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RAILROADS RUN BY GOVERNMENT.

"Experience shows that wherever railways have been placed under government control the people have had better service and at a cheaper rate. In Belgium, where the government has assumed the control of the railways, fares and freight rates have been cut down one-half and the wages of employes doubled; but for all that the railroads pay a yearly revenue of \$4,000,000. In Hungary, where the roads are state owned, one can ride six miles for a cent. In Australia one can ride 1,000 miles across the country for \$5.50 or six miles for 2 cents. Sixty-eight governments own their telegraph lines. Forty-four governments own their railroads in whole or in part, while only nineteen do not."

The above paragraph clipped from Farming, published in Toronto, Canada, furnishes an excellent illustration of the sort of pabulum served up to their patrons by the anti-railroad press. Consular reports, vol. XLV, No. 167, page 579, contains a statement from Consul General Maratta of Victoria, Australia, from which we quote: "No doubt we in Australia will never be able to obtain rates as low as those that prevail in the United States, our conditions being radically different; but the extraordinary thing is that the assertion should be persisted in that our Victorian rates are lower than those charged in America. Over a large portion of the Pennsylvania system, which may be taken as a typical case, the average ton-mile rate which is the only possible basis of comparison, was in 1890 less than a farthing (one-half cent) per ton per mile, while the

average for the whole system was three-tenths of a penny. That is to say, that throughout this great organization the average for goods of all classes was just over a farthing (one-half cent) per ton per mile, while in Victoria the average for all classes would be more like three pence (six cents) per ton per mile. The average American rate for wheat is under one-fourth of a penny per ton per mile, while the average Victorian rate is one penny, four times as great."

In Belgium, while it is true that the rates have been reduced they are still higher than in the United States, both for passengers and freight, the latter being at least three times as great as in this country. The Interstate Commerce Commission some time ago prepared a report for congress in which it was shown that with one exception as to passengers (Norway) and no exception as to freight, European rates are much higher than our own for similar service. In England, where the conditions are more nearly similar to our own, than in other European countries, the second-class passenger rate is materially higher than our first-class, being 3.2 cents against 2.34 cents per mile, while the freight rate is shown to be nearly three times as high. The entire list of countries owning their railways might be gone over with similar results.

In reply to the closing sentence of the quoted paragraph in question, it may be said that instead of forty-four, only twenty-three governments own their own railways in whole or in part, namely: wholly owned, Egypt and Nicaragua; in part, Argentina, Australasia, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cape of Good Hope, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Guatamala, Holland, India, Italy, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Russia and Sweden. Of these only the first two named operate all of their own road and three, namely, Greece, Holland and Italy, operate no portion of theirs. Several of the other countries, namely: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, France, Greece, Guatamala and Japan, own less than 30 per cent of their railroads, and in many cases do not operate all they own.

Were it worth while much more data in refutation of the assertions made in Farming could be supplied, but enough has been given to show what little foundation there is for this and similar statements. The press of the present day is to a large extent the educator of

the people, and the publication of misleading statements, particularly when they are likely to affect public action, is little, if any, short of a crime. Especially is this true in respect to those papers that eschew politics. Misrepresentation has come to be so generally accepted as the principal factor in the advocacy of partisan measures, that people look with suspicion upon statements made in party organs, but that fact should make other journals more careful to ascertain the truth of what they publish. Too much harm has already been done to the railroads of this country by inflaming the public mind through misstatements as to their operation, and journals like Farming would do well if they would carefully examine such statements before giving them currency.

WANT A QUORUM.

It is stated that the Cuban "Assembly" at Santiago is in great want of a quorum. But it is also said that there is no such want around the U. S. commissary department at that place. A joint committee, consisting of Senators Proctor and Thurston, should be immediately transported to Cuba to investigate this grave matter. Those oppressed Cubans should have a quorum; if it can not be had in any other way, one should be provided for them at Washington. The "liberty" of these Cuban patriots to have quorums and commissary in plenty must not be infringed.

SCARED ALL EUROPE.

The statements sometimes made by partisans just previous to elections are absurd and incredible even to the understandings of the most densely ignorant and stupid. Not many days since THE CONSERVATIVE attended a public meeting to listen to a discussion of economic, financial and political questions. Among the speakers was a violent republican candidate for office who informed his hearers, in perfectly original English, that the effete monarchies of the old world began to tremble as soon as the news of the election of McKinley penetrated the indurated wax which veneered their antiquated ear drums. But after a partial recovery from their first fright they began—with the silly exception of decrepit Spain—to pose as friends and admirers of the United States. Thus—said the speaker—England began to pretend to