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THE GOVERNOR SPEAKS

Important Extracts From Governor's Message.

FAVORS TWO CENT FARE.

Primary Laws Are Urged and Railroad Legislation is Demanded.

Below we give a few extracts from the message of Governor A. B. Cummins. The document is an important one to the people of Iowa and states the well-known views of the Governor in a statesmanlike and firm manner. We regret that lack of time and space prevent editorial comment in this issue or the publication of the message in its entirety. The following is what the Governor has to say on a number of important questions.

Enlargement of the Pure Food Law.

Last year the general assembly adopted a measure intended to protect the people from fraud and imposition in the sale of adulterated and unwholesome food. It is now in operation and I believe that it will accomplish great good.

Those who are vitally interested in the live stock industry feel that similar protection should be extended to live stock food. I have examined the subject with as much care as has been possible under the circumstances, and have reached the conclusion that their views are sound. I therefore recommend the enactment of a law with respect to such foods, having the general scope and purpose of the act of the Thirty-first general assembly relating to pure food.

Railroads.

Inasmuch as I feel compelled to make a series of recommendations that touch, directly or indirectly, the railroads within the state, I must be allowed a brief preface. There has been, within the last three or four years, so much discussion concerning the relations of the railroads to the people, that those who manage railroad property and those who own railroad stocks and bonds seem to fear that there exists a violent prejudice which will result in unjust legislation. I cannot believe that the fear is well founded. The discussion has been the natural outcome of the marvelous increase in commerce, and the plain attempt of railway managers to reap the largest possible profit from the unparalleled traffic of the time. These managers, while they admit as a mere abstraction the proposition that a railroad has not the liberty or license of private property, cannot and will not accept it as a rule of conduct. They still believe, apparently, that they have a right to capitalize not only present earnings, but hopes for the future. They cannot and will not, save theoretically, recognize that all persons and all localities must be given the use of transportation facilities upon like terms under like conditions.

There is no disposition upon the part of the people generally or of any legislative body to take away from railway corporations the management of their property, or to deny them full and adequate compensation for the service they render. I say to you, and I hope you will bear it in mind when you come to consider the recommendations I shall make that you could not inflict a more fatal blow upon the people of this state than to adopt such legislation as would deprive our railroads of the opportunity to earn a fair profit. We are as dependent for our material well being upon the transportation afforded by the railroads as we are upon the air we breathe for the continuance of life. Railroads will not and cannot serve the people efficiently unless they are reasonably compensated for the work they do. The spirit of confiscation is not in the people of Iowa, and it is not in this general assembly. The railway companies may dismiss all fear of injury. It is incredible that the calm wisdom of this or any other legislative body in a country like ours will impose such restrictions upon the use of railroad property as will render it either unprofitable in operation or unfairly interfere with the control of its owners. The whole history of legislation upon this subject proves conclusively the truth of my assertion. Notwithstanding all the acts that have been passed regulating the operation and limiting the compensation of railroads, whether by the states or the United States, the railroads have steadily grown in mileage and increased in revenue until their excessive

stocks and bonds aggregate nearly one-seventh of the entire wealth of the nation. Experience has abundantly shown that, with the privileges granted to them by the law, they can take care of themselves much more effectually than legislatures and congresses can take care of the people. Concluding this general review, I come to specific things.

Passenger Fares.

In my message delivered to the Thirty-first general assembly, I had the honor to recommend the passage of a law that would require railway companies to "sell mileage books good for 1000 miles and upwards, at a flat rate of two cents per mile, good until used," and I said in that connection, "if purchased by the head of a family, there is no reason why it should not be used by any member of the family," and again, "The man who travels little is at present at too great a disadvantage as compared with the man who travels much."

A bill embodying this recommendation passed the house of representatives, but in the committee of the senate, counsel for the railways contended that it was unconstitutional, because it authorized discrimination.

The argument seemed to be convincing, and although I do not concur in the conclusion, I feel impelled to lay aside the remedy then proposed. It must be assumed, therefore, that if those who travel little are to be relieved of the unjust burden which they now bear, the relief must come through a general reduction of all passenger fares. There is much reason to believe that, in the western country at least, passenger traffic at the present rates is less profitable than freight traffic at the present rates. The representatives of the railway companies, during the last session, insisted that the average actual rate paid by passengers in Iowa was not more than two cents per mile, some of the roads showing a fraction higher and some a fraction lower than two cents. In making this computation, arbitrary division of certain large expenses was assumed, and as I understand it free transportation was not included.

This condition has been brought about by the railroads themselves, through mileage books, credentials, and other reduced rates to privileged classes. When it is remembered that the vast majority of those who travel a great deal pay but two cents per mile, and that the travel of all those of our people who pay three cents per mile is necessary to bring the average up to two cents per mile, the extent of travel which pays less than two cents per mile assumes tremendous proportions. Granting, for the moment, that it would be unfair to

reduce the revenue from passenger service a single penny, it is still manifest that the adjustment is hopelessly wrong. It costs the railway company just as much to carry a passenger who has purchased a 2,000 mile book, per mile, as it does to carry a passenger who has bought a single ticket for 100 miles; indeed, I think the former costs but little more, for the use of the mileage book entails more expense in the maintenance of extensive bureaus for identification, auditing and rebating than the sale of tickets at stations. The only advantage derived by the railway company is the interest upon the payment in advance, and this does not warrant any appreciable reduction in the rate.

If the practice of making low rates for excursions, conventions, meetings of associations and the like, is unprofitable, the railway companies can easily abolish it. For my part I can see no justice in the custom which compels the farmer and his family or the merchant and his family, as they go from place to place, either for pleasure or for business, to pay a part of the cost of carrying men to conventions or to gatherings of any kind, and much less can I perceive the wisdom of making our people pay, as they move about engaged in their ordinary affairs, for losses incurred in making trainload after trainload of pleasure seekers to points of entertainment or amusement, or land seekers, as they journey to distant states in the hope of finding riches that they could more easily discover at home.

These things, however, are entirely within the control of the railway companies. If we give them an opportunity to take two cents per mile from every one who rides upon their trains in Iowa and they avail themselves of the opportunity as they can, their revenue from the passenger traffic will not be reduced a single dollar; on the contrary, according to universal experience, it will be increased. If on the other hand, the railway companies, with the right to demand two cents per mile from all who travel, find it advantageous, by reason of ulterior and extrinsic benefits, to reduce the rates under certain circumstances below the maximum, and thus diminish the average rate actually received, they cannot assert that the law has done them an injustice. I stand firmly upon the proposition that the travelers who are now paying three cents per mile are paying the fares of other travelers who are abundantly able to pay their own; and the burden is laid upon the people who are least able to bear it. It is a discrimination which cannot be defended, and which ought not to continue. It will not be forgotten, either, that the prohibition against passes already in force, and an enlargement of the prohibition of which I shall speak presently, and which I hope will shortly be in force, will add materially to the revenue of the railway companies and will help greatly in maintaining the average at or above its present point.

Freight Rates

What I have already said is sufficient in so far as the income of the railway companies is concerned. The railroad commission has already adequate power to fix schedule of maximum freight rates. The schedules and classifications announced in 1889 have not been changed essentially during the eighteen years that have since intervened. In the meanwhile, the manufacture and commerce of the country have been revolutionized; and I believe it to be true that the present adjustment of rates is grossly unfair to the manufacturers, farmers, stock producers and distributors of the state. They do not have a fair and even chance in the struggle for business. It may be worth your while to institute an investigation, which, with your plenary powers, might develop many things which the railroad commission cannot discover and which would greatly aid in the readjustment of rates. As you know, it is the almost invariable custom of railway companies, in bringing shipments of any kind into the state, to make rates to the state line, and then add the rate of the Iowa distance tariff to the point of destination. This practice results in great hardship to our manufacturers and distributors in their efforts to compete with their rivals situated beyond the state. To give point to this phase of the intricate subject I take the liberty of giving you the substance of two letters which I received during the time I was writing this part of my message:

"In 1906 there was shipped from Chicago to Fairfield the Loudon

Machinery company twenty-nine cars of bar steel having a total weight of 980,741 pounds.

"Distance from Chicago to Fairfield 256 miles.

"Distance from Chicago to Burlington 206 miles.

"Distance from Burlington to Fairfield 50 miles.

"Rate from Chicago to Fairfield 13 cents per 100 pounds.

"Rate from Chicago to Burlington 5 cents per 100 pounds.

"Rate from Burlington to Fairfield 13 cents per 100 pounds.

"Rate charges for hauling these twenty-nine cars 206 miles \$490.37.

"Freight charges for hauling these twenty-nine cars 50 miles \$784.59.

"In this particular case the freight for one-fifth of the entire distance—the part in Iowa—is \$294.22 more than for the other four-fifths of the distance—the part in Illinois."

"In 1906 the Iowa Malleable Iron company of this city shipped in 1,597 long tons of pig iron. Most of this if not all came from Chicago.

"Rate from Chicago to Fairfield \$2.40 per long ton.

"Rate from Chicago to Burlington \$1. per long ton.

"Freight from Chicago to Fairfield on 1,597 long tons \$3,832.80.

"Freight from Chicago to Burlington on 1,597 long tons, \$1,597.

"Freight charged from Burlington to Fairfield, 1,597 long tons \$2,235.80.

"Freight on 1,597 ton for hauling fifty miles in Iowa, \$2,238.50.

"Freight on 1597 ton for hauling 206 mile in Illinois \$1,597.

"In other words the freight charges for hauling 1,597 ton of pig iron fifty miles in Iowa are \$638.80 more than for hauling the same tonnage 206 miles in Illinois."

I understand perfectly that nothing you could do would affect a through rate, but if it is to be the settled policy of the railroad to make the interstate rate, so far as Iowa people are concerned, by adding the local distance tariff from the state line to the point of destination, it is possible to so adjust our rates that less injustice would follow their application in that manner.

At the present time there are no joint rates upon local traffic. The law gives to the railroad commission the authority, upon specific application, to establish a joint rate, but there is no authority to prescribe a general schedule of joint rates. The constitutionality of the existing statute was at one time questioned but the case in which it arose was determined upon another issue and therefore the validity of the law is still undecided. I recommend the subject to you as one worthy of the most careful consideration. It is believed by very many of our manufacturers, as well as by a large proportion of our general shippers that the law should be amended so as to confer upon the commission as complete power to establish a schedule of joint rates embracing all railroads and all traffic as it now has to promulgate a schedule of rates over single lines.

Demurrage

Two propositions will be admitted without controversy: First that it is the duty of every railway company to provide itself with sufficient motive power and enough cars to carry the freight offered to it with reasonable promptitude and to furnish these facilities without discrimination to the shippers who ask for them; second it is the duty of shippers and consignors to load and unload cars

Continued on page 6.

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F. W. HANN, Harlan, Iowa,

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