

WHAT RAILROADS SPEND. The railroads of the United States expend in a year a sum more than \$100,000,000 in excess of the total expenditures of the United States government, and this computation does not include nearly \$250,000,000 paid in the form of interest upon railroad bonds or guaranteed stock and from \$80,000,000 to \$100,000,000 paid in the form of dividends to stockholders. The railroads, indeed, are the great disbursing agencies of the country, handling never less than \$1,000,000,000 in a year and disbursing it all, or practically all, for railroads as a rule do not keep large bank accounts, and do practically a cash business, turning money rapidly.

An estimate made by one of the scientific papers a short time ago gave as the average annual expense of American railroads in maintaining the condition of their roadbeds \$75,000,000, besides \$25,000,000 for the purchase of rails, ties and sleepers, and \$15,000,000 for the construction of new bridges. The railroads of the country spent last year for fences, signboards, signals and watch towers \$3,500,000 and for printing and advertising \$8,500,000. Very few persons have an accurate idea of the extent to which railroad expenses are to be subdivided, supposing, probably, that the largest items of expenditure are for cars and engines, fuel, employes and terminals. Such is the fact, but there are other large items, and one of the largest of these is the item of taxes. Railroad corporations in the United States are heavily taxed, and they pay collectively in a year, it has been estimated, \$40,000,000. There is then another item which figures largely in all railroad accounts, the item of legal expenses, railroads being drawn into almost constant litigation and requiring at all times the services of counsel. It is estimated that expenses of American railroads for professional legal services amount in a year to about \$10,000,000, and this is, of course, exclusive of the sums requisite to meet claims for personal injuries or damages to property. Some of the large railroad companies expend as much as \$250,000 in a year for the settlement of such cases or the payment of judgments recovered. This item of expense on all American railroads is ordinarily put at about \$5,000,000. A serious accident may entail on a railroad company damages so large as to offset many months of profit, and some railroads have been crippled for long periods by such cases.

There are in the United States 800,000 railroad employes, 100,000 station men, 35,000 engineers, 40,000 firemen and helpers, 25,000 conductors and dispatchers, 65,000 trainmen, 30,000 machinists, 100,000 shopmen other than machinists, 20,000 telegraph operators and their helpers, 45,000 switchmen, flagmen and watchmen and 175,000 track-

men. The daily payroll on all American railroads combined, officers and clerical staff included, amounts to about \$2,000,000 a day.—New York Sun.

**BOARDS WITH-
OUT SAWMILLS.** The constitution of the state of Nebraska, and, in fact, the organic law of many of the western states, is intentionally so constructed as to restrict the number of elective and appointive officers. This feature in fundamental law grew out of a wise forecasting of political possibilities. It was fashioned for the purposes of economy and frugality in state administration. But the smartness of modern legislators, whetted by an appetite for official life and its emoluments has avoided and evaded constitutional inhibitions.

No sawmills in the heavy forests of Wisconsin and Michigan have turned out "boards" with the rapidity with which the Nebraska and other legislatures have exuded that sort of lumber upon the taxpayers of this commonwealth. We have boards of railroad commissioners, boards of warehouse commissioners; boards almost innumerable and almost wholly unnecessary, and each and all of them have appetites for fees and salaries. The cost of "boards" to the taxpayers of Nebraska is immense. These boards originate primarily with the idea that common people are individually incapable of looking after their own interests. The oil inspectors are the incarnation of a belief that the average citizen of the state of Nebraska does not know enough to buy oil that will not blow him up or set his house on fire. The time is not distant, if this anxiety for the creation of public office continues dominant, when there will be a board of flour inspectors, sugar inspectors, corn and oatmeal inspectors, starch inspectors, potato inspectors, water inspectors; in fact, a board to inspect anything and everything that humanity can eat, drink or wear. Paternalism has so established itself that many citizens of the state seem entirely unconscious of the fact that whatever the state pays for in money must be taken from its citizenship in the form of taxation. Neither a state nor a national government has any patent or power to create values. Every government is a born pauper. No government has any money except that taken by levying and collecting taxes upon either subjects or citizens. Extravagance in government expenditures means enhancement of the burdens of taxation. Taxeaters advocate more revenues. Taxpayers protest against more and pray for less taxation. Who ought to govern—those who pay all the taxes or those who eat all the taxes? No tax can be too small and any tax may be made too big.

J. Sterling Morton, the ex-secretary of agriculture, has established a weekly paper at Nebraska City, Neb., which is

called THE CONSERVATIVE, and which will be published "in the interest of the conservation of all that is deemed desirable in the social, industrial and political life of the United States"—including the gold standard, civil service reform, the rights of corporations as well as individuals, and economy in public administration. Mr. Morton is a powerful champion of such causes, and the fact that his subscription list contains 5,000 to 6,000 names before the first number has been issued, assures his enterprise of substantial support.—Daily Springfield (Mass.) Republican.

Out in Nebraska City a new weekly paper has begun its career with the present month, starting out with a subscription list of four or five thousand names. It is called THE CONSERVATIVE, and carries at its masthead the name of J. Sterling Morton as editor. Mr. Morton was secretary of agriculture during President Cleveland's last administration and his name was suggested in 1896 as candidate for President on the ticket of the Gold Democrats. Though he did not attain that distinction he did yeoman service as the champion of a sound currency, and he has always been identified with the stability and integrity of our national affairs. It is not to be doubted that the paper under his control will justify its name, though conservatism with him does not mean sluggishness or indifference to new and progressive ideas. There is need of a strong, honest and able conservative influence in the very region where the new journalistic enterprise is planted, and certainly no harm would follow should it acquire a national reputation and circulation. Its prospectus is frank and vigorous. It announces that it "will treat all Americans as laborers, either with hands or heads—doing either manual or mental work—or both. There is no menacing 'leisure class' in the United States. Conflicts between money and muscle have nearly always been inaugurated by politicians seeking prominence and profits through public offices." It "will declare for the continuance of the single gold standard in the monetary system of the Government of the United States. It will combat the free coinage of silver at 16 to 1. It will contend that the relative value of coins made of silver and gold depends, not upon an enacted ratio, but upon the relative market value of the silver and gold bullion which those coins contain." Finally, it "enters upon its existence with the hope of becoming useful as a truth-teller, and influential as a militant exponent of everything in American social, industrial and political life which the experience of one hundred and twenty-two years of national independence has proved to be worth conserving." Its editor is an able, honest, up-to-date man and we expect to see THE CONSERVATIVE reflect these characteristics. May it live long and prosper.—Boston Transcript.