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The Significance of Some of the Proposed Railroad Legislation.

The most conspicuous feature of the railroad bills now before the Congress is the tremendous increase of power that they will give the Interstate Commerce Commission if enacted.

These departures are radical. Before the use of steam as power there was not the conveyance of raw material of various kinds from different points of the compass over long distances.

Not until well in the nineteenth century had traffic developed in that volume which conduces to the benefit of the masses of the people.

Before the days of steam, when each community in greatest measure supplied its own needs and the transportation of commodities was casual and occasional, the highways were regarded in much the same light as the streets of a city.

In the United States railroads have been built in greatest measure by corporate capital. At the present time their ownership is vested almost entirely in corporations whose shares and securities are held by hundreds of thousands of individuals and institutions.

Into the cost of a barrel of flour enters not only a proportion of the wages of the workers in the flour mill, the maintenance of the mill, and return on the capital invested in it, but of the wage of the employees of the railroads that transport the wheat to the mill.

ing of economic forces, the interplay of supply and demand, as are also the prices of products and the measure of return to capital.

The railroads are obliged to pay wages so determined, and for the materials and supplies which they use prices so determined, but they are not permitted to vary their rates in accordance with the supply of and demand for transportation.

Rebates and other secret discriminations which were a principal factor in the enactment of the original interstate commerce law have admittedly disappeared.

The law of 1906 gave the commission power to prescribe a specific rate if a rate complained of were found to be unreasonable. It is now proposed to empower the commission to investigate rates on its own initiative even though they be not complained of.

The proposed new legislation will give them still greater rigidity akin to that which similar control has fastened upon the railways of Europe.

A Good Word for the Rules and One for Himself.

The old Committee on Rules and all its works were good enough for the Hon. PHILIP PITT CAMPBELL of the Third Kansas district, as that hustling son of Nova Scotia explained to the House in the throes of the struggle over the Norris resolution to reorganize the committee and eliminate the Speaker from it.

Mr. CAMPBELL rose from a sick bed to get into the Congressional Record, and No. 72 of Volume 45 will burden the bag of the R. F. D. carriers in Crawford, Cherokee, Neosho, Labette, Wilson, Elk, Chautauque, Cowley and Montgomery counties for the next fortnight.

Mr. CAMPBELL modestly deposed that when he entered the House seven years ago he knew as little of the rules as an Apache, but he burned the midnight oil over manuals of parliamentary procedure and musty precedents.

Mr. CAMPBELL testified that he had addressed the House 149 times and had made only one call on the Speaker to ask for recognition, and that was to introduce a resolution providing for an inquiry into the organization and methods of the Standard Oil Company.

This voluntary testimony of Representative CAMPBELL did not, it is true, change the purpose of the coalition; the death of the old committee was decreed, but the member from Kansas proved that an alert and industrious man could make his mark under the old order, and without abusing himself before the awful czar in the chair.

lack? "dinned into every passing ear. It was only in Bartholomew fair that one heard the other business call, "Who'll buy?" the clamor of saltimbando and merry-andrew, not a cry of such sober commerce as led to the civic chair.

Within memory almost recent the tourist to New York rarely omitted a visit to the clothing market of Baxter street, where improvement had left "the Bay" a community with manners and customs all its own.

Indeed, a milder pulling in plays now no mean part in business. The man who buys has become a part of the stock in trade of the merchant who sells. The knowledge of who will buy possesses a commercial value, it may be bought and sold, it is under the protection of the law, and it is a misdemeanor to acquire such information by trick and device.

Every name is a help to the business man, else why should the mails be flooded with circulars in such disguise as to trick the recipient into reading them? Promotion, a new branch of trade, is but the exploitation of lists of names; with cynical estimate of the facts of the case the precedent confidence men called them "sucker lists."

Is any connection to be traced between the renewed activities of one BENNETT for the alteration of the record of the Sixtieth Congress in the matter of its treatment of the President who insulted it and the removal of the House of Representatives of the late JAMES BRUCE PERKINS of this State?

Hookworm Nonsense.

The Hon. ROBERT L. OWEN, Senator from Oklahoma, is, we think, distributing his talents over too large and too unpromising a field. It is conceivable that in the Populist philosophy the Government should concern itself with the toothaches, the stomach troubles and the diseases of the populace in general.

This, however, is not the deadliest arrow in his quiver. He talks of the hookworm. He inspects its squirmings by day and dreams of its ravages by night. We learn from him that 90 per cent. of some community somewhere in the South are infected by the hookworm.

Senator OWEN is a man of parts. He is young, ardent, and more than usually equipped for public service. Why can't he let the facts and freaks alone and lend his undoubted abilities to the end of much needed and sane lawmaking?

Our Vanished Sarsaparilla.

Sulphur and molasses yet remain to us in the legislated purity of drugs, sovereign specific of the vernal season in the domestic pharmacopoeia. Children yet may take the slab mess. According to our recollections yet alert there can be no question about it; children must take their sulphur and molasses and must lick both sides of the nauseous spoon, and somehow or other that spoon seemed always a giant among the table equipment. But what citizen of adult habit and the power to call his works if not his soul his own would ever take sulphur and molasses?

This is the season when the purifying influences of sarsaparilla, in days before Dr. WILEY, were indicated by the faculty. The apothecaries filled their windows with bottled sarsaparilla, the vendible spaces of the press were filled with praises of the great spring medicine, blank walls blossomed forth in enticing pronouncements of this elixir of health.

Now is the time, and sarsaparilla has vanished. So far as we are able to keep track of the public health the strong remedies of the winter food from inside out have given place to lotions and other whitenings of the sepulchre. Creams and massage and vibratory rollers, these are the agents of the spring repair. Far sterner was

our thro before WILEY purified us by law. The sarsaparilla that came in bottles we shall not attempt to defend. Dishonesty may have tampered with it, it may have been charged with noxious drugs, it may have contained no sarsaparilla at all. Let it pass; for it we hold no brief.

But to the true sarsaparilla holds our faith, salutary decoction of the farmhouse kitchen when nature was waking from her hibernation. Sarsaparilla went into that cauldron, bushels of it. Sassafras went into the pot, slippery elm added a therapeutic value of its own, root of Solomon's seal was set into the brew for its service in tickling the torpid liver. These were the base, the roots, and every one must know that it is the roots which draw the virtue from the soil.

Roots and herbs were so far the only ingredients, and in popular medicine nothing can bring such health as nature's own products of the soil. But vegetable mixtures need to be protected against themselves; they spoil without some preservative. Benzoin of soda had not reached the countryside, but run was at hand, old New England rum. There with the vegetable virtues preserved; into the potion went a dash of rum; after all this trouble it would be a pity to have the sarsaparilla spoil; good pharmacy erred on the side of overcaution.

A great shame to abolish sarsaparilla. Is any connection to be traced between the renewed activities of one BENNETT for the alteration of the record of the Sixtieth Congress in the matter of its treatment of the President who insulted it and the removal of the House of Representatives of the late JAMES BRUCE PERKINS of this State?

Encouraging the Hens. Mrs. James Cramer of Springfield, Ohio, supplied from her henry a good share of the "strictly fresh" that we have in the Springfield date for their breakfasts this last winter.

When the hens struck, late in the fall, Mrs. Cramer was well launched in the egg business and simply had eggs to sell for the next summer. Some humorist told her that chickens were fond of music and she decided to experiment.

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THE INCOME TAX AMENDMENT.

Interesting Remarks of the Hon. Charles E. Littlefield on Federal Power. From a recent address before the Merchants Club of Boston.

The Federal Congress has to-day all the power that it ought to exercise, and it may be said that a time when the history of the legislation of Congress would be a record of the power they now have to accomplish indirectly ulterior results.

In regard to that power I have had some personal experience. A few years ago legislation was passed known as the railroad rate legislation. It originated in the House of Representatives, inspired by a gentleman who then occupied the highest place in this Government and who is now, if I remember correctly, in the dark continent, hearing the lion in his den, the elephant in his jungle, the rhinoceros in his lair, the hippopotamus in his wallow, and the serpent in his slime.

At present under the law of 1901 there is to be a contract mail service between the United States and certain countries, including Japan, China or Australasia. The touching of Honolulu, Samoa, the Hawaiian Islands, and Auckland, stopped on March 1909, because of insufficient mail compensation. With the consent of the Oceanic Steamship Company of San Francisco it was agreed that the service would be carried on by the American flag.

On April 17, 1909, our Consul-General at Buenos Ayres reported: The mail of the United States by the British flag entering and leaving Buenos Ayres for the three years was 1,118, belonging to thirty-two companies, of which the Royal Mail carried mail regularly, for which it is subsidized.

It is vitally necessary to improve our mail service, and to do this we must have a better mail service than we have at present. The United States Postal Service is a very important factor in our commercial relations with other countries.

Free Meals and Beer. One of our Chamber of Commerce steambroasts a few days ago advertised a low rate for the Nashville papers. A round trip figure was announced with the supplementary information that it included "free meals and beer."

Escaping Identity. From the London News. The question is, which may be the cleanest manner of escaping, not from existence (for that is a matter of a bare bodkin and a pall of water), but from identity, which is a complicated concern.

When Prices Were Really High. From the Florida Times Union. Editor: I have just read in your issue for this date the effluvia of a generation that complains of the high cost of living, for he indulges in the following reminiscence in the Jasper News: "It makes one feel like a miser when he reads in the paper that the price of a barrel of flour is \$1.25."

OUR OCEAN MAIL SERVICE.

To the Editor of THE SUN.—The Postmaster-General, the Hon. Frank H. Hitchcock, on February 12, 1910, has given his support by request to the Hon. William P. Frye, chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, which clearly shows the inadequacy of our ocean mail service, particularly to the Philippines, Japan, China, Australasia and South America, the very countries which are the most important to American trade should be built up.

Under the act referred to (that of March 3, 1891) we now have, in addition to a weekly service to Europe and a service of ten times a year to Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, Central and the Atlantic ports of Mexico in our own ships and under our own control; but with these exceptions our mails to foreign countries are wholly dependent upon steamers over which the Department has no control, and a condition of affairs not in keeping with the policy of our great commercial nations.

The act of March 3, 1891, has enabled the Department to discontinue the service of the United States on short routes, but it has not enabled us to secure service on the longer and more expensive ones. Service to Brazil, Argentina, Australasia and the Orient, which was contracted for under the provisions of the act of March 3, 1891, has not been continued because the contractors could not continue the service for the amount of compensation received.

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THE USES OF PROFANITY.

A Proposal to Provide Adequate Explanations in Place of It. To the Editor of THE SUN.—The profanity taboo in New England suggests the idea that there really ought to be a substitute for swearing. When a young man was rather prone to use stronger words than were fitting to one so young, some one advised me to substitute the words "pothooks and hangers" when I got excited. I did so, and it was a relief to me, for I had never sworn before. I looked at my upturned face, and seeing nothing but cheek with my shoe with such energy and despatch that I went out of the door and the reforming business at one and the same time.

A fourth American Indian never swears. He flings his tomahawk and throws it with the utmost accuracy, so that the effect is immediate and conclusive. It ends a controversy at once. The white man in three or four words, and in a few minutes he is to be seen in the next world, while the simple and unpolished Indian quietly sits down and says nothing. The question of profanity is a very old one. It is a very old one. It is a very old one.

Some Odd Facts About the Web Spinners and Their Habits. From the Saturday Review. The male of the well known spider is a tiny creature, unfamiliar to the casual observer and very different from the female both in form and habits. Although in early life he can construct an exceedingly perfect snare, he seems to lose the art, or at any rate the ability to do so, as he grows older.

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