

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by the Boarders.

"The Knights of Labor," said Sharkey, "are at present making a determined effort in the United States to have all railroads, telegraphs and telephones, owned and operated by the Government. The President himself suggests a limited control of the roads by the State. Considering that in the last election over sixty representatives were elected pledged to this reform it may be said to be 'within measurable distance of practical politics,' and now the question arises whether railroads and telegraphs can be run without loss by the Government. We in Canada have a Government road, but I've yet to earn that we ever made a profit by it."

"No, the Intercolonial," said Gas. kill, "like any other Government undertaking which is run for the benefit of a few capitalistic friends of the powers that be, has never paid for itself or ever will, until it is run for the benefit of the people. If you want to find out whether Government railroading pays you will have to consult the statistics of countries where governing means something more than a plundering of the public treasury. The "Statesman's Year Book," a reliable authority, says: Belgium has a total revenue of 320,555,406 francs; the land tax yields 25,579,900 francs; railways, 120,700,000 francs; telegraphs, 3,150,000 francs. The State railways are put down at 3,110 kilometers, and monopoly railways at 1,256 kilometers. In Bavaria, out of a total revenue of 241,584,781 marks, the state railways, post telegraphs, mines and state domains yield 141,228,814 marks, or more than one-half the revenue. Wurtemberg shows a total revenue of 54,552,047 marks, of which State property yields 21,916,724 marks. Austria shows total miles of railway 13,601, of which 4,452 miles are State roads, and lines worked by the State 1,209 miles. Denmark shows a considerable revenue from State railways and telegraphs. In France the land tax yields 178,765,000 francs; doors and window tax, 46,667,400 francs; customs, 394,941,300 francs; post and telegraph, 165,575,200 francs; there are many lines of railway laid down by the State for utility rather than profit. The receipts from assisted lines are 1,045,000,000 francs; and from State lines 31,576,613 francs. In Prussia the receipts from State railways form the chief source of revenue. In recent years the income from railways and other State undertakings, such as mines, has been largely increasing, showing a tendency to become a far more fruitful source of revenue than all taxation, direct or indirect. The total revenue is 1,253,928,396 marks, of which the ministry of public works, produce of mines, iron furnaces, State railways, etc., are quoted at 786,866,118 marks. In England the telegraphs were transferred to the Government on Feb. 5th, 1870. In January, 1889, there were 28,500 miles of line and 158,568 miles of wire. The

Gross receipts in 1885 were.....£1,755,118
Working expenses..... 1,730,980

Net revenue.....£ 24,138

In Russia the revenue from mint, mines, post-telegraphs and State domains is quoted at 28,216,454 roubles. The State railways shows:

Gross receipts..... 215,152,891 roubles.
Working expenses..... 144,772,000 "

Net receipts..... 70,380,891 "

In the face of statistics like these it is useless so say that Government can't run railroads and telegraphs with profit to the country."

"Apart from any consideration of dollars and cents," said Phil, "the great mass of the American people are beginning to realize that the power of those transportation companies is the greatest danger of democratic institu-

tions and popular government; it is in their interest to be so. Monopoly is only another name for brigandage. Each and every monopolist strives to make the people more helpless, so that he may rob them with greater ease; and to accomplish this legislatures and parliaments, judges and juries have been bought again and again, and nowhere more so than in the United States, until the people, would they preserve their rights and liberties, must kill monopoly by again assuming duties which should never have been delegated to private individuals and corporations. To own and operate railways, however distasteful it may be to present monopolistic tools in power, is but one of many things which governments will be forced to do, much against their will, in the near future. It will not be many years before most governments will be found working their own mines and timber limits, doing the banking of the nation besides transporting its passengers, intelligence and freight. From the government railroad workshop to the government factory is but a short step, and from that to a co-operative commonwealth a shorter one still. It is now two years since "Looking Backward" was written, and already Bellamy's dream of the possibilities of the telephone has been realized. Nobody of average intelligence now considers that part of his work Utopian; and yet it was ridiculed not so very long ago. Well, wait a little, and you will find more of reality than fiction in it. Herbert Spencer might tell you from experience that conditions change and ideas expand with unthought-of rapidity,

and Edward Bellamy may yet feel called upon to alter the dates in his work so as to bring them nearer our own time."

BILL BLADES.

PERSONAL.

Boston claims that 2,000 girls are receiving instruction at the cooking schools of the city. They still study Browning, however, when not browning beans.

Mrs. Stanley talks as though she expected to find a mild reproduction of the Dark Continent in America and seems astonished at finding "so much to admire" here.

Mrs. Chandler, the widow of Zachariah Chandler, is erecting a beautiful house in Washington. Its walls are of pinkish yellow brick with trimmings of grayish yellow stone.

The sale of fancy garters for New Year presents is reported to be heavy in the Northern and Eastern States. West and South not heard from, but the fad is likely to spread over the Republic.

The Portuguese translation of the "Arabian Nights," undertaken by ex-Emperor Dom Pedro, and made from Lady Burton's revised version of her husband's edition, is reported to be nearly finished.

Chief Gall, now at the head of the Sioux nation, is said, upon high authority, to be honest, from the Indian standpoint, and a brave and skilful leader in the field. Besides all this he had rather fight than draw a ration of a gallon of rum. So it would appear that the "gentle mantle of peace" may remain packed away for a while yet.

Three golden weddings in one family, and occurring within a short time of each other, is remarkable even in a community of long-lived people. In New Hampshire, recently, Deacon Thomas E. Folsom and wife, of Exeter, celebrated their golden wedding, and the most interesting fact in connection with the anniversary is that Deacon Folsom's brother at Abington, Mass., also a deacon, some time ago celebrated his golden wedding, and a sister living at Tufonborough observed the same event two years ago.



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