

become readily entangled. It is so easy to be stupid and to believe that things that used to exist still go on long after they are past; to commit irreparable blunders because we fail to correct our theories by our changing experience. So many of the stumbling blocks against which we fall are the opportunities to which we have not adjusted ourselves. We keep hold of a convention which no longer squares with our genuine insight into life and we are slow to follow a clew which might enable us to solace and improve the life about us because it shocks an obsolete ideal.

Why is it that women do not vote upon those matters which concern them so intimately? Why do they not follow these vital affairs and feel responsible for their proper administration even although they have become municipalized? What would the result have been could women have regarded the suffrage not as a right or a privilege but as a mere piece of governmental machinery, without which they could not perform their traditional functions under the changed conditions of city life? Could we view the whole situation as a matter of obligation and normal development it would be much simplified. We are at the beginning of a prolonged effort to incorporate a progressive developing city life, founded upon a response to the needs of all the people, into the requisite legal enactments and civic institutions. To be in any measure successful this effort will require all the intelligent powers of observation, all the sympathy, all the common sense which may be gained from the whole adult population.



RAILROADS DISCRIMINATION.

THE EVIL.

For The Public.

In spite of the old saying that "there is nothing new under the sun," the railroad problem of the last fifty years is something absolutely new in industrial and political society. In civilized communities, and some barbarous ones, too, the establishment and maintenance of highways has always been a function of government. Government exists to protect life and property; but the right to travel to any part of the land on equality with other citizens is an important adjunct to the right of life, and the right of the citizen to take property from place to place as readily as others may take their property, is a most important element of the right of property.

In Anglo Saxon and English history the roads were called the "King's highways". All subjects of the king had equal rights there. The Anglo Saxon system was transplanted in America, and the providing of channels of transportation was always a matter for the action of either local or general government, until the coming of the railway. The highways on land and water were for the most part established and maintained at the public charge, leaving all citizens free to use them without discrimination and without price. The only apparent exception to this rule, the so-called toll roads, was an exception in name rather than in fact, the gathering of toll from travelers being really another way of collecting the road tax.

The wagon roads, still necessary for local transportation, cannot compete with the railroad for any

considerable distance; and with the exception of a limited opportunity for water transportation, the internal commerce of the country is entirely dependent upon the railroads. The placing of the transportation facilities of the country in private hands, was contrary to Anglo Saxon traditions; but there were certain conditions tending to this result when the railroad came into use.

(1) The railroad displaced other means of transportation gradually at first, and the people did not realize the far-reaching consequences of the change.

(2) Previous transportation facilities consisted only of the way or road on which all might pass with privately owned vehicles; but with the railroad there must be a specially prepared track on which only one vehicle can pass; there must be specially designed cars and engines, which it was impossible to expect individual citizens to possess; the railroad must be operated with great care and system by a large number of employes. The situation was something new, requiring the government either to abandon one of its functions recognized from time immemorial or to launch out in a new and extensive enterprise. If it chose the latter course, government must at least build and maintain the roadbed, and possibly undertake the entire operation of the road.

(3) The people looked at first upon the railway as a business enterprise only, not seeing the important functions of government which it was likely to absorb.

Although the government was prevented by the very nature of this invention from pursuing its former policy of merely providing the road and allowing individuals to use it at their pleasure, yet the government undoubtedly might have undertaken the building and maintenance, or even the operation, of the railroad. The general government, however, was one of limited powers; many of the States were new and without financial ability and were unable to cope with the problem. There was, moreover, alongside of the recognized principle that highways should be free to all alike, this other dogma, that the government should leave industry to private hands. As a result of these conditions, the early railroads, excepting a few feeble and unsuccessful attempts at State building, were allowed to become private enterprises. The private proprietors have ever since opposed all suggestions of change to government ownership or operation, thus far with success, in spite of the most serious evils which are now seen to go with private control. Railway partisans are still fond of repeating the maxim of the "laissez faire" economists, that government should not interfere with business; and many still apply that doctrine to railroads because they do not see, what was universally recognized before the dust of the railroad train had filled the air, that the assuring of equal and fair transportation rights to all citizens is one of the most important functions of government. If we are to accept the doctrine that government should not interfere with business, we must accept the correlative principle that business must leave government free to do the governing. The danger now is that the railroads and their allied interests will themselves become the government.

From the standpoint of experience, what are the evils resulting from private control of railroads?

1. Competition, which is relied upon in ordinary industries to keep prices reasonable and insure equal opportunities to all, is found to be utterly incapable of regulating railroad rates and practices. Comparatively few points of shipment have more than one railroad, and competition is impossible for them. For those places which have more than one road, there may be competition for a time at least to certain other places; but the competition is of such a nature that it soon results in combination or consolidation, so that competition is destroyed. This is the uniform story told by the history of railroads. At the present time the important railroads of the United States are grouped into a few large systems under unified control, so that competition for the greater part of the country is out of the question; and even between these systems there are understandings and agreements which make competition of little use to the public. It is therefore not surprising that railway rates should be sufficient, often, to pay interest and dividends on a capital from two to four times the real investment. This means that the rates charged are unreasonable. With the exception of legislation in recent years, rates have been limited only by what the traffic would bear. The railroads have usually seen the necessity of taking only such tolls as would allow the traffic to continue; but this is no guaranty of reasonable rates. The existence of this condition makes necessary the interference of government to insure reasonable rates for the use of the means of transportation.

2. The railroads have charged one man more than his neighbor for the same or similar service. Under the old system in English and American history, this would be equivalent to saying that the public road is open to some and closed to others, or that some must pay for what is a common right. Such a condition would then have been considered insufferable. It makes necessary the interference of government to insure to all citizens equal rights to go or to send goods to any part of the land.

3. The railroads have not been impartial in the burdens imposed upon different cities and communities. They have built up the places which they chose to favor, and have torn down or retarded the growth of the places not favored. This situation also requires the interference of government, to insure fair treatment of each community in comparison with other communities.

These are the three principal evils. The results indicated are accomplished in hundreds of different ways, and by many different devices, the mere recital of which would be a long story. The evil of excessive charges for the right of traveling or shipping goods, is serious enough; it brings unjust gain to the carriers at the expense of the public. I say "the public," for I do not mean the merchants or middlemen who actually ship the goods over the railroads. The real shippers who pay the bills are the producers of the things transported, who are forced to take less for the products of their labor; or they are the consumers of the products transported, who are forced to pay the increase in price added to cover the excessive transportation charge. These two classes, producers and consumers of products, who together "pay the freight," include practically every person in the country. It is only those having railway stocks or bonds, or otherwise

interested in railroads, who are not losers by excessive rates. This is one way in which all of us are concerned in the regulation of railway rates.

But unjust and burdensome as are excessive rates when they are uniformly imposed upon all persons and communities alike, yet even worse is discrimination or partiality in the treatment of individuals and communities by the railroads. Business and industry can proceed, even under an excessive tax, if the tax is uniform; but when the tax becomes unequal and discriminatory, the inevitable result is that men are put out of business by their competitors who get lower rates; the result is that manufacturing and commerce become games which are played with loaded dice, that merit, thrift and industry do not win. Success comes to the cunning grafter who can steal from his fellows a part of their birthright of liberty by an unholy bargain with the railroad, this private industry which exercises important functions of government. In the noxious and poisonous atmosphere of industry thus created, the combination and the trust flourish and become, in their turn, the instrument of industrial oppression. When the founders of "Standard Oil" killed off their competitors by robbing them of their equal transportation rights, they committed an offense scarcely less heinous than the bribing of courts or the stuffing of ballot boxes; they were corrupting the very foundations of society and government. And we who see and know these evils and do not apply such remedy as may be in our power, are partners in the crime.

Discrimination between communities has given arbitrary advantages to one of two rival industrial centers, causing the value of property in the other to fall, business to dwindle and population to decline. This discrimination has built up large cities at the expense of smaller towns and villages, and has created many of the distressing problems which exist in the great cities.

The worst result of private control of transportation has not yet been mentioned; for, serious as the direct effects upon industry are, to my mind the indirect effect upon the character of the people is vastly worse. Before the advent of the railroad and the trusts bred and supported by the railroad, the American character possessed sturdy, fearless and independent qualities, which I fear have been lost or put in eclipse during recent decades. The lawless barons of old used to prey upon industry and commerce, but no baron of feudal times ever had a more effective grip upon industry than have the modern railroad barons. Transportation is the key of industry, and whoever controls this may levy tribute upon industry almost at will. Such arbitrary action may be unlawful, but the railway baron finds that of little consequence as a practical obstacle. It is a bold and venturesome shipper who will try conclusions with a railroad in a court of justice and stay in the fight to the end. Most of the transactions between the railroad and shippers involve comparatively small amounts of money, and the railroad can easily make it cost the shipper several times what the claim is worth, even if he succeeds at the end of the legal fight. Railway lawyers can lead the shipper a merry chase from one court to another and back again to the starting point. Not one shipper in a thousand who have real grievances, ever attempts to right the wrong in a court of justice. He

arrives at this conclusion when he considers the probable financial consequences. When he reflects on what the railroad can do to him by future discrimination if he is inclined to make trouble, the inexpediency of standing upon his rights is still more apparent. I have heard it said, and I believe it to be true, that there is no coward who is so great a coward as the shipper in his dealings with the railroad. His business prospects can be made or unmade by the railroad, and if he once incurs the baron's ill will, it is a sad day for him. The plight of the farmers, the gardeners and the fruit raisers is even worse than that of the shipper. The middleman may pull up his stakes and go to another locality; but the men who raise the products of the soil have a permanent investment in their land, and cannot move so readily. The possibility of marketing their products promptly and at a reasonable transportation rate depends upon the grace of the railroad. Without effective government regulation, the railroad can build up or pull down almost whomsoever it chooses in the world of industry. The losses resulting to the American character from this helpless condition of industry, the stifling of the old sturdy and independent qualities, have been terrible in their extent and far reaching in their consequences. Although I appreciate keenly the material advantages which have been brought to the world by the invention of the railroad, I do not hesitate to say that if the evils of which I am speaking cannot be effectively remedied, it would have been better that the railroad had never been invented. Character is worth more than quick transportation, and freedom is worth more than cheapness of travel. The old saying, "a crust of bread and liberty," may be paraphrased by saying, better the old stage coach with independence of character and freedom of action than the twentieth century limited with a servile spirit and the rule of an industrial dictator.

JESSE F. ORTON.

Grand Rapids, Mich.



ETHICAL LIFE INSURANCE, WITHOUT THE ETHICS.

For The Public.

As conscienceless as Shylock Jew,
With one intent, well veiled from view,
They steal their campaign "dough"
To run their G. O. Party show,
And buy their votes for president.

Crime built on crime—they steal, they lie,
As shameless as a perjured soul;
Then with the funds stol'n from the voters, buy
The voters' vote—from whom they stole!

TRUTHFUL JAMES.



"Mickey, wot's a phill'nt'ropist?"

"Well, it's like this—if I wuz to swipe a quarter from ye when ye wasn't lookin', an' den offer to give ye a dime, if ye'd promise to buy a toot' brush wit it, I'd be one of them things."—Life.



Mayor Dunne of Chicago is not without witty moments between worries over traction matters and an incompetent police force. He recently visited a

strange barber shop, where the barber, failing to recognize him, was very talkative.

"Have you ever been here before?" he asked.

"Once," said the mayor.

"Strange I don't recall your face," said the barber.

"Not at all," replied the mayor. "It altered greatly as it healed."—Judge.



"Yes, I've just returned from a two months' visit in the East," the Portland young lady was saying, "and, oh, I had such a lovely time! Those Easterners are so different from us, though."

"What points did you visit?" inquired the newcomer in Oregon. "I do hope you saw dear old Boston."

"Boston!" the Portland girl ejaculated. "I should say not. I was in Montana."—Portland Oregonian.



It is unfortunately true that the people as a whole are not of great learning or great intelligence. But they have average intelligence and the instinct of self-preservation; and through all their blundering they will tend toward the right goal. What is done by all with the approval of all cannot be hurtful to many or, if so, will be soon corrected. But what is done by a few for the good of a few is sure to be hurtful to many and if the governing power rests with a few there can be no remedy.—C. E. S. Wood.

BOOKS

NEW ZEALAND.

New Zealand Views. By James S. de Benneville. Printed as manuscript. All rights reserved.

This is the title of a little book printed privately by Mr. James S. de Benneville. Statistical works as well as books of travel (not forgetting Mark Train's "Following the Equator") have enlightened us concerning this distant region; but each new traveler recording his impressions has either something new to tell or something old to say in a new fashion, so we open with interest this booklet.

The author is a man of education, traveled and cultured, with special knowledge in the field of chemistry. He is presumably studying New Zealand from the prospector's point of view, but is yet interested in all phases of its life and resources and gives a fair account of all—save its politics.

His travels begin in the North Island upon whose outermost borders lie various cities of greater or less importance—Auckland, Bedford and New Plymouth, jostling their native sister-towns with unpronounceable names: Onehunga and Whangarei and Pukenoana. The interior seems to be the haunt of geysers, hot springs, terrific winds and native Maoris, and one gains the impression that there is little to interest any but geologists and ethnologists. Wellington, the capital, lies at the southern extremity of the island, but is much hampered in its growth by the curvature of the harbor and the close proximity of the hills.

The southern island is undoubtedly more attractive; it has fewer natives and those few more