

portation. In England, however, rates include charges for collection and delivery, whereas in the United States such services are performed by express or dray companies or by private hauling lines. If the cost of delivery and collection were added to American rates they would be advanced enormously. But these points are ignored by the writers who are now contending that freight rates in the United States are lower than in England, but who fail to state why they are lower.

#### THE BURGLAR AND MORTENSEN

Sometimes a burglar does society a service. As much can be said of the burglar who took State Treasurer Mortensen's annual passes. By this means Nebraskans learned that a member of their state assessing board had been favored with free transportation by railways which are not bearing a just share of the taxation burden. It is reported that the passes were over the Burlington, Missouri Pacific and Rock Island.

The Independent last May called upon the state officials charged with the duty of assessing railroad property to return their passes. There is irony in the fact that the state treasurer retained his passes until a burglar took them away from him. When The Independent made this demand it said:

"Free passes are special privileges given by the railroads to procure special privileges in return. So long as there was no pretense on the part of the state board to assess railroad property on any other basis than that suggested by the railroad managers, the state officials could justify themselves on at least one point. They had received special privileges and they had given special privileges in return. But now with all this flourish of pretensions coming through the daily press from the state house, that the board is about to make an actually fair assessment of railroad property, wouldn't it seem more like the real thing if the members of the assessing board would return at least their own passes?"

When the assessment was made The Independent pointed out how grossly the railway properties had been undervalued. The daily papers called attention to the fact that Governor Mickey and State Treasurer Mortensen were battling strenuously against a higher valuation on the Burlington than they wished to see established. Now the public is informed that Mr. Mortensen holds—or rather that he did hold until the burglar made away with it—a Burlington annual.

Similar hypocrisy has been displayed by many state officials in Nebraska. The people will not be surprised at this development. Mr. Mortensen himself will scarcely feel abashed, but the people will take this episode as one more reason why they should insist that their legislators, executives and judges shall be selected hereafter for their honesty and consistency rather than for their shrewdness as politicians.

#### MORE RAILWAY SOPHISTRY

William Alfred Crawford, who has written an article on railway rates for the "Era" magazine, does not pose as a humorist, but he is apt to be so regarded by western men who know something about the railway situation. He tells a story concerning a New Hampshire farmer who explained the absence of a corn crop in that state by saying that "yew fellers out there in the West can ship your corn down here so cheap that we find it as reasonable to buy it here as to raise it!"

Is that really the reason why they do not grow corn on the rock-ribbed hills of New Hampshire? History relates that the men of New Hampshire began to migrate westward years ago because of the poor, high-priced land at home. We are told that corn is an ideal crop in the west because lands are cheap and do not require renewal by fertilization as do the hills of New Hampshire. Mr. Crawford, however, attributes this condition of affairs to railway rates. With as much justice he might say that if rates on stone from New Hampshire to Nebraska were lowered Nebraska would compete with New Hampshire in selling granite at Concord.

Mr. Crawford's argument would be proper if corn could be grown cheaply in New Hampshire. Nebraska farmers have an illustration of this in the rate on apples from New York to Northwestern Nebraska. The New York apple competes in Northwestern Nebraska with the apple grown in Southwestern Nebraska. The railways make the low rate from New York in order to take advantage of the long haul and they thus destroy the fruit business of Southwestern Nebraska.

Competition cannot be eliminated from the grain business except by a trust and it does not follow that the Nebraska farmer will not sell his grain because competition exists. It is rather odd that Nebraska wheat is sold in the markets of Europe despite the fact that Europe produces much wheat. Why is this? Is it not something

that is regulated by the law of supply and demand? If an insufficient quantity of wheat is raised in Europe, demand is made for American flour, although it must be transported four or five thousand miles at great cost. What distinction, then, is to be drawn between the producer who is near the market and the producer who is far away. Clearly the remote producer will receive less for his grain. The Nebraska producer will not receive as much as the producer in Indiana and Illinois. This is the condition that exists today. But does it follow that the Nebraska producer will not be able to sell his wheat? The railway bureaucrat strives to convey the impression that at the present time the Nebraska shipper pays only a trifle more in freights than does the Illinois shipper. Last year the Illinois Central was hauling grain to the Gulf for 11 and 12 cents a bushel, whereas the farmer living in central Nebraska was compelled to pay more than 20 cents a bushel for the same service. Following the the bureaucratic argument to its natural conclusion the Nebraska farmer should not have been able to sell any grain. But Nebraska shippers sold many million bushels in the markets of this country and Europe.

Under government control the conditions would not be dissimilar. Rates from Illinois and Indiana points to the gulf would be lower than from Nebraska points, but the Nebraska farmer would sell his grain then as now. It is likely, however, that the general level of rates would be much lower and that, therefore, the Nebraska farmer would receive a higher price per bushel for his corn and wheat. The writer who makes the above argument is debarred from contending that the consumer pays the freight, because he has already contended that the lower the freight rate the higher will be the price for the farmer's grain. If it be true that the higher the rate the less the farmer receives for his grain then it must be true that the producer pays the freight.

#### JAPANESE ARE STILL CHILDREN

The Japanese people continue to puzzle Americans and Europeans. During the war their self-restraint, intelligence and thoroughness made a strong appeal to the occidental mind and won unstinted praise. But now that peace has come the Japanese are displaying a spirit of anarchy that seems more natural in St. Petersburg than in Tokio. Their self-restraint has been thrown to the winds and even the intelligence which correspondents were fond of describing as the chief cause of Japanese victories has been replaced by the mob mind. The human side of the little brown automatons of the orient is being revealed and the revelation is far from pleasant.

Two facts in connection with the rioting are significant. The mob showed little respect and affection for a party of Americans and when the opportunity presented itself the rioters burned all the Christian churches they could reach. This, it may be argued, is not conclusive evidence of Japanese sentiment, and yet the reports from Tokio state that many substantial citizens took part in the riots.

It is pertinent to ask whether the affection for the United States, which we have been led to believe exists in Japan, is confined to official circles. The destruction of Christian churches indicates a hostility to western civilization rather than to western religion. It betrays a bitterness toward foreigners which was shrewdly concealed while the war was in progress. Probably the people feel that inasmuch as Japan is now the dominant power in Asia there is no potent reason why this sentiment against foreigners should be concealed any longer.

The United States, however, has made no mistake in remaining friendly with Japan. The little children of Nippon are in a pout just now and they are acting unreasonably even toward their friends. The Japanese are not yet fully in touch with the modern spirit of cosmopolitan liberality, but education will doubtless remove their prejudices against westerners unless the peoples of Europe and America make themselves offensive by greed and aggression.

#### STANDPATTERS ARE GETTING WORRIED

It is reported that Speaker Cannon and other staunch standpatters, who have vowed never to tamper with the tariff, have come reluctantly to the conclusion that they must not even tamper with the internal revenue duties. They had hoped to provide against deficiency by increasing taxes on beer, whiskey and tobacco, but some astute politicians have warned them that such action would prove unpopular and therefore hazardous to the republican party. Thus the standpatters are facing a most perplexing problem.

It is absolutely necessary either to raise more revenue or to reduce government expenses. The republican party, according to the standpatters, must maintain its standing with the trusts and with the people. The party cannot favor lower tariffs without offending