

route and getting the bonus. And experience proves that those who secure bonuses with the greatest facility are not railway men but schemers of various kinds and grades. If there is traffic to maintain a railway, there will be little difficulty in getting that road built. If there is not traffic at ordinary rates, and some of the people willing to pay extraordinary rates and prefer to "slump" their payments into the form of a bonus, there is no reason why they should not be accommodated with whatever they are willing to pay for. But it is illogical and contrary to public policy that the public, whether as a municipality or a province or a dominion, should pay all, or part, of the cost of a road and then leave the management of that road entirely in the hands of others, as is now the universal rule.

It is inevitable that there must be some public control of railways, for the simple reason that they enjoy public franchises and perform public duties as common carriers. There is, therefore, nothing in the plea so commonly raised that a railway company has as much right to manage its own affairs in its own way as a grocery firm has. But, on the other hand, too much public control of railways amounts to a confiscation, to a greater or less extent, of capital invested *bona fide* in valuable public works. But it is not to be supposed that the people will go on forever bonusing roads and then leaving the management to others, on the plea that public management means confiscation. In fact the bonus system is the thin end of the wedge of government control and ownership of the roads. It may be essentially necessary in some cases to endure the evil and take the risks of bonusing in order to secure the necessary development of the country. But this principle, if admitted, is to be applied in good faith and not stretched so as to cover the subsidizing of roads which are valuable mainly to the schemers who promote them.

There is another phase of this question. One of the strongest reasons urged for the change of the Ontario Government's policy is that it will enable the government to make itself "solid" in certain constituencies. In other words, having millions of public funds at their disposal, the government makes the excuse of putting them to public use to buy an additional lease of

power. We do not intend to discuss politics, but from a railway standpoint we claim that this be-devilling of our public affairs can lead to no good, either generally or in relation to railway interests.

In order to keep our politics pure, in order to prevent railways being made the playthings of schemers who are of no use to the province or to its railway interests, it is to be hoped very earnestly that the Provincial Government, so far as this scheme is concerned, will "go slow."

BENEFIT FUNDS.

"Similarly in Germany and other European countries railway employees are cared for in a paternal manner by the companies whom they serve, and are thus relieved from many of the anxieties of life and attached more strongly to their avocation and made more useful to their employers." So says the *Railway Age* in the course of a long article on railway employees' benefit funds. The tone of the article is fairly given in this short extract; it is patronizing in the extreme.

There seems to be a good deal of misapprehension as to the true relation of employer and employed in connection with these funds. We hold that where they are established on a true basis they are for the purpose of making good to the employee a deferred payment, deferred necessarily because length of service, good fortune, or otherwise in the service, faithfulness and ability in the discharge of their duty must all be taken into account in calculating it. The payment is not made on a basis of strict definite bargaining, but in a general way for the same reason, that an absolutely accurate estimate of the amount due on this "deferred payment" is beyond human power to make. But the fact that the arrangement for sick or aged benefits is not made as definitely as that for monthly pay does not in the least interfere with the fact that the employee has a right to it.

If the fund is established on any other basis than this, the employee is a "servant" of the company, and is "cared for in a paternal manner" by the company. He takes the sum given him from the benefit fund as a gratuity for which

he is to be thankful, considering himself privileged above the majority of men of his class. There are two things about this. In the first place, no self-respecting man wants to be treated as if he were his employer's inferior, whether that employer is an individual or a firm or a company. In the second place, a public company like a railway company has no right to collect money for any such purpose as to distribute in this semi-charitable way.

It is a beautiful idea that of the company being a sort of chief, and all the employees clansmen faithful in little things and in great. Loyalty to his road is one of the finest traits of the typical railway man's character. This noble feeling has been the inspiration of deeds of heroism as great as those of Scottish clansmen or Spartan warrior, and is to-day the greatest guarantee of the safety of life and property in connection with railway operation. That feeling among railway employees at least is not one involving any distinction as to equality between employer and employed. The engineer or switchman feels and has the right to feel as much right to treat the company in a "paternal manner" as the company has to treat him so. Loyalty to the company is, at bottom, a feeling of self-respect, and that feeling is more potent with free men than any feeling of loyalty at the expense of self-respect could possibly be. It is not necessary, therefore, in order to preserve this moral force which saves life and property from destruction, to have benefit fund schemes upon any supposed "paternal" relation between the company and its employees. It is necessary, however, to treat the men with justice. If it is held that there is a value to the railway company given by the united efforts of able, earnest employees which cannot be made up for in the monthly pay, a benefit fund is probably as good a scheme as any for wiping off the indebtedness. The advantages of such a scheme are incalculable. Those established by the two great Canadian railways—the Grand Trunk and the Canadian Pacific—have saved hundreds if not thousands from want. But if they are to be attended by talk of "paternal" treatment, and if the idea is to be advanced that there is anything now in them than simple *business*, it would have been better had no such thing ever been suggested.