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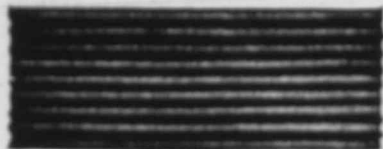


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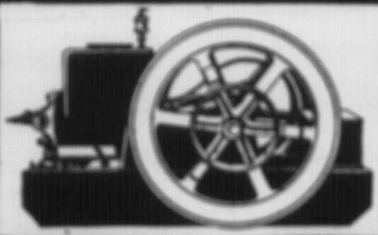
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The Railway Problem

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there is sclerosis of the arteries decay has already set in and the whole frame is enfeebled and paralysis ensues. To apply this analogy: The mind is the government, the arteries are the railways, canals and waterways of the country, and sclerosis is that arterial nerve disease set up when the revenues are diverted from the sole service of the nation to the personal use of private individuals in the form of dividends, share values, etc.

It is quite true that governments may be corrupt, but does that resign us to the greater evil of no government at all—to anarchy? But the reasonable remedy for a poorly managed government railway, as for a poorly managed post office department, is not an abolition of the department, but a reform of administration. It is manifest that whatever defects there are in the democratic government under which we live apply no more to the administration of railways than to the post office, customs, and the many other public services committed to it. If it is said that government ownership of railways, by reason of the number of hands employed and the revenues handled, involves an immense political power, then these facts, while they show the need of a higher type of civil service, are surely, for the same reason, signals to show the danger of placing these great powers in the hands of a few individuals, whose avowed purpose is not purely public service but private profit. If private profit were not the basis of private railway ownership, on what ground would any railway promoter appeal to an investor to take stock in it? Did ever a railway company's prospectus ask an investor to put money into the business on the ground that it was an opportunity of giving the best transportation service with the smallest prospect of a profit in the operation?

The true preventive of wrongful political influence in the operation of railways is then not the abandonment of the state's authority, but reform of the civil service. This is the remedy that is being steadily applied in other lands with the best results. It is the right and only path for Canada.

The Postal Service Example

The history of the postal systems of the world furnishes a good parallel. While these were farmed out to private companies and individuals as they once were in Europe, they were notoriously inefficient, expensive and discriminating in their work. There is now no civilized land in the world that farms out its postal service. Has the world rung with scandals and frauds and the corruption of legislatures thru the government ownership of the post office department? Not even in countries of the lowest rating in moral standards and public spirit. If the claim of efficiency, economy and integrity of private control in public affairs can be so clearly demonstrated, how do we account for the universal stupidity which keeps the postal service of every country in government control? Why is it that some nation of the twentieth century has not reverted to the good old Roman practice of raising its customs and other public revenues thru that ancient and honorable type of agriculturist—the tax farmer? How does it come about that the same tendency as in the postal service, etc., has shown itself in every quarter of the world in railway matters, and how are the advocates of private ownership to account for the fact that of all countries in the world which have become masters of their own railways no nation has re-consigned them to their former owners and none has completely abandoned the principle of state ownership? Surely the test of actual experience has some value on this point, where the people have tried both systems and still have the power to make their own choice.

The Experience of War

The events of the present war will impress the least thoughtful of us with the commanding influence of the railway on the organized life of a nation; and it will become an accepted truism that not only this tremendous conflict but every war since the American Civil War has been determined by the railway as the instrument for moving and

maintaining armed forces. Much instructive information has been given by E. A. Pratt in a work entitled "Rise of Rail Power in War and Conquest," published in 1915. The author has written a good deal on railway questions and for us his evidence is the more illuminating as he is a partisan for private ownership. He shows, what the world knows, that the railway system of Germany was laid out as much for purposes of war as for peace. At the outset of railway construction German generals were greatly impressed with the fact that a British regiment in 1830 was conveyed over the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in two hours, a distance—34 miles—that would have taken them two days on foot. With a wider experience Von Moltke was able to say: "Our general staff is so much persuaded of the advantages of obtaining the initiative at the outset of war that it prefers to construct railways rather than forts." The troubles, mistakes and losses in the Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the Russo-Japanese and other wars since the railway era were chiefly due to the lack of mutual understanding and co-operation between those operating the railways and the military forces, as Mr. Pratt shows by many instances. These troubles were due to a lack of unity of control which could secure these advantages: 1—The control of rail transport as a whole; 2—The supervision of supplies to be forwarded; 3—The proper distribution and use of rolling stock; 4—The prompt unloading and return of cars; 5—The harmonious linking of the military and railway management.

Taking these factors of success in war, the author shows that Russia lost the Japanese war because her transport system over the Siberian railway failed to do its work; and it was held by the writer of a military work—"Principles of Strategy," by Bigelow—that "Without railways the siege of Paris would have been impossible, because the old idea of living on the country invaded cannot be carried out."

All thru the work one is impressed with the enormous advantage possessed by Germany and her ally in having their railways under one control and operated for one main purpose in union with the work of the armies. And what Germany did compelled a like co-ordination of military and transportation forces in the allied nations, including Great Britain. Now the question for Mr. Pratt and other advocates of private control to answer is this: If all this has shown the over-mastering advantages of a unified control of railways in the hands of a nation for the necessities of war, why will not national control be equally of advantage for the necessities of peace?

SENDING PARCELS TO GERMANY

When sending parcels to prisoners of war in Germany it is necessary that the rank, initial, name and number, regiment or other unit should be given. Also mark whether British prisoner of war or other prisoner of war, such as Russian, French, etc. Also place of internment in Germany. If anyone wishes to obtain the names of prisoners who might not have anyone sending parcels to them, the St. John Ambulance Corps, Winnipeg, will be glad to supply such names. It is absolutely necessary that parcels be sent well wrapped up, not in thin cardboard boxes, but in packing such as the following: Strong double cardboard or strawboard boxes. Those made of corrugated cardboard and having lids which completely enclose the sides of the box are the most suitable. Tin boxes such as are used for packing biscuits. Strong wooden boxes. Several folds of stout packing paper.

It is also necessary to write the full address on the box as well as on the outside wrapping. The British authorities advise that parcels for prisoners of war in Germany must not be wrapped in linen, calico, canvas or any other textile material. Persons sending Xmas parcels to prisoners of war should remember that mail is particularly heavy at this season of the year and parcels to be in time should be sent away immediately.

If the binder has not already been housed, it should be done as soon as possible. Every year that can be added to the life of implements represents a saving of money, and money saved is money earned.

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