

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by the Boarders.

"The subsidizing of railways by land grants has gone on at such a tremendous rate," said Brown, "that legislators themselves are beginning to get afraid of the power so lightly and freely handed over to private corporations. The other day at Ottawa a proposition to give six thousand four hundred acres per mile for a railway about to be constructed by an enterprising coal company, was severely 'sat on.' Mr. Mulock, who during the present session has done excellent service, rightly contended that this road, like many others was being built by a syndicate who control some coal mines along the proposed route, in its own interests. It is being built with a view of exacting a high rate of carrying any other coal but their own, thus greatly increasing the value of their own property and securing the power of crowding adjacent coal operators against the wall."

"What I would like to know," said Phil, "is, in what respect this proposed road you speak about differs from dozens of similar roads throughout the Dominion. If it does not do so, then I would like to know why this syndicate should be discriminated against above any other. Is it that the members of it are greater robbers than those of other syndicates, or do they refuse to hand over sufficient plunder to induce our immaculate government to grant their request; which is it? Then, again, if it becomes necessary in the interest of the people to build a railroad, by what right does the government shirk its duty by leaving the building of it to private corporations. To provide a medium of exchange and facilities of transportation is a duty incumbent upon every government; by what right, then, does the government allow it to become a private affair? Or, having made it a private business, by what right does it subsidize it with money out of the public treasury and grants of public lands? A railroad owned by the government is operated in the interests and for the benefit of all the people; but one owned by a private corporation is run for the benefit of its shareholders and at the expense of all the rest of the people who do not happen to own any shares in it. The government is doubly wrong in its action; first it hands you over to the tender mercies of capitalists who rob you by charging excessive rates, and secondly it actually gives them large sums of your money for doing so. And, again, why not carry this principle of robbing Peter to pay Paul to its logical conclusion by subsidizing all the Pauls in the country? If it is done to railways on the plea that they confer a service to the public in carrying its freight, why do they withhold it from the shoemaker who makes the shoes of the people or the tailor who makes its clothes? Is not the making of boots and clothes for the people as big a service as the transporting of them? Then why make a distinction between the tailor and the railway magnate? The man who cleans the sewer performs a greater public service in a day than the railroad king or coal baron does in a lifetime, yet the former does not only not receive any subsidy, but is actually compelled by the government to pay his proportionate share towards the maintenance of the other, and this despite the fact that he may not have occasion to use the railway in one way or other during the course of all his life. Is this right? True, the sewer cleaner is paid for his work, but so is a railway company paid for carrying freight and passengers. However, the railway company being a monopoly has the power to exact as high a rate as the tariff will bear, or in other words, it can compel its patrons to pay all they can afford, whereas the laborer, being compelled to compete in an over-

crowded labor market, must accept whatever is offered, which is a far different thing. These are facts which are easier explained away than explained. That the people should submit to such transparent and therefore brazen outrage shows that they are either criminally indifferent to their fate or else too ignorant to realize their position. In any case, it is high time that a stop be put to this pernicious practice of giving large tracts of the public domain to every enterprising thief who builds a 'corduroy' road, and if Mr. Mulock and his friends but continue as they have begun they will deserve the gratitude of all who have the welfare of their country at heart."

"You have asked a good many questions," said Gaskill, "but what I would like to know is by what right the government can sell or give a single inch of land to anyone. I contend that the economic value of land is such that in equity it cannot be rightfully bought or sold. Absolutely necessary for the maintenance of life, the ownership of land gives the possessor a power of life and death over all those who, unfortunately, don't own any of it. It cannot rightfully be owned by any one man or generation of men; if ownership of land is just and morally right, where would you and I go if all those who own land prevented us from going on to it? Ownership of land is incompatible with man's inherent right to life, and is, therefore, unjust and indefensible."

BILL BLADES.

MEXICAN NEWSPAPERS.

Journalism and Journalists in a Spanish Republic.

Here's your daily paper of tomorrow! This is the cry I hear at 5 o'clock every afternoon in the streets of Mexico City. Dozens of newsboys are crying it. Ragged, dirty little fellows, they look out under big hats and stick cheaply printed newspapers under your nose while they yell out in Spanish the names of their papers and say that they contain all the news of tomorrow. In the morning they will cry the same papers as just from the press and pretend that they contain all the news of the day.

Mexican daily newspapers are always printed in the afternoon before the date of publication. The editors and reporters are too lazy to think of night work and they have no idea of the value of news. Telegrams are just as likely to be printed three days after reception or to be thrown out entirely as to be used at once, and a prosy three column editorial often crowds out a big accident or good news matter. The Mexican reporters do not know what the word "scoop" means, and many of them will not take telegrams, because they say they have no room for them.

Nevertheless, there are twenty-nine dailies in Mexico City. The most of these are subsidized by the government. All have small circulation, and the biggest journal of the whole Mexican republic runs out only about 5,000 copies daily. This is El Monitor Republicano, which is the real independent daily of Mexico City, which contains about 300,000 people and which is bigger than Cincinnati.

The Monitor Republicano pays \$40,000 a year and it is the best newspaper property in Mexico. It gets no subsidy from the government and it is supported by the Conservative party. It is one of the most independent of journals in its advertising methods. It will not take an advertisement for any fixed time, only for as long as it is convenient to publish it, and it will not make any reduction in price for a number of insertions. It has four pages and sells for six cents a copy.

The editor of The Republicano is now and then too decided in his criticisms of the government, and like all other editors in Mexico he suddenly finds himself and given a few months or a year or so's imprisonment in the penitentiary. There is practically no freedom of the press in Mexico. The editor of a newspaper who is obliged to sign his name to his matter never feels certain as to whether he will not be taken to Belem, which is the name of the Mexican penitentiary. There is, in fact, a corridor of this prison which is devoted to newspaper editors and which goes by the name of "Newspaper Row."

The most of the articles in a Mexican newspaper are signed, and the paper has to print in every issue the name of a man who is responsible for those which are not signed, and in case of trouble as to the unsigned articles this man goes to prison. In some of the newspaper offices here the attaches assume this responsibility turn about. El Tiempo or The Times is the organ of the Church party,

and it often denounces the government. Its editors are frequently imprisoned, but it makes about \$10,000 a year and it considers itself doing well.

The leading government paper is El Universal. This is subsidized by the government and it gets \$1,000 a month from President Diaz. The editor has also been made a senator and he gets a senator's salary. The Universal has about fifteen editors to every one reporter, and this is the proportion in most of the offices. The editorials are chiefly essays.

The Mexicans do not know what the racy paragraph means. The first page of every Mexican newspaper is devoted to long winded critiques and commentaries on current events of history.

The only live papers that the city has are two dailies published in English and patronized by the English speaking people of Mexico. One of these is The Two Republics, which was established about twenty-five years ago and which makes about \$10,000 a year. The other English paper is known as The Anglo-American. All kinds of newspaper work in Mexico are poorly paid. Editors get from \$10 to \$25 a week in Mexican money, which is only from \$7.50 to \$18 a week in American money. The essay editors get the highest salaries. As to telegraphic news, the papers seem to think nothing of quoting from their contemporaries telegrams which have been used a day or two before, and an event three months old will be put in with as much assurance as though it had just happened. Time, in fact, is of no importance in any affair of Mexican life, and neither the people nor the editors seem to care as to whether the matter is new or old.

I found newspapers in every one of the big cities of Mexico I visited, and there is no perfecting press in all Mexico. The presses in use are of the old French style, made after patterns which have long since been abolished. The amount paid for telegraphic service in Mexico City ranges from \$4 to \$25 per week per newspaper, and only the leading newspapers pay anything for telegrams. As to newspaper correspondents, these are paid by getting a copy of the paper free, and the papers throughout are run on the economical ground. The printers get from 28 to 35 cents per thousand ems and a good foreman receives a salary of \$30 a week. Such printers as are on salaries get from \$6 to \$12 a week, and all of these sums are in Mexican money, which is worth only 75 cents to the dollar.—Frank G. Carpenter in New York World.

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