

**STORY OF THE BURLINGTON.**

In an address delivered at Albia, Ia., December 30, W. W. Baldwin spoke of the Burlington system as follows:

"Many a farmer, in this county and in the counties west of here, has cause for thankfulness that he bought his farm from the Burlington, and not from a speculator. Its land policy was always to favor the farmer and to sell lands only to actual settlers. These sales were made on ten years' time, with every facility afforded to enable the purchaser to become the owner of his land. Prior to 1868, all sales were made at \$1.25 per acre. The lands were good but the people were poor. Today these same lands are worth from \$40 to \$60 per acre, showing to the farmer a larger profit on the investment than was realized by any purchaser of the stock or bonds of the railroad company. In this connection there is an interesting situation growing out of the land grant to the Burlington, to which you will pardon my alluding. By an act of congress passed twenty-five years ago, a deduction is made of 20 per cent of the mail pay of all land grant roads. Ever since the fast mail was established on the Burlington, this deduction has reached a large and constantly increasing sum and aggregates at this time more than \$900,000.

"The company could have bought from the government every acre of land granted to it in Iowa for \$450,000 when the grant was made. It has already repaid to the government twice the value of its Iowa land grant and is now paying at the rate of over \$80,000 a year for what was intended by the people at the beginning as a gift. Such is politics in some of its phases.

"Other railroad systems have become prosperous from the traffic of mines or the products of the forests, but this company has been allied to the soil and those who till the soil, and its growth has been contemporaneous with the evolution of the western farm. It has not prospered except in those periods when the farmer has been prosperous, and its perception of the needs of the land owner, as to rates and facilities, has been the true secret of whatever success it has attained; its history is the history of the building of the west.

**Value of Administration.**

"Some one has said that, next to the question of economy in administration, there are just three points in railroad-ing—terminals in cities, the rate sheet and how to get trains over the road. Iowa farmers and business men are interested, or think they are interested, more in the rate sheet than in anything else. I do not know anything about rate sheets. As Governor Shaw said the other day about another mat-

ter, 'I would rather be a shepherd in the 'bad lands' than be obliged to make rate sheets to please everybody and produce revenue enough to keep the wheels going.'

"It certainly goes without saying, at a business men's banquet, that no one railroad has power any more to make its own tariffs. The tariff is a complex business production, as we may all be led to vividly appreciate when the inter-state commerce commission begins to promulgate tariffs for everybody; but this I have a right to say for the Burlington: that, in the making and application of tariffs, its influence has always been exercised for reasonable rates, for rates that will move the corn and cattle to market, that will enable the business of small towns to prosper and that will build up and stimulate the local industries along its line. How and where and when its influence in these directions has been felt you may not know in detail. But this assurance as business men you have had for many recent years, that no railroad company has had a man in charge of its freight interests, more democratic in his ideas and manners, better qualified from long experience as an Iowa business man himself, nor more in sympathy with the western farmer and stock growers, and the western merchant and manufacturer, than modest, genial and capable Tom Miller, and when it comes to successful railroading there is a good deal in selecting men like that.

"The Burlington has been a progressive railroad; it is a progressive railroad now. In the year just passed it paid out \$4,226,000 simply in improving its road, as it stands; that is, in reducing its grades, straightening curves, adding new tracks, buildings, fences and bridges, besides paying out more than \$1,500,000 for new equipment, among the latter being 1,000 freight cars added in the year. This does not include two and a half million dollars expended during the year upon the new lines built in Wyoming and Colorado. Of this four and a quarter millions spent last year in improving the road by reducing grades and putting in second track, etc., more than \$2,500,000 was spent in Iowa.

**Stupendous Improvements.**

"The work that is now going on between Murray and Creston, a distance of about twenty miles, is costing in cash at the rate of \$100,000 per mile for every mile of that distance—the rebuilding of the road.

"This means that a great railroad is never finished—that there is a constant demand and pressure, not simply that it be kept in good condition and repair, but that it be constantly added to and improved. Every device and invention which the ingenuity of man brings to

light that may add to the speed, comfort and safety of passengers, and to expedition in the carriage of freight, must be tried and adopted, if it proves to be a success. If some Edison, or Marconi or Tesla shall perfect an electric locomotive that is a better and cheaper traction machine than the present steam engine, the Burlington will adopt it, and operate its road by electricity. That is the Burlington way.

"If there are ambitious rivals, cherishing the view that the Burlington will some day lose the fast mail because it fails to keep up with the times in the matters of roadbed and equipment, there are plenty of business men in Albia competent to advise them not to lay that flattering unction to their souls.

"Now, if you will allow me, I will speak of one more characteristic of the Burlington—its policy towards the men who work for it.

"A railroad is not simply two strips of steel with some cars and locomotives to run over them; it is a complicated business mechanism, demanding the anxious thought and study of many minds. It is every day and every hour in the day, what its management makes of it. It is not a clock that can be wound up and will then run of itself, keeping time and showing good results. Good service on a railroad means unremitting attention to details, and such attention can only be expected from a corps of willing, faithful and contented employees. Fidelity from employees of any large corporation is always stimulated by policies in its management which recognize merit for its own sake, and that railroad is most successfully managed on which ability and not personal or political pull secures promotion, and where the humblest worker may hope for advancement to the higher honor, if by the test of years he is found worthy.

"Where do you find, this country over, a railroad which offers a better illustration of this enlightened policy than the Burlington? Call the roll of those who at this moment are in its active management, and you will find that, practically without exception, they have come up from the ranks, and reached their places step by step upward, and after many years of apprenticeship. There surely can be no impropriety in my referring briefly to their successful careers as proof of this policy.

"Mr. Perkins, who for the past twenty years has been president, began his services with the company in 1859, at nineteen years of age, as a clerk in the office of the assistant treasurer at Burlington, upon the B. & M., with a salary of \$30 per month, and was successively paymaster, assistant treasurer, superintendent, director, vice president and president.

"Mr. Harris, now president, began as an office boy on the Hannibal & St. Joe, when he was sixteen years old, with a salary of \$35 per month, and