

School and College Directory

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High Class Residential and Day College for Boys and Girls

FALL TERM COMMENCES MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11th, 1916

Write for CATALOGUE and College Literature

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NOTICE TO PARENTS

The Schools and Colleges whose announcements appear on this page are institutions of proven standing in their respective branches of education, and The Guide believes that parents will make no mistake in selecting from them those which they consider best suited for the education of their sons and daughters.

Regina College

REGINA - SASK.

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Business
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SUCCESS BUSINESS COLLEGE, Regina

The Railway Problem

Article IV.—Political Corruption the Crowning Evil of Private Ownership of Railways. The Sordid Railway Annals of the U.S. and Great Britain

By E. B. Biggar

Without giving concrete proof, it is not fair to those who have not studied railway history to assert that the making of a private profit out of the nation's highways has been the parent of corruption overshadowing all other sources put together. We shall therefore give facts; but the difficulty in this case is to condense within a small compass the evidence that has accumulated, like Pelion upon Ossa, against those who have prostituted this chief national service to personal gain.

There is a work on the "History of the Supreme Court of the United States," and another on the "History of the Great American Fortunes," making together four volumes, by Gustavus Myers, giving the genesis of some of the vast fortunes made in the United States. Of the space taken by these records, three-fourths relates to fortunes made out of the public resources by the heads of private railway corporations. This evidence is largely derived from public documents, and the records of the numerous investigations made by Congress and the state legislatures.

These criminally gained fortunes were not the result of any sudden mania, but developed naturally out of the continued exercise of a state power in the hands of a few men without direct control by, and responsibility to, the authority from which they derived their power. In a great degree it was an inheritance from the days when slavery was an established institution; when the European immigrants—generally destitute—who flocked to America were themselves but little removed from slavery; and when the legislatures were filled with shipowners, land owners, canal owners and merchants whose combined wealth was thought to be as great as that of the government itself. In this condition, and when railways had suddenly taken precedence over the wagon roads as a public need, it became easy to obtain a transportation franchise, with valuable gifts of land and timber thrown in, if only it could be sought in the guise of public benefit. It would have been strange if the continued use of this power, without accountability, did not lead to its abuse, until, growing by what it fed on, it reduced the law-making authority itself into a mere instrument of its will.

Control of the Supreme Court

Having obtained control of the controlling members of Congress, the next thing was to see that no new judges were elevated to the higher courts who were unfriendly to the interests of the railway monarchs who now occupied the invisible throne behind the seats of Congress. So steadily was this purpose pursued that by the year 1880 there remained in the Supreme Court itself only two judges who had not been active railroad lawyers, directors of or large stockholders in the railway and express companies before elevation to the bench. It was the coronation of the private railway interests in the seats of supreme authority which at last roused the business and industrial classes to join the Grangers in their struggle for the rights of the people. The action of eight hundred business firms in protesting, thru the New York Board of Trade, against President Hayes' nomination to the Supreme Court, of Stanley Matthews, recently attorney for Jay Gould and the Adams Express Co., and a director of various railways, will show the apprehensions of business men. The following is an extract from the telegram to the president: "We believe that the great railroad corporations of the country are endeavoring to obtain control of this court of last resort, which has heretofore been the most important bulwark in defending the public interests against the encroachments of the corporations; that Mr. Matthews has been educated as a railroad attorney, and views railroad questions from a railroad standpoint; that his actions while in the United States senate prove this,

and in this important respect render him unfit for a justice of the Supreme Court." Leading newspapers joined in the fight against turning the Supreme Court into a machine for registering the will of the railway companies and the senate committee, before which the appointment came, bowed to the popular anger and rejected the president's nominee. Under the next administration, however, Matthews was again brought forward, and appointed, tho by a majority of only one vote.

To know the extent to which public money and the public resources in lands, minerals, timber, etc., were used for the personal enrichment of the few who controlled the United States railways, one has only to study the careers of men like Vanderbilt, Astor, Russell Sage, Jay Gould, Harriman and others. Their acts of bribery, often involving a majority of the whole legislature; their frauds, their repudiation of legal and public obligations, and their debauching of the courts, are they not written in the numerous trials, investigating committees and public exposures in the press of the past half century?

Public Steals

During the Civil War, Thomas A. Scott, a railway vice-president, was placed in charge of the railways of the Northern States, and with his connivance the rates were made so extortionate that the profits of the roads rose 50 per cent. in a single year. Of the extortions during the supreme crisis of the nation an investigating committee reported that these millions were wrung "out of the impoverished and depleted treasury of the United States at a time when every energy and resource were taxed to the utmost to maintain the war."

In the period of railway development after the war, hundreds of millions raised by public taxation were turned over to the railway corporations and thru the repudiations of loans and other forms of fraud, little was ever returned. Not counting the enormous areas of land granted by the various states; the Federal Congress alone between the years 1850 and 1872 handed over 135,500,000 acres, which became the private property of the men who owned the railways. There was a condition to these grants that the lands would be forfeited if the roads were not built, but of all these grants only 607,741 acres were declared forfeit by congressional action, and even then much was restored by decisions of the courts, composed so largely of ex-attorneys of the railways. The "Swamp Lands Act" was engineered in the interests of the railway owners, who, under a corrupt system of surveying, were able to obtain millions of acres more of the richest agricultural land—classified as "swamp"—at a nominal rate. Under the same act they were able to evade the interdict against taking up mineral lands, and they succeeded in getting possession of the rich copper areas, which, with other mineral lands, afterwards went to form the wealth of the Standard Oil Co. In the Milwaukee district alone it was shown by an investigating committee that out of 6,441 entries made for land there were but forty actual settlers.

Lord Bryce's Opinion

The sway exercised at the expense of the masses by these magnates was well summarized by Lord Bryce, in the "American Commonwealth": "They have more power—that is more opportunity to make their will prevail—than perhaps anyone in political life, except the president or the speaker, who, after all, only hold theirs for four years and two years, while the railroad monarch holds his for life. When a railroad magnate travelled, his journey was like a royal progress. Governors of states and territories bowed before him; legislatures received him in solemn session; cities and towns sought to propitiate him, for had he not the means of making or marring a city's fortunes?"

But at the wealth of Vandorted at \$200,0 fellow citizens, labors his railw were out of e tress.

The "foreign sources from w public crime some readers hideous wrongs lower standards to the logical private corpora est of all public gain. Let us things have we Great Britain.

Corruption

As early as M.P. for Ipsw ested in railw greater control especially as to of the franchis soon discovered influence in th was against his proposals till a use his own wo railway interes sions that follo the difficulties. was best, the ably reluctant soft euphemism tent to which their hold on of these diffic when we learn the Great Nort the Midland spent \$432,000 penses. And be cost the Great its act of incor in 1853, Lord a committee to der a steady a the public int ready sums ag been needlessly flamentary san rival schemes, had been rego standpoint of, penny of the pe been squandered behalf of priva into the world a flamentary ages various descript selves parasites lived on the m corporations to out of parliam all this drain money—leaving sense drain w take out of a p almost humoroi alarms raised a to the national creences were national own vice.

Gladstone

In 1844, und ship of Sir Robb a brave attempt chairman of a five reports. T presented as the provided for r mate purchase. terests would showed Gladsto was already too his oratory. In to the parliam citors as the m sition was got could talk alon and draw up p they steered a they made st fact." In final "I shrunk from way companies. in the house, with justice on he perfectly re suaded that ju do not shrink f that, altho the powerful, I do mounted so high yet sunk so lov ding you shall this bill." He the parliament