

LOW RAILROAD RATES A PRACTICAL QUESTION.

For The Public.

It has always been a puzzle to me why railroad companies and other monopolies seem to prefer a large income from high charges against customers, to much larger incomes from low charges that receive greater patronage.

Some years ago the roads cut rates from the Missouri river to the Pacific down to ten dollars via San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, with five dollars for the return. At the same time they exacted twenty dollars extra, to be returned. (This to prevent passengers for half-way and Utah from taking advantage of the low rates.) I went across three times. About every day from Kansas City, Atchison, Omaha and Topeka there left twenty carloads of sixty persons each, two engines, conductors, etc., in proportion. It could not have cost over two hundred dollars to take the train through. Twenty cars, sixty passengers each, equals twelve thousand dollars at ten, six thousand dollars at five dollars per head. Freights were in same proportion. Never did roads make so much. Yet they said it was ruin. I got to studying over it.

Pullman started his cars with great difficulty. But it paid enormously—cars cost a large sum. I took train at Omaha for Chicago, paid the railroad company eighteen dollars, paid Pullman five, two of which he paid the company for hauling us. The railroad got twenty dollars for hauling me, Pullman three. You know how rich he became.

A little company began to furnish a poor kind of passenger car with beds, etc., very common for us common people, to go from the Missouri river to the Pacific. They charged six dollars per head and less for a family, and divided with the railroad of course. It paid so well that the railroads grew jealous and took it from the little company to run it themselves. Three dollars across the continent from the Missouri river paid. At the same time they exacted three cents per mile, or from sixty to eighty dollars!

Consider all this. You know it must be true if you reflect. How could the little ride companies get so rich? and Pullman richer?

An engineer once ran a newspaper, entitled "Across Continent for One Dollar," and proved it would pay enormously. He had helped build and operate railroads, so he knew what he was talking about.

CLARKE IRVINE.

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PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXATION.

From the New York Times of October 21, 1906.

Gov. Stokes recently made William J. Devereux, Secretary of the Democratic State Committee, a member of the Monmouth County Tax Equalization Board. In a letter which reached the Governor today he tells of some of his troubles in fixing true values upon the Summer show places of New Yorkers at Long Branch and neighboring coast resorts.

"Our greatest trouble comes, Governor," says the letter, "from the show places or freak properties of the millionaires summering at Long Branch, Spring

Lake, Elberon, and Deal Beach. For instance, one of the Guggenheims has a pretty, glass-enclosed labyrinth on a portion of his estate at Elberon. Thus far, I confess with shame, I have been unable to ascertain the value of a down-to-the-minute Monmouth County shore-front labyrinth.

"I asked a wiseacre friend of mine to put a fair price on a twentieth century labyrinth, and he replied that he never ate any of it.

"I next tackled Dominic Ballard of Ocean Grove. To him I put the question. 'Labyrinths! Labyrinths! I am a trifle rusty, brother, on church discipline,' he replied, 'but I don't think Methodists are forbidden to play the new game, providing, of course, there is no gambling attached to it.'

"Now, Governor, if they have any old sort of labyrinth down in Millville, for mercy's sake please quote me a price for one, so we can fix up the Guggenheims' assessment p. d. q.

"Down at Spring Lake, Marquis Martin Maloney has a famous show place containing a replica of the world-famous Grotto at Lourdes. Now, Governor, I'm on the job when it comes to beer gardens, but I'm a Mugwump if I know anything about the value of a Grotto a la Lourdes. If you ever owned one, put me wise as to its worth.

"The Marquis also has a very elaborate iron fence around his estate. You, Governor, no doubt, have built and repaired many fences in your political career, so please give me a line on their value—for taxing purposes, I mean.

"Another fellow has a hot-air plant underneath a portion of his garden for forcing tiger lilies to bloom outdoors in Winter. They tell me the plant—the iron pipes, I mean, not the flowers—cost \$30,000 to install. What amount should we assess him for his tiger lily hobby?

"Then up at Kildysart, the Summer home of the late Daniel O'Day, at Deal Beach, a small fortune was spent in laying out an Italian Sunken Garden. It's nothing, as you probably know, but a hole in the ground. How are we to get at the intrinsic value of a big, open air hole?"

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TOLSTOY'S REVOLUTION.

From the Chicago Examiner and American of October 21, 1906.

To a French journalist friend who visited him at Yasnaja Poljana the other day, Count Leo Tolstoy spoke of the Russian revolution in the following words:

"I have my own ideas of this revolution. I know very well that it has become the fashion to consider me an old chatterbox. But what can I do?

"I cannot say that I am wrong when I know that I am right.

"The whole situation is very simple. What is the cause of the disease from which Russia is suffering and from which some, but not I, think she will die? It is because there is no real power, no authority, here any longer.

"There are two kinds of authority—one which is founded on violence, and which is immoral and bad, and another is based on the will of the free citizens.

"Here in Russia we have at the present time

neither one nor the other, and I for one am convinced that a nation cannot exist without recognizing some authority.

"The proper authority, or government, is possible only when you have union and co-operation, moral or religious, the word does not matter. But who shall give us this?—the Anarchists, the Socialists? Their negative criticism may be just, but what they intend to put in place of what they endeavor to tear down is miserable and not founded on reason and justice. The eight-hour day, for instance. What if it suits me to work fifteen hours to-day and one hour to-morrow?

"But why worry about the future? Let us let the future take care of itself and only look at the present.

"Two measures are necessary to the happiness of Russia—all land must be given to the peasants who work it, and we must have the Single Tax as advocated by Henry George, one of the greatest men that ever lived.

"Then the whole labor question will be solved. The young country people will then no longer leave the fields, where life is natural, simple and healthy, to go to work in the miserable, joyless factories.

"Civilization, or rather what we call civilization, will not suffer when people shall at last come to see that nine-tenths of what is manufactured is worthless.

"These are foolish, Utopian thoughts, I am told. Yes, in England perhaps, where only one man in a hundred is a peasant, these thoughts can be realized.

"Let us make our revolution as it suits us. Your foreign cooking recipes do not teach me one penny's worth—I am a Russian and I want Russian dishes."

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WHERE'D JIM HILL GET IT?

From the St. Louis Mirror of October 25, 1906.

What is believed to be the largest transaction in the history of this country was the sale of approximately 750,000,000 tons of iron ore on October 6 to the United States Steel Corporation by President Hill of the Great Northern Railroad Company. It was said that the deal was accomplished by five men in two hours' time at the New York office of the Steel Trust. This is interesting. Who gave Jim Hill his title to that iron ore? What right had he to that wealth of the earth?

Does it actually belong to anyone—this wealth—until some one by labor has dug it out for the use of mankind? Does it not actually belong to all the people? Should not all the people have the benefit of that natural wealth in the land? Should not the value of it be taxed into the public treasury as the value of a natural resource, leaving to whomsoever might develop the field all the profit that might hereafter accrue from the working? Who made this wealth? Not Jim Hill. Did he buy it? No: he bought only the right to keep it out of the possession of others until such time as increased demand for such wealth might enhance the value of the product. And now he turns it over to the United States Steel Corporation in order that that corporation may keep the field out of occupancy and productivity lest its output under the working of others should prevent

that corporation from keeping up the profits on the restricted output of the other iron fields under their control.

If this vast field were taxed to its full value, not only as mere land but as land covering and containing iron ore, think you that it could be held out of use at any profit? Not at all. Either the field would be worked by others or the occupants of other fields would reduce their prices on the product of those other fields. If a tax on the value of the iron lands were levied heavy enough to make it necessary either to work the fields or quit holding them, wouldn't there be 750,000,000 tons of free iron ore threatening the profits of the existing and now worked fields? There would. Would not that materially weaken the Steel Trust? You bet it would. That ore value belongs to the people so far as it is ore land. All values coming to those who might bring it into the service of the public would rightly belong to such servitors of the public. But as it is, the value goes to enhance the value of other iron fields, simply by keeping this field out of use. This iron is used by non-use to put up the price of other iron and steel. The public's property is used as an engine to plunder the public by means of high prices.

This tremendous transaction is a beautiful example of the evil that is wrought by our failure to get, by taxation of land values, the benefit for the public of the values of the public's own possessions. The forestallers of the land and the engrossers thereby of the land products are the vampires draining the body politic of its public wealth. Why not drive these vampires away by a trial of the Single Tax?

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LAND BOOMS AND REACTION.

An Editorial from the Springfield (Mass.) Weekly Republican of October 11, 1906.

The conclusion is reached by the New York Journal of Commerce, after talks with real estate men and bankers, that the land boom which extends over the country is the wildest ever known, not excepting even the craze of 1873. This has an important bearing upon the question of our general and extraordinary business prosperity and its duration: for it is well known that land speculation usually marks the culminating point of boom periods. Henry George, indeed, held the view that land booms are the cause of panics and succeeding depression, and presented it with impressive force and argument.

The speculation in land about Greater New York has been of especially marked intensity—the initial causes being the rapid growth of the city, the great immigration, the overflow of population into suburban districts and the tunneling projects of the Pennsylvania railroad. It has been most overdone on Long Island and in the districts north of the Harlem river. Unimproved land on Long Island, for example, has trebled in price within a few months. Millions of dollars have been withdrawn from savings banks by poor people to invest in lots which in most cases must be carried for years before they can be turned to productive account. In the month of July alone \$2,000,000 was taken from the Bowery savings bank for this use. The upshot of the matter for most of these people will be the loss of the property through mortgage foreclosure or sacrifice