

The reply would be: "Yes, if we can get a better service." Then ask yourself whether a better service would be born of a publicly-owned street railway—then you will find mental reflection. On another page appears a letter intended to gather a general opinion on the subject of public ownership. When a person must utilize muscle and brain to obtain footing and a minimum of comfort in a street car, the transference of ownership is to him a burning topic. He cares not what capital is invested to see that his body and troublous thoughts are transported to regions far from his desk.

A dissatisfied public first mooted municipal and Government ownership; the same public is urging that cause. The same dissatisfaction will talk it in the future.

Democratic peoples are born from the tyranny of the autocrat. The man who, twenty years ago, dared to dispute the Czar's title, was sent manacled to the wildernesses of Siberia. Now, things are different. Out of the monarchical autocracy has arisen a revolutionary democracy. So with Capital the world over. It has sometimes abused the public, and Socialism numbered new thousands. Men from whom the least available tittle had been squeezed talked of abolishing capital; which was foolish chatter. From some abuse there came into being an erratic and extreme revolution.

Capital is great; so is labor. But for the sweat on the brow of the latter, the former's wrinkles and big banking accounts would be non-existent. Without capital, Labor must go hungry. Talk of public ownership is largely another phase of the endless strife between Capital and Labor. The issues are much intertwined.

Some men want the railways operated by the Government, because they think the Government would inaugurate reduced fares, would run a better service of trains, would do a dozen things, pleasing the most exacting traveller of the luxurious twentieth century. But would the Government do better than things as they are? The State ownership of railways is the biggest feature of the public control question. In Australia and New Zealand are many miles of steel over which rumble Government operated trains. In Canada we have a small percentage of such railways. Whatever be their usefulness, they are magnified and glorified by Government ownership devotees and ridiculed by the Opposition, and others. "Others" is a word of elastic scope; it embraces a multitude of sins and sinners. In Europe many countries possess their State railways. Australia, so far as national wisdom is concerned, is youthful compared with Canada. Government railways there are purely an experiment; it remains to be seen what the country owes to this system, for prosperity. Comparisons with European countries are unfair. The size of Canada forbids. In this country, the Government has properly assisted in the cult of transportation facilities. The Dominion has grown, and will grow, on its lines of communication. But there are few who would say that the Government could have prospered the country with the aid of, say, the Canadian Pacific Railway, equally as that company has prospered it.

Two phases there are of the public ownership question which appeal to the unbiased. They may be considered, as our correspondent says, "without regard to political leanings." First, the Dominion of Canada, with a land area of 3,618,939 square miles and a water area of 125,756 square miles, cannot be developed without capital, be it Government, municipal or private. Second, in the Dominion there exist such vast and valuable resources that it is obviously wrong to permit of their exploitation without some authoritative supervision and direction.

The public, collectively, is a grumbler. Its special privilege is to complain of everything and everybody. Unfortunately and unwisely, the spirit of Capital in some cases has been to crush instead of to hear the complaining voice. Whatever the situation has resolved

itself into, the necessity and power of Capital must be recognized. If you took from Capital all those things in which its money was invested, transferring the utilities to public ownership, Capital would naturally find its way back into the old channels. Withdraw the money from the enterprises of our millionaires and financiers, and the majority of the wheels of banking and commerce would cease their revolutions. Capital has sometimes indulged in extremes. Then it was badgered and baited by Royal Commissions, Interstate Commissions—commissions of all sorts and conditions, some with the proverbial axe to grind, some with none. Now that we have witnessed the abuses, also a revolt, it is time that the public and Capital came within a nearer circle. It would be foolish to place all public utilities under public control. Then, again, the definition of "utilities" is elastic.

Public ownership has been a dismal failure in some places; in others, experiments in this direction have been crowned with success. Local decision is thus a poignant factor. From a national standpoint, Canada could not exist without private capital and private enterprise. It is Government co-operation with this private capital and enterprise which is building, and will up-build, the Dominion. It is the duty of a Government to see that Capital is treated fairly. Scare Capital and Prosperity seeks hiding. The national resources also must be conserved in an equitable proportion. The United States offers many lessons on Government and public ownership experiments. This country is youthful enough to profit by the errors of a neighbor. The question of public ownership is largely one of use and abuse.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

That the West looks good to Westerners is shown by the many purchases of land in the Okanagan by people from the Yukon. The development of that fine fruit valley is a surprise even to those who were intimately acquainted with its resources. During the last few months over twenty, from miners to court officials of Dawson, have secured acreage in the Okanagan.

Anyone committing a crime or creating a sensation these days is apparently duly qualified for journalistic duties. Harry K. Thaw is said to be writing "a calm and thoughtful book" anent the simple life. Jabez Balfour, who served a long term of imprisonment in England for monetary malpractices in connection with The Liberator concern, has written his prison experiences, a wearying volume of first essay style. Thomas W. Lawson is responsible for many literary absurdities, which would probably never have seen print but for the fact of his own sensational existence and banking account.

The limerick may yet be an important asset in business. Its literary benefit is neither remarkable nor awe-inspiring; its popularity is remarkable. Its cult in Canadian cities has but commenced. In Britain, it threatens to become a sort of lunacy. Prizes ranging from a cake of soap to a house, horse and rig, and a pension for life are offered. Reputable firms find that to keep up in the competitive race of business, they must institute limerick competitions. Those whose efforts continually fail to be rewarded will eventually treat the Muse with scant respect. It is forgotten that to give one man a life annuity in such a competition thousands of people pay extra for their brandy, butter, and brain fag.

Winkler is a little town in Manitoba whose success is dependent upon the beneficence of Nature, the presence of a railroad, and the enterprise of five hundred citizens. Mr. P. Elias, one of these, wished to seek fame and fortune elsewhere. To pay the rates in Haskett