

ing his post and calling the hours as required. He called: "Seven bells and all's vell." The next call, however, was a variation. It was: "Eight bells and all is not vell; I haf droppit my musket oferboard."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

THE DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION OF THE RAILROAD PROBLEM.

In the course of the several debates on the Pacific railroads during the last five years the advocates of refunding and other methods of sacrificing the government's interests have repeatedly declared to the house that my opposition to their measures was designed and intended to bring about an experiment in the government ownership and operation of railroads. I have as frequently declared that while I believe absolutely in the government ownership of all railroad highways, including roadbeds, bridges, stations and terminals, I do not consider the operation of railroads in the transportation of freight and passengers for hire to be a proper function of government. . . .

To those who have seriously and intelligently studied the railroad question the difference between these two systems is as plain and unmistakable as the difference between night and day. The public highway system is based upon the great democratic principle that the true and only function of government is to prevent the interference of one citizen with the equal rights of another, or, as that principle has been more tersely expressed: "The only true function of government is to govern." While the system of government operation of railroads as a common carrier is based upon the socialistic idea that all industrial enterprises should be conducted by the government and that all citizens should look to the government for employment and support, the public highway theory is a development of individualism.

The public highway system is a stage or step in the establishment of free competition, while the system of government operation involves the destruction of individuality and the elimination of competition in the great industrial field of railroad transportation. It is remarkable that systems so widely different, so entirely contrary in principle, should be confused as substantially identical by gentlemen having long experience in the congress of the United States.

In view of the fact that this bugbear of government ownership and operation of railroads has been and still is the greatest obstacle in the way of the

enforcement of the claims of the government against the Pacific railroads, it can hardly be considered a digression to fully and clearly state my position on that question.

Let me first deal with the principle involved in the government ownership of public highways, including navigable streams, ship and boat canals, wagon roads and railroads. If it be undemocratic to advocate government ownership of railroad highways, it must be equally undemocratic to advocate or to tolerate government ownership of other highways. That will hardly be asserted. Who would contend that the streets and wagon roads should be given or sold to private toll gatherers, who, in consideration of their maintaining the highways, should be permitted to levy tolls on all travelers who use them? Who would give over the navigable streams of our country to the care of private companies and individuals with the right to levy tolls for their private use as a consideration for keeping them in condition? Does any man contend that the granting of franchises and rights of way, either by gift or by sale, for such purpose would be democratic?

Certainly no man who understands the democratic theory of government would make any such contention, or, if opposed to the democratic theory of government, would for a moment risk his reputation for either truthfulness or intelligence upon such a statement. The fact is that the granting of a franchise for any purpose whatever is undemocratic. The true democratic principle is that no franchise shall ever be granted for any purpose whatever, because a franchise is a privilege granted to some citizens which cannot be enjoyed by all, and in its very nature involves the creation of a monopoly, which, according to the democratic principle, it is the function of government to prevent and suppress, but never to encourage or establish.

The whole philosophy of democracy was summarized by Thomas Jefferson in his world-famous expression: "Equal rights to all, special privileges to none." The democratic principle requires that any enterprise of general utility which in its nature necessarily becomes a monopoly if left to private control, and which requires a franchise in order to enable it to be carried on privately, must, for the general good, be made a public function to the extent of eliminating the monopoly, but no further.

What is the theory of democratic government? It is, first, that all men have equal natural rights; that every

man is morally entitled at all times to the enjoyment of all his natural rights; that he is entitled to perfect freedom in the exercise of his natural rights; that he is entitled to pursue his happiness without hindrance or obstruction, provided always in the exercise of his own freedom or in the pursuance of his own happiness he does not interfere with the equal right of any other man; that some men are prone to invade the natural rights of others; that government is necessary to prevent the evil disposed from interfering with the equal rights of others; that no man has an inherent right to govern another, though all have a natural right of self-defense; that all rights of government must spring from the consent of the governed only; that that consent is always to be expressed by the majority of the persons of mature age and sound mind in every community; that the true and only function of the government so established by the majority is to prevent individuals from interfering with the natural rights of others; that the government so established has no more or better right to interfere with the natural rights of any citizen than one citizen has to interfere with the natural rights of another; that the government so established has no right to grant franchises or privileges which enable one citizen to interfere with the natural rights of another; that no government has, nor ever had, nor ever can have, any rightful power to grant or maintain or permit any franchise or privilege which constitutes or involves a monopoly.

Keeping those principles of democracy, the correctness of which no man of intelligence will dispute, clearly in mind, let us come to the consideration of the railroad problem. The monopoly system of private toll roads has universally given way to the democratic system of public wagon roads, owned variously by the national, state, county, and municipal governments, and maintained as public highways over which all citizens freely pass and compete with each other in all kinds of transportation service. The locomotive is invented, making an enormous saving of labor and time in transportation possible, but involving the necessity for special highways for operation.

A railway company is formed to establish and operate a railroad between two given points. The company announces its purpose to open a highway, to construct a roadbed, and to operate trains for the transportation of passengers and freight for hire, and so advises the public authorities. The authorities say to the company: "Go

ahead." But, says the company, we cannot secure a right of way without a franchise. The authorized representatives of the Government, under a truly democratic system, cannot grant franchises for any purpose. A franchise is a special privilege, and the democratic principle forbids the granting of special privileges for any purpose.

But the construction and operation of the railroad would manifestly be of great advantage to the whole people of the state. It cannot be constructed by private enterprise without the granting of a special privilege by the government. What then? Why, clearly the true function of the democratic government is to make such change in the construction of one or more of its public highways as will make it possible to operate this new form of conveyance for the public benefit. It is soon discovered that this new form of conveyance, with the special construction and operation of the highway required for its operation, cannot be successfully combined with the uses to which the old wagon roads of the country are put.

What, then, is the function of a democratic government? Certainly not to bar the way of progress by refusing to provide a highway for the new and improved vehicles of transportation. Certainly not to disregard the lives and interests of its people by combining railroads with wagon roads, but to open new highways so constructed as to serve the interests of the public with the greatest possible safety in the operation of the new system of transportation. When the railroad highway is constructed, what, then, is the true function of the democratic government?

It is, first, to protect the highway from interference of any kind that would either destroy or impair its usefulness. What next? Manifestly to open the highway to all citizens who desire to operate locomotives and cars over the road on terms of perfect equality and with such limitations only as are necessary to prevent transporters of freight and passengers from interfering with each other, and to prevent as far as possible the danger of collisions and other accidents. This done by the government, the commercial and industrial inclination of the people, based upon intelligent self-interest, will do all the rest. If the freights and fares usually collected for railroad transportation give greater average returns, in proportion to investment and risk, than can be had from other equally safe investments, capital will tend to supply locomotives

and cars for all kinds of railroad transportation.

As soon as the average profits of transportation have been reduced by competition to the average net earnings yielded by capital in equally safe general investments the equilibrium will be reached, capital will continue to supply locomotives and cars but will cease to be attracted to that business in superfluity. Freights and fares will be regulated by the free competition of common carriers over the railroad highways as perfectly as they are regulated by the free competition of common carriers over wagon roads.

The people will be required to pay simply for the service rendered by the carriers, including interest on the capital invested in the locomotives, cars, and other property used incidentally in the transportation service. Under such a condition of free competition there would be and could be no such thing as monopoly extortion. . . .

Ask the officers of any railroad company in the country or in the world if there would be the slightest difficulty in their permitting trains of a dozen different companies to operate regularly over any given railroad, provided locomotives and cars were built on the same plan and to the same gauge with their own locomotives and cars and with their engines and conductors running such trains under the command of the superintendents and train dispatchers of the company owning the road, and the answer will be that there would not be the slightest difficulty. In fact, it would make absolutely no difference, so far as operation is concerned, whether the trains belonged to the company owning the road or to another company or to as many companies as there were trains operating over the road.

If that plan of operation would not present the slightest difficulty under a private company owning any given railroad, why do men who pretend to knowledge in the ordinary affairs of life contend that the difficulties which the government would encounter in doing the same thing are insuperable?—Hon. Jas. G. Maguire, in the House, Feb. 4, 1898.

Spanish Statesman—Hurrah! Viva Hispania! We are saved. The American government is now threatened with enemies at home.

Another Spanish Statesman—Ah, good! Who are they—Indians or the old confederates?

Spanish Statesman—Neither. I just read that the populists—the American peasantry—recently met and publicly

denounced the United States government.—Puck.

"I can't see which one this is," said Aunt Jean when she went in the semi-darkness to kiss her two little nieces good night.

"Ruth," answered Frances, soberly. "But it sounds like Frances," said Aunt Jean.

"P'raps it 's," replied a roguish voice; "it's so dark I can't see, too."—Judge.

"Just think of Chicago being for four days without a newspaper," said Jinks.

"I don't believe it ever happened," said Blinks; "it's a canard, to make the city attractive to residents."—Bazar.

Uncle Sam—Peace? Why, certainly, senor. Only, this being—ahem!—strictly a war of humanity, you must hand over any trifles you have about you which I think I can find use for.—Life.

In my sleep I was fain of their fellowship,
fain

Of the live oak, the marsh and the main.
The little green leaves would not let me
lie down in sleep;

Upbreathed from the marshes a message
of range and of sweep,

Interwoven with waftures of wild sea-liberties,
drifting

Came through the lapped leaves, sifting,
sifting,

Came to the gates of sleep.
—Sidney Lanier.

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