## The Human Side of the Railways

Business is Concerned and the Interests of Human Beings are Kept in a Very Subordinate Place

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This is the real question. And it is not always should not be judged by a purely business standard. recognized as such. The moment we approach it as a business proposition the rights of mankind begin to recede. For business is concerned first and last with profits, and the interests of human beings, in spite of an occasional heated disclaimer, are kept in a very subordinate place.

The proposal of the majority of the commission that the people of Canada should own a great railway system formed of the two big concerns now in distress together with the Intercolonial, promises great things for the citizens of this growing Dominion. But, first, a word regarding that phase of the matter which suggests itself first to almost every mind, that is, the difficulty of administration,

The proposal is that the new system be taken out of possible political patronage by its being given to a commission to manage. If my memory is correct, and I am writing where I cannot get at the reports which tell about it, this was the method adopted by New Zealand when the railways first came into state control. It was afterwards abandoned, because the administrators could not rid themselves of "business" prepossessions, and thought less of the service they gave the community than of making the railways pay. It may indeed be wise for the elected and directly responsible authorities of the country to sacrifice their power for the sake of avoiding graft and pull, but there is something to be said for a more direct and responsive mode of administration. It is certain that, under the fire of capitalistic criticism, there will be a constant temptation upon the managing commission to keep the surplus always in the foremost place. Whereas, it may very well be that the convenience and development of Canada require the production of a deficit. The highways could supply surpluses if there were a system of toll-gates on them, but we have passed the stage where we want dividends from the highways. The railways are but highways of a cuckly seet and dr Campda. Careft, land detailed investigations in

It has been the experience of the writer of this article to have lived for six recent years in the maritime part of Canada, where the Intercolonial is. Now that he has returned to his native west he finds many of his friends possessed of the conviction that that railway is the last word in inefficiency and dishonesty. This is their great argument against government ownership. Now the Intercolonial is a good railway. It has a mooth roadbed. It has comfortable and speedy trains. Its freight rates are comparatively low. Its employees are secure in their positions, however elections go. And it has been rapidly improving in all these respects. The purchase the land for the Halifax terminals was made in such a way as to positively insult the claims of the party bosses. After many years of familiarity with the privately-owned railways of Canada this writer feels a kindlier affection for the Intercolonial

One thing is sure, that the employee of a government-owned railway stands to receive better treatment than his brother on the privately-owned railway. He is a voter, and all his comrades are voters, and any wrong they suffer may be ventilated with force in parliament.

than for any of them.

But the great and unanswerable argument for government ownership is the justice of it. It is fair and right and honest that the community which makes the increment by its own growth should possess that increment. Railways prosper as population increases. It has been our pleasant Canadian practice to bestow the railway upon its promoters, and then allow them, by voting themselves and their successors increases of stock, to take not a part but all of the wealth which the labor of the country produces that they can legally collect. This is not right. To the people should go what the people create.

One can make a fair guess at the amount of poverty

England by men like Charles Booth showed that about one-fourth of the people lived below the poverty line. The poverty line, I may explain, is drawn by the daily wage which is just enoug! to keep an average family in decency. It does not allow for any amusements, and it permits no unemployment or sickness. Similar attempts, much less detailed, have been made to estimate the poverty in the United States. The estimate most generally accepted is that of Robert Hunter, who puts it at one-eighth. That is, twelve millions of the people of the United States are below the poverty line. In the absence of any Canadian computation we may use that for the United States, and say that one-eighth or a million persons in Canada are below that fateful line. Most of that million, if not all, see part of their toil go to enrich the real estate speculator, part go to the monopolist of food, and part go to these other monopolies, the railways.

And their children will be worse off. The entail of privilege runs on from generation to generation. The prospect before them is low wages, high prices, shabby rooms in crowded cities, and no way out. One here and there will fight his way into the employing class, but only a few can do that. An everincreasing proportion of the Canadian people, unless things change, are going to live on the ragged edge of want, with no assurance of work or money to-morrow, and every illness an impossible expense. At the same time a few will be growing immensely wealthy. Palaces, yachts, luxury, pride will be their portion. And it will all come from the work of all the people. In the name of a fairer distribution of the good things of life I am for government owner-

Some day the pernicious habit of one generation binding all succeeding generations by its foolish bargains will be put a stop to. The legal device of cypres is a step in that direction. So is the practice of collecting death duties on large estates. The ancient Levitical law provided for a return of the estranged land once in fifty years. It is so obviously just and necessary, that a parent generation should not impoverish its children, that it is bound to come. In the meantime, while we wait for its slow approach, government ownership of those various sorts of monopolistic holdings which are accustomed to waylay the abundant to-morrows is an excellent sub-

## Causes of Chinese Unrest

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tion in China. It is not that the Government headed by Li Yuan-hung is opposed to making a final break with Germany, since more than a month ago the Cabinet was reported to be unanimously in favor of a declaration of war, and the President himself gave the assurance that he would sign the mandate as soon as the resolution had been approved by Parliament. That body has, so far, been chiefly remarkable for its capacity for wasting time, and the and it is, as has been justly said, ridiculous to inmajority of its members seem to be more intent on attending to the provision of their own salaries and perquisites than in disposing of the constitution which they were elected to prepare. The statement has been made, with some show of authority, that behind the apparent dilatoriness of the Chinese Parliament there are these substantial reasons; want to see the guarantees from the Allies for which China, theoretically at least, is being asked to risk her national life. These have not been published; since the middle of March, when China broke off relations with Germany, they have been barely hinted at. Most of these guarantees which were semi-officially mentioned then are mere acts of tardy justice which the Allies could not avoid offering to a nation whom they were receiving as an equal and an ally. But China needs more than this. She needs a real guarantee toward her rehabilitation; she deserves not the empty guarantee of her autonomy, but the actual and honest restoration of her autonomy. None of the so-called pacifists who are now standing out against war with Germany are pro-German; there seem to be hardly any such people in China. They are only narrowly, and for reasons satisfactory to themselves, pro-China. To this the obvious reply is that the mere rupture of diplomatic relations brought no benefit to the Allies. Favorable consideration has been promised to China's requirements when the stipulations of the Allies have been complied with. The Chinese Government is perfectly well aware of what the Allies want, and there

No intelligent formula will fit the present situa- cated as follows: They want the lid put on Germans in China, so that their miserable intrigues shall be ended, and their schemes for future exploitation of the country blasted. Should China go into the war without taking measures against the Germans resident in China similar to those taken against them by the belligerents in Europe, there will be no advantage to the Allies.

Briefly, if China wants her terms, she must pay the stipulated price, there is no ambiguity about it, sinuate that the Allies have broken their promises when China had not taken the measures stated to her as the consideration for these promises. Regret has been expressed that the Chinese Government should not have been able to take a larger view of the situation. The argument of the best friends of China, during the negotiations which preceded the present crisis, ran somewhat as follows: are defending the cause of international law, as solemnly subscribed to by all the civilized nations of the world. From the beginning of the war Germany has flouted that law, and if she and her friends were to be victorious the rights of every nation in the world would be subject to German might. China, rich but weak, of all countries, depends for her integrity upon the observance of law. It is a question of minor importance for the Allies whether she goes into the war or not; but for herself it is a question of enormous importance. She would then range herself according to her ability with those who are standing for law; she would become entitled to a place at the great Peace Conference that will determine the future of the world for probably generations to come. At a time when the Military Governors of eleven of the eighteen provinces have formed a Provisional Government with Hsu Shi-Chang as dictator, the fact should be recalled that these are the same Governors, or Provincial Tuchuns, who were summoned to Peking on April 20, that they might be fully informed as to the Government's motives in breaking off diplomatic relations with Germany, and seems no reason to doubt that it is correctly indi-

ernment's future policy. Fears were expressed at the time as to the danger regarding the leaders of the army as a power co-ordinate with the representatives of the people, but there is some reason to think that the military men had a clearer grasp of the situation than the politicians.

A fortnight after the conference of April, and while the Cabinet was still discussing the Sino-German question, there came to Peking the Military Governor of Anhui, the Tuchun of Shantung, the Tuchun of Kirin and the Tuchun of Fukien-generals all-and requested an interview with the Premier. The spokesman, General Ni Shih-chung, delivered himself as follows: "We must declare war against Germany without further delay. We must go to war without asking conditions from the Entente. I, voicing the sentiment of the military leaders of the country, urge the Government to abandon its colorless policy of negotiations with the Entente for the increase of the Customs tariff, revision of treaties, etc." The generals apparently recognized that if China's prestige was to be upheld there could be but one course of procedure. China had protested to Germany, and in the same breath told the United States that she was entirely with us, and would take all possible steps to secure the observance of international law. The Chinese protest, like our own, was disregarded, but we have declared war against the defiant enemy of civilization, while China still hesitates. There is thus a good deal more than meets the eye in the summary measures taken by the Military Governors to compel decisive action at Peking. Back of it all, there must be reckoned the irrepressible conflict between North and South, and the stubborn attachment of the Cantonese contingent to the spoils of office. The Northern men have by no means a monopoly of that sadly lacking commodity in China -administrative honesty-but experience has shown that they are more liberally endowed with it than the Southern leaders, from Sun Yat-sen downward. After all, the disturbance is one which does not make more than a ripple on the vast surface of Chinese life and activity, and in spite of its military origin, there is some ground for the hope that it may result in bringing China a stage nearer to honest, responsible and capable government.