

WHY THE COST OF OPERATING RAILROADS HAS BEEN INCREASED

STRUGGLING AGAINST INCREASED COST OF LABOR, SUPPLIES, ETC., ON ONE HAND—REDUCED RATES ON THE OTHER

During the last few years, the advocates of government ownership of railroads have been somewhat persistent in the public press and the matter is referred to here, not with any idea of combating this propaganda, but merely that the people may briefly see both sides of the picture. So long as a lot of men welcome the wrecking of the railroads on the theory that the government will take them over and that such a state of affairs would be preferable to private ownership, it will be impossible to obtain from them a fair judgment of the latter system which now prevails in the United States. It is impossible to enter into this question at any length at this time, but here are a few things worth thinking about: Much has been said in recent years about the "water" contained in American railroad securities, and in this connection the valuation of the government owned railroads of Europe is very interesting. In Germany the state owned roads are valued at \$114,185 per mile, in Austria at \$120,692, in Hungary at \$69,210, in Italy at \$126,886, in Belgium at \$190,914, in Switzerland at \$102,960, in Roumania at \$90,113, in Japan at \$88,104, in New South Wales at \$71,391—while the privately owned lines of the United States, regardless of what water may have been forced into them in specific instances, are valued at only \$68,944 per mile. Whatever inflation may therefore have been put into these properties in the past, the fact remains, that their present valuation is much lower than that of the government owned railroads of Europe, and what is still more important, the rates charged are the lowest and the service rendered admittedly the best in the world. It is also pertinent to remember that the charge of watered stocks, after all, can be made against but very few railroads, while the lion's share of them having been managed without a breath of scandal or criticism.

In this connection, a statement contained in the last annual report of the Deutsche Bank of Berlin, which has a paid-up capital and reserve fund of \$75,000,000, is interesting: "American railroads need higher rates. The present rates are the lowest in the world—representing but a fraction of the English railway rates, for instance—and this in the face of the fact that wages in the United States on the average are fully twice as high as in Europe." Certainly this view of the privately owned lines of the United States, coming from Germany, which has the most successful state owned system of transportation in the world, is worthy of grave consideration.

In further confirmation of this statement we quote the following statistics: It costs 7 mills per mile on an average to haul a ton of freight in the United States while in England it costs an average of 2.33 cents, in France 1.41 cents and in Germany 1.42 cents. The average daily wage paid to American railroad employees is \$2.23, in England it is \$1.15, and in Germany and France it averages little more than a dollar per day. Are American railroads therefore entitled to the wholesale abuse and denunciation which has been heaped upon them from all sides in recent years?

Letting Well Enough Alone.
In view of these facts, the average citizen may well ask himself whether it is not best to let well enough alone rather than invite other ills we know not of—whether it is not wiser to cure such defects as may encumber the present system rather than run the danger of plunging this mighty industry into the whirlpool of party politics for all time, with its attendant opportunity for evil of which the past affords such rich variety of experience. The United States is still a young country, and in many sections only partially developed. Many new lines and extensions are needed here and there to give a wider opportunity to expanding agriculture and commerce, and nothing could be more unfortunate or disastrous than that these favors could henceforth be obtained only by leave-taking of the dominant political factions which will reign at the national capital in the years to come. Political parties are intensely human institutions, and the average cautious citizen will prefer to leave the railroad expansion to the future to the economic law of supply and demand of the different communities rather than to place such a temptation for power in the hands of those who rise and fall in the field of politics. Furthermore, should the time ever come when the government takes over the railroads, it means that the people will have to forego the millions of taxes which they now pay and which help to support the public schools, public highways and other public expenses—and that henceforth these millions of revenue will have to come out of the pockets of the people.

Many other things could be said upon this phase of the question, but space forbids. For some time, the government, through the Interstate Commerce Commission, has been engaged in making a physical valuation of all our railroads as a matter of guidance for future rate adjustments. Again, we repeat, since the people absolutely control the government, it is better to cling to that which is good and eliminate that which is bad in the present system which, with all that has been said against it, furnishes the best and cheapest transportation service in the world.

Increased Cost of Operation.
We now wish to refer briefly to another phase of the problem. For a number of years the cry of the "high cost of living" has been everywhere abroad in the land. Time was, not so many years ago, when the farmer sold his corn at 25 cents per bushel. Now it brings from 50 cents to 75 cents. So, too, he sold hogs at 3 cents per pound, which now readily brings from 7 to 10 cents—while a good steer calf, which used to bring

from \$10 to \$12, now now sells for from \$20 to \$25. Nobody who knows anything about present land values or the farmer's cost of production will contend that he is not entitled to these increased prices. At a matter of fact, unless he is an exceedingly good manager and utilizes the best of modern agricultural thought he is by no means getting rich at present prices—high as they may seem to people in the cities who do not understand the cost attached to present-day farming. To go back to the old prices, he used to receive would bankrupt, in a little while, every farmer in the country—the tendency of the future will be for the price of farm products to go still higher rather than lower. Agriculture is the nation's greatest fundamental industry and society must make the farm game sufficiently profitable to justify the man who is on the farm today and the farmer boys of the future to stay by the plow. Much has been said recently about the fact that the farmer does not receive enough for what he produces—that there is too big a waste in the channels through which his products pass before they reach the consumer, and that he has some ground for complaint in this respect is undoubtedly true. However, the railroads can face such an inquiry with a clear conscience, conducted by the Lehigh Valley railroad some time ago shows that the farmer gets 50% cents out of the average dollar's worth of products he sells; the packers, local shippers, distributors and retailers get 14 cents between them; while the railroads receive only 5 cents, or one-twentieth of the dollar, for the transportation services they render.

So, too, there has been a steady advance in practically the entire realm of merchandise and manufactured products, whatever their nature, and the ever increasing toll in the cost of labor, steel products, lumber, cars, locomotives, and other supplies have levied a tribute of untold millions upon the railroads, which have not only been forbidden to increase their rates, but, on the contrary, in many instances, compelled to lower them.

Big Increased Cost of Labor.
To give the reader an exact idea of how the cost of labor has advanced in the operations of railroads we quote the following increase in the daily wage from 1900 to 1914—a period of only fourteen years. In the case of engineers it increased from \$3.68 per day to \$5.76, or an increase of 56 per cent; firemen from \$2.21 to \$3.62, or 64 per cent; conductors from \$2.31 to \$4.53, or 45 per cent; station agents from \$1.98 to \$2.16, or 9 per cent; other station men from \$1.62 to \$1.90, or 17 per cent; ordinary trainmen from \$1.97 to \$2.36, or 20 per cent; machinists from \$2.22 to \$3.22, or 45 per cent; carpenters from \$2.31 to \$2.59, or 12 per cent; other shopmen from \$1.93 to \$2.20, or 14 per cent; section foremen, from \$1.51 to \$1.83, or 21 per cent; trackmen from \$1.15 to \$1.52, or 32 per cent; telegraph operators and patchers from \$2.25 to \$2.65, or 17 per cent. This means a general average increase in wages of 32-39-100 per cent—and all other classes of railroad operatives and employees in a more or less similar degree. While these advances have proven a great boon to the nearly two million employed in the railway service and increased their capacity to buy from merchant and farmer, they have exacted many millions annually from the railroads themselves, all of which made the general public richer, but the roads poorer. In 1900 the railroads paid \$1.44 per ton for coal. Now they pay \$1.81. They paid 38¢ for ties. Now they pay 52¢.

Other Increased Costs.
But there are many other items which have enormously increased the cost of railroad operation which we cannot go into because of a lack of space. The public is constantly demanding a more efficient and safer service, and hence the railroads have had to spend vast sums in installing block signals, steel passenger cars, doing away with grade crossings, straightening lines, heavier locomotives, better roadbeds, and supplying many other precautions protecting both their operatives and the public—all things very necessary, yet very costly. So, too, numerous states have passed "Pull Crew" laws which, without benefitting the public, have compelled the railroads to pay a toll of millions to useless employees.

Now, while labor, farm products, merchandise and manufactures and supplies of all kinds have steadily increased in price, the railroads, as stated before, have been compelled to reduce their rates in the face of this avalanche of ever-advancing cost of operation—and that all but the most powerful lines find themselves in an exceedingly critical condition is not to be wondered at. The farmer, the merchant, the manufacturer and the laborer justly insist that the world should not be able to get along on the prices they received ten or fifteen years ago. How, then, can the railroads, which are the largest employers of labor and buyers of material in the United States, be expected to exist on less than the prices received ten or fifteen years ago? In view of these facts, it is no wonder that President Wilson and other patriotic and careful students of the situation are speaking words of kindly admonition to the American people to let well enough alone, through whose giant arteries flows the very life blood of the nation, may not be wrecked and destroyed.

The Public and the Manager.
On the same hand, for the last twenty-five years the public has demanded the best and highest efficiency in service and lower rates in one and the same breath. On the other hand stand the thousands of men and women who have invested their money in railroad securities and who, in common with the farmer, the manufacturer and the merchant, believe they are entitled to a fair profit. Then

Optimistic Thought.
One's duty is to accept the challenge of the passing day.

Delaware County Farmers' Institute

Central Opera House, Manchester

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

JANUARY 20, 21, AND 22, 1915

To the Farmers of Delaware and adjoining Counties:

Webster defines the word institute as "a society for the promotion of some special interest". Our Delaware County Farmers' Institute is therefore properly designated, as it is intended to promote the best interests of the farmer. I do not mean by this that the farmer is only interested in the breeding and feeding of stock and in tilling the soil. The successful farmer of today must know something of engineering, otherwise his water pipes, his gasoline engine, his wind mill and his automobile will be constantly out of repair. He must be something of a veterinarian so that if a colt is injured on the barb wire fence or a brood sow is in trouble at the time of farrowing or any minor disease attacks one of the animals on the farm he knows the remedy and how to apply it. He must also have a general

knowledge of what constitutes good citizenship and what national and state laws should be enacted, for he is quite likely sooner or later to be called upon to represent his country in the legislature and possibly in congress. Believing all this and having lived among the farmers of Delaware county for over 50 years and having had some success in securing their aims in the arrangement of this program to have something a little different from the ordinary. One of the subjects to be discussed at the introduction of this new disease is "The Hog Cholera Question." This year he will use lantern slides to show how bad roads may be converted and made

into good ones and he will tell us what the effect is in raising the valuation of the county could attend the sessions of this first day of the institute. You who cannot, certainly have my sympathy. The second day had to spend vast sums in installing block signals, steel passenger cars, doing away with grade crossings, straightening lines, heavier locomotives, better roadbeds, and supplying many other precautions protecting both their operatives and the public—all things very necessary, yet very costly. So, too, numerous states have passed "Pull Crew" laws which, without benefitting the public, have compelled the railroads to pay a toll of millions to useless employees.

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Dr. Jessup, Dr. Seerley, president of the Iowa College for Teachers, is another of Iowa's great educators. His subject is "The Signs of the Times". I wish we could give an accurate list of the young men and young women, who from Delaware county have prepared themselves for teaching by spending one or more terms in Dr. Seerley's normal school at Cedar Falls. Some

conditions may enable him to give us information of even greater value than anything of a general nature that Dr. Hopkins might have brought us. Dr. Reed will be followed by Dr. Fannell, who is at the head of the botanical department at Ames. He has made a life study of plants and will not only give a most interesting address which the ladies will especially enjoy but he will tell the farmer about the plant enemies of the farm and how to subdue them. The institute has been especially fortunate in securing Dr. M. P. Revenel of the Missouri University, who is said to be the highest authority on "Bovine Tuberculosis." Dr. Revenel is also chairman of the American Medical Society of Chicago and comes to us on the recommendation of Ex-Governor Hoard, Dr. Kepford and Dr. H. A. Dittmer. It is seldom a city the size of Manchester is favored with so distinguished a speaker from the medical profession. Doctors of

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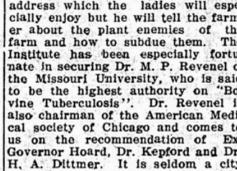
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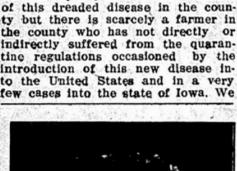
C. F. CURTIS

of the young people of the county will go to Cedar Falls this year. Won't you parents come out and hear and greet Dr. Seerley. Among the best men in the state is Prof. C. F. Curtis, dean and director of the Iowa State College, Ames. We were unable to secure him last year but he comes to us this year with a message that I am sure we shall be glad to hear. His subject is "Successful and Permanent Agriculture". What a theme, but not too deep for the progressive and intelligent farmers of Delaware county. By consulting the program you will note that all three of these great men will speak the first day of the institute and they will be followed by Prof. A. Marston, chairman of the State Highway Commission, who will tell us how the state expended \$11,000,000.00 on its public highways in 1914 and what the results have been. He will use lantern slides to show how bad roads may be converted and made



DR. W. A. JESSUP

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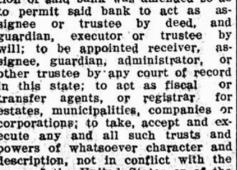
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A. MARSTON

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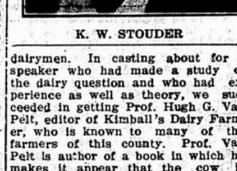
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want to know the first symptoms of this disease. If there is a cure for it Dr. Stouder will tell us candidly and frankly what it is. He will also tell us more about hog cholera and the year's results of his teachings and his methods of vaccination. At the close of the Doctor's lecture there will be a general discussion in which farmers should be prepared to ask questions concerning both of these diseases. Do not hesitate to glean from Dr. Stouder all the information possible. He will be here for just that purpose. The first session of the last day of the institute, Friday, will be of special interest to



K. W. STOUDER

dairymen. In casting about for a speaker who had made a study of the dairy question and who had experience as well as theory, we succeeded in getting Prof. Hugh G. Van Pelt, editor of Kimball's Dairy Farmer, who is known to many of the farmers of this county. Prof. Van Pelt is author of a book in which he makes it appear that the cow is man's best friend. "Breeding and Feeding Dairy Cattle" is the topic he will discuss at the institute. We do not need to urge the dairymen or



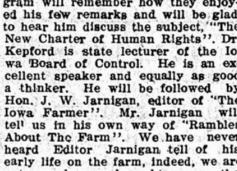
J. W. JARNAGIN

shall excel the one of last year which you so much enjoyed. Will you attend or if the weather is not ideal will you remain home. Every session is a daylight one. The train service is good. The hotels and restaurants will be prepared to feed all who come. We want to thank the farmers of the county for their attendance last year and urge upon them the same loyalty to the 1915 institute.



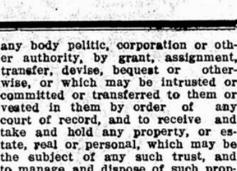
HUGH G. VAN PELT

dairymen of the county to be sure and hear Prof. Van Pelt. Those who attend the institute last year when Dr. Kepford was crowded off the program will remember how they enjoyed his few remarks and will be glad to hear him discuss the subject, "The New Charter of Human Rights". Dr. Kepford is state lecturer of the Iowa Board of Control. He is an excellent speaker and equally as good a thinker. He will be followed by Hon. J. W. Jarnagin, editor of "The Iowa Farmer". Mr. Jarnagin will tell us in his own way of "Rambles About the Farm". We have never heard Editor Jarnagin tell of his early life on the farm, indeed, we are not sure he was brought up on the farm but it matters not; he can describe in detail every ramble about the farm in such a way as to make everybody laugh or cry just as suits his own sweet will. The afternoon of the 21st day of December, 1914, Article II of the Articles of Incorporation of said bank was amended so as to permit said bank to act as assignee or trustee by deed, and will be appointed receiver, assignee, guardian, administrator, or other trustee by any court of record in this state; to act as fiscal or transfer agents, or registrar for estates, municipalities, companies or corporations; to take, accept and execute any and all such trusts and powers of whatsoever character and description, not in conflict with the laws of the United States or of the State of Iowa, as may be conferred upon or entrusted or committed to them by any person or persons or



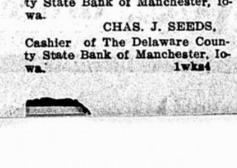
J. F. MERRY

any body politic, corporation or other authority, by grant, assignment, transfer, devise, bequest or otherwise, or which may be intrusted or committed or transferred to them or to them by order of any court of record, and to receive and take and hold any property, or estate, real or personal, which may be the subject of any such trust, and to manage and dispose of over the terms of such trust or power; to exercise the powers conferred on said bank by the charter as amended so as to provide for the election of two vice presidents instead of one. Dated this 31st day of December, A. D. 1914. WM. C. CRAWLEY, President of The Delaware County State Bank of Manchester, Iowa.



CHAS. J. SEEDS

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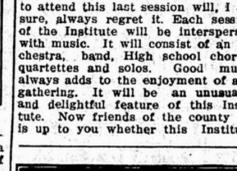


DORMAN BROOKS



A. E. KEPFORD

Cedar Rapids High school. Her subject is "Iowa's Greatest Crop, Her Girls and Boys". Those who have heard Miss Fordyce at school institutes are loud in their praises of her as a speaker and a thoroughly original thinker. The friends who fall to attend this last session will, I am sure, always regret it. Each session of the institute will be interspersed with music. It will consist of an orchestra, band, high school chorus, quartettes and solos. Good music always adds to the enjoyment of any gathering. It will be an unusually and delightful feature of this institute. Now friends of the county it is up to you whether this institute



J. F. MERRY

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