condition in Iowa," and the reply is that the people of Iowa are prosperous and contented and most stubbornly blind to their "unfortunate condition."

In dealing with the Australian railway problem the writer points out that rates are much higher in Australia than in the United States and that the government-owned railways are losing money. So, too, it might be added, is the Siberian railway losing money and rates on that road are as high as rates on the Australian roads. No comparison can be drawn between Australia and the United States. Australia is commercially dead. Even in the hard times Nebraska enjoyed as much prosperity as Australia enjoys when its trade is liveliest. The resources of Australia and New Zealand are almost infinitesmal when compared with the resources of the United States. In Australia a great proportion of the laboring men are unemployed the year round. Industry is at a standstill and the population is not increasing.

When comparing American with European or Australian rates the railway apologists fail to note an important fact. In such countries as England, France, Germany, Austria and Italy there is no such thing as "the long haul." None of these countries is as large as Texas and some of them are no larger than Nebraska. In the United States traffic officials employ all sorts of devices, fair and unfair, to secure "the long haul," and they succeed, for example, in sending New York apples to northwestern Nebraska to compete with apples grown in southeastern Nebraska.

With the advantage of long hauls railways in the United States can afford to make much cheaper rates than those in effect on European roads. But as a matter of fact, rates in the United States are not lower. The railway statisticians are apt in the art of jugglery. They select a few rates, which, owing to peculiar local conditions, are high in European countries and low in the United States and use them in their "educational leaflets."

The Nebraska railroads claimed the right to charge higher rates in hard times. The volume of business being limited, the roads assumed that it was their right to maintain a high schedule of freight rates and the supreme court upheld their contention. But in good times, when the volume of business is great, lower charges are possible, and The Independent has insisted that the roads should not now charge as much for hauling freight as they charged when times were hard. That is why The Independent has demanded the enforcement of the maximum freight rate law, which, even though its enforcement might have meant confiscation in hard times, can be enforced with all fairness to the railways at the present time when conditions show such a vast improvement.

TOO STRENUOUS AT WHITEWASHING

When history impartially records the acts of President Roosevelt's administration it will be forced to mix some black coloring with the whitewash the chief executive has applied to the officials of the Santa Fe railway and the Colorado Fuel & Iron company, and more particularly to Paul Morton, secretary of the navy. In the process of clearing Paul Morton the president found it necessary to prevent any prosecution that would involve the officials of either company.

Messrs. Judson and Harmon, the special attorneys employed to investigate the case, reported that without question rebates had been granted in violation of law and recommended such proceedings as would make possible the taking of testimony to fix the guilt. The reply of the attorney general to their suggestion is absurd. He opposes the bringing of contempt proceedings because the evidence contains nothing to connect any officer of the Santa Fe with the violation of law. Inasmuch as Messrs. Judson and Harmon proposed proceedings that would have developed such evidence, the attorney general's refusal to comply with the request of the special counsel must be set down to bias. Moreover, the attorney general's reply contains a ridiculous implication. If there was no doubt that the law had been violated, a fact admitted by the attorney general, then there was no doubt that some person or persons violated the law. And yet his reply seems to indicate that although the law was violated there was no evidence to prove anybody responsible and that therefore proceedings to secure such evidence was unnecessary.

The president himself protests too much. He gives Paul Morton an honorable discharge in the most fulsome terms and yet Paul Morton admitted that the Santa Fe under his regime had granted rebates to the Colorado Fuel & Iron company. In his letter to the retiring secretary of the navy the president takes the same position as Attorney General Moody. He declares that "proceedings against individual officers," in other cases, "must depend in each instance on whether testimony is obtained showing that such individual officer has either by act of connivance been personally guilty in the matter." This sounds well, but if in each instance the attorney general is to block proceedings that will secure adequate testimony against the individual official, all prosecutions against the railways will be futile.

The president followed a similar course in dealing with the Bowen-Loomis controversy. Bowen was expelled from the diplomatic service because, in the president's opinion, he had spied on his superior officer and had made charges he could not sustain. But even the president is forced to admit that Loomis acted "indiscreetly" when he became financially interested in the business of the asphalt trust. Inasmuch as the dispute between the asphalt trust and Venezuela was the most important business which our representative in that country was called upon to deal with, the public will regard the acts of Secretary Loomis as worse than mere indiscretion and will agree that the president would have done well to discipline both Bowen and Loomis.

NEW PHASES OF STANDARD OIL WAR

The Standard Oil company is now trying to evade the anti-trust laws of Missouri. Herbert S. Hadley, attorney general, has brought suit in the supreme court of that state to punish the Standard Oil company and its various branch corporations for violating these laws.

The Standard Oil company sells oil in the northern, and the Waters-Pierce company sells oil in the southern part of Missouri. The Republic Oil company sells in both districts to people who are opposed to trusts or who do not want to buy from the monopoly. The Standard Oil company controls both the Waters-Pierce and the Republic Oil companies.

At first there was competition, but Standard Oil followed its usual plan of absorbing the other companies, which, however, continued apparently to operate as independent concerns. In reality, however, competition in the oil business is unknown in Missouri at the present time. The three companies all receive their orders from the same office at 26 Broadway, New York. The prices charged are just what the companies decide the people must pay. It is of this that the state of Missouri complains.

Almost the same conditions exist in Nebraska, but the people have not yet become aroused against the exactions of the trust, although Nebraska has anti-trust laws that could be enforced.

A few days ago the Associated Press announced that the Standard Oil company would again enter the market for heavy Kansas oil and added the gratuitous comment that the producers of Kansas would be just as well off as they were before the last legislature passed its restrictive laws. And yet in the same dispatch it was stated that the price to be paid for the oil would be twenty-five cents a barrel. This is the lowest price ever made by the Standard for Kansas oil. The company will now fill up its tanks all over the country at this outrageously low price and a little later will be prepared to advance the price of refined oil while completely checking the output of the Kansas wells.

LIGHT ON THE ELEVATOR TRUST

Depositions taken at Wahoo in the suit brought by Thomas D. Worrall against a number of Nebraska grain dealers indicate that the farmers are in the grasp of an elevator trust that has existed since 1901. Prior to that year competition was the rule. There was no artificial interference with the law of supply and demand. If prices were low it was due to natural causes and the farmers had no reason to complain, for they knew that in obedience to the same law prices would rise whenever natural conditions changed for the better.

For about five years, however, prices have been controlled and competition has been stifled by a combination in restraint of trade. At the Wahoo hearing letters were submitted in evidence to show the nature of the agreement made by the dealers who entered into this combine. After the unfair covenant had been made and forfeits had been posted, the dealers bought grain only by card. Every day cards were sent out to the dealers, who were forced by their agreement to buy at prices no higher than those listed on these cards. But this was by no means the only measure taken to prevent competition. The dealers no longer rode about the country soliciting grain. Each dealer bought only the grain to be obtained in his prescribed dis-