

multiplied lines to certain cities without reducing the rates to the people at large. And lastly, the elimination of private profit out of a public service would have removed from parliamentary life its greatest curse and most fruitful source of corruption. And what has been said of the railways of Great Britain applies with even greater force to countries like Canada and the United States, for here the railway is practically the only means of colonizing the waste lands and therefore more profoundly affects the condition of coming generations.

First State Owned Railways

There was one country in Europe which not only appreciated at the start the great transformation which the modern railway would make in a people's daily life and social intercourse, but apprehended as by instinct the true relation of government to the new means of transport. Of this country and its immediate neighbor, Young, the historian, says: "In their devotion to the arts and industries of peace they have long set an example to the world as useful as the mighty struggle for freedom which identified with their progress and with the advancement of humanity." This was Belgium, and the prompt decision of this brave little state to control and determine the laying out of its railway system was chiefly due to the insight of Leopold I, for whose statesmanship Queen Victoria had such a profound regard. Belgium was the first country in continental Europe to build railways and the first in the world to adopt state ownership. The results, both as regards the internal development of Belgium itself and its effects upon the rest of the world, have been so remarkable that a short account will prove instructive. In the same year in which the Liverpool and Manchester railway was opened Belgium was undergoing a political revolution and separated from Holland, and in the following year Leopold was chosen king. By the separation from Holland, Belgium lost the mouths of the river Scheldt as an outlet for its commerce, but king and people determined to compensate themselves by making the utmost use of the new means of land transport. It was decided to distribute the advantages of the railway as equally and widely as possible, and that ideal has been adhered to ever since, with this outcome that at the date of the German invasion no country in the world had so well distributed a system, or so many miles of line per square mile of territory, nor had any country in the world such cheap fares or so flexible a system of passenger rates. If no other country in the world had adopted state ownership the example of Belgium would have demonstrated the public benefits of developing a railway system from the standpoint of the whole nation's interest, not narrowing the national purpose down to the question of profit in the operation of the roads. "It is a well known fact," says Carl S. Vrooman ("American Railway Problems"), "that the low rates and good service given by the Belgian state roads have made Antwerp one of the most important ports in the world."

State Ownership Endorsed

In order that the achievement of Belgium may be better understood it may be mentioned that in the early years of railway construction the rates were fixed too low to provide state capital for extensions and it was decided to allow private companies the opportunity of building more lines. But experience proved that the private lines could not give the efficient service at the moderate rates of the state lines. The manufacturers, merchants, agriculturists and working people again and again implored the government to buy up these private lines, on one good and intelligible ground that the people of districts which were ill served at a comparatively high rate were being crippled in the struggle. When at last it was proposed to take over the Grand Central, the chief of these private roads, a report was made to parliament by M. Helleputte, himself a strong partisan of the corporations, who said: "It is not necessary to seek any other explanation of the favor with which the public has received the rumors that most of our private railways are going to be taken over by the state. A comparison between the transportation facilities offered to the public by the private railways on the one hand and by the state railways on the other is altogether to the advantage of the latter." M.

Helleputte added that while the trains and stations were better equipped, and the speed of the trains greater on the state railways, the railway employees of the private lines were required to do more work at lower rates of pay, so that the change to state ownership proved to the advantage of the railway employees and the people at large.

The situation at the beginning of the war was that the state owned and operated the main lines of the railway and private ownership was confined to light railways and feeder lines. Of standard gauge roads Belgium has 2,932 miles, all but 217 of which are owned by the state. Of railways of all kinds Belgium has 5,284 miles or 47.2 miles of line per 100 square miles of territory. Great Britain, the next in comparison, has less than 20 miles of line per 100 square miles. In 1912 the Belgian railways carried more tons of freight per mile of line and earned a greater freight revenue than any country in the world. They also carried more passengers per mile than the railways of any other country, the figures being 1,046,614 passenger miles per mile of line, or one and a half times more than Japan and ten times that of the United States. And yet, the passenger rates are so wonderfully cheap, the revenue per miles from this source is exceeded only by that of Great Britain.

Low Passenger Rates

The average passenger fare in Belgium is a shade over seven-tenths of a cent per mile. (We speak of things as existing before the war). There are three classes of fares, the highest being 3 cents a mile, the second 2 cents and the third class 1.2 cent. The larger percentage of people, however, use special tickets, and there are many cases of special reductions, such as for school children, travelling salesmen, etc., and special trip tickets with rates according to distance and number of trips. For instance, the twelve-trip tickets intended for a week's use between farm and city or factory and home enable the holder to travel daily a distance of 30 miles (60 miles for the round trip) for 45 cents for the whole week, or less than 4 cents for each round trip, or about one-sixteenth of a cent a mile. Season tickets were also used allowing the holder to travel at will for 5 to 15 days, the price for the fifteen-day ticket being \$6.50. That is, one might travel all over Belgium night and day if so disposed for fifteen days for \$6.50. Then there are very cheap combined rail and water rates, and it may here be noted that the state seeks to harmonize the rail and water transportation services whereas the almost invariable tendency of private ownership of railways is to antagonize and destroy canal or river transportation. To sum up—the Belgian policy is to make rates low and public privileges so generous as to promote the freest flow of commerce, and the result of the purchase of the private main line railways was a general reduction of rates. By this policy Belgium became the gateway of Europe for travel and commerce and her railway systems have eclipsed the world for volume of traffic, cheapness of rates, economy of operation and efficiency of service.

This case of Belgium is cited to show how a whole people has reaped the advantages that flow from a government starting out with a clear and logical conception of what a railway is and to what end it should be conducted.

The next article will show the powerful and wide influence of the example of this plucky little nation in the state ownership which has uninterruptedly spread over the world. Great Britain herself, roused by the war, takes control of her railways over night, thus making amends for the false start which she gave to railways in the last century. Now she heads towards the recovery of the public rights and duties she had surrendered into private hands.

NEW LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

Sir James Aikens has been appointed to succeed Sir Douglas Cameron as Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, the latter's term expiring July 31.

O. J. Stevenson, Assistant Master at the Toronto Normal School, has been appointed Prof. of English at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, Ont., as successor to Prof. J. B. Reynolds, Principal of Manitoba Agricultural College. Mr. Stevenson assumes his duties on September 1.

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