

The River Press.

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THE RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE.

Whether or not the railroads as a whole are sufficiently well paid by the government is a question about which for years there has been much controversy, says the New York Times. The compensation of the railroads was fixed by law in 1873. By subsequent amendments in 1876 and 1878 the rate of pay was reduced 10 per cent. and then 5 per cent. There has been no change since. The scheme of compensation, however, was based on a sliding scale, which reduced the rate of pay as the weight of the mail carried increased. In addition to this pay by weight, an allowance is made to railroads employing cars devoted exclusively to the carriage of mail. The total amount paid to the railroads under both these heads in the fiscal year ended June 30, 1905, was \$44,226,999. Of this total about \$39,000,000 was for transportation proper, and about \$5,000,000 was the allowance for special mail cars.

The rate of pay graduates from \$1.71 per ton per mile in the case of a daily average of 200 pounds of mail carried to .068 per ton per mile for each 2,000 pounds in excess of 5,000 pounds. This shows clearly how the rate of pay drops with an increase in the amount of mail carried. This also accounts for the further fact that, while the rate of pay as fixed by law is now what it was in 1878, when the average passenger and freight rates were much higher the automatic working of the sliding scale has in effect reduced the rate of carrying the mails as much or more than the freight and passenger rates have been reduced.

The railroads are allowed no extra pay for increasing the speed of mail trains. All that has been accomplished in this direction has been accomplished by the repeal of the post-office department in the interest of the public and by competition between the railroads themselves.

An illustration of the inadequate pay sometimes received by the railroads for mail carriage is found in the statement of a former president of the Long Island railroad to the effect that the bootblack privilege on the company's ferryboats yielded the company one-fifth of the amount received from the government for transporting the mails all over the lines of the company.

The average weight upon which is based the payment for mail transportation is determined by actual weighings made for a period of ninety days once in four years. The weighing period was formerly fixed by law at not less than thirty days, but was recently increased to ninety days. Just now the date is approaching for the weighing of mails on the western lines. For the moment this has added greater zest to the competition between the several lines. The more mail the roads can carry during the three months of weighing the larger will be their pay for the next four years. This quadrennial determination of the weight is something of a hardship for the railroads. The mails normally increase very greatly during the course of four years. It has been estimated that on an average the roads in this way carry 20 per cent. more weight than they are paid for.

In 1866, when the Union Pacific railroad was opened to the Pacific coast, the running time from New York to the coast was about nineteen days. That was considered remarkably fast time in those days. Now it is three and a half days. A more striking illustration of the evolution of our railway and of our mail service as well could hardly be found.

THE PRINCE OF CHUMPS.

Commissioner Garfield is not connected with the department of justice and was never authorized to make any promises in its behalf or on its account. If the beef trust packers did not know this they were densely ignorant, and so were their high-priced attorneys and counselors. Just why the government should be bound by the promise of an official who was without authority to make such a promise, and who could not be supposed by any intelligent person to have such authority, is beyond the comprehension of the ordinary citizen.

But if the testimony of the witnesses in the packers' case is to be believed, Commissioner Garfield is easily the prince of chumps in President Roosevelt's official family—and that is saying a good deal. Facile princes is no name for it: he is the royal flush of four-flushers, and that is the limit.

When President Roosevelt declared war against the beef trust and sent his chosen knight, young Mr. Garfield, out on the firing line and beyond to reconnoiter the enemy and report to headquarters preparatory to a general assault, the country breathed a sigh of relief and the innocent bystanders united in saying that there was going to be trouble. Mr. Garfield's name

was accepted as a sufficient pledge that he would at least emulate the doughty deeds of his distinguished ancestor, notwithstanding the old proverb about great men's sons. But when Mr. Garfield turned up later, fat and rosy, with no marks of battle upon his well-upholstered person, and reported that the beef trust was a much-abused innocent corporation, doing business at an infinitesimal profit and often at a loss, the country wept—all but the cattle raisers and meat consumers—to think of the great injustice it had been doing these noble philanthropists; and then, as one good turn deserved another, somebody poured a bucket of white-wash over the young commissioner whose name was too big for him. His apologists averred that the packers had taken a cruel advantage of Mr. Garfield's youth and innocence—in fact, had cruelly deceived him by means of a double set of books.

Now it appears that the bitter was bitten and Mr. Garfield deceived the packers. According to the testimony of three men of high standing in Chicago—one of them an ex-comptroller of the federal treasury—Commissioner Garfield assured the packers that nothing in his reports would be used against them by the government, and on the strength of this pretense he was given free access to the most private books of the packers' combine. Now the packers are pleading Mr. Garfield's assurances of immunity as a bar to the prosecution which the government has instituted against them.

Whether the claim is good in law or not, the country would like to know what Commissioner Garfield meant by making such a promise. Did he suppose, as some cynical folks say, that the government's attitude toward monopolistic trusts in general, and the beef trust in particular was merely a bluff? What possible use could the federal authorities have for his report except as a basis for prosecution?

It appears that Mr. Garfield has betrayed his trust as well as the packers. President Roosevelt's warm defense of Loomis and Paul Morton and Press Agent Bishop has given him a well-earned reputation for sticking to his friends, but he will have to look up the famous recipe that used to make such a lasting coat of whitewash for the White House if he expects to stick to Garfield.—Kansas City Journal.

ELECTRICITY AND STEAM.

According to a recent Washington dispatch, Representative Dixon has introduced a bill in congress to authorize the construction of a dam across the Missouri river near Helena, for the purposes of water power and irrigation. The dam will be built by the Capital City Improvement company, of Helena, which proposes to supply electrical power to the Butte and Anaconda smelters.

Electrical power promises to supplant steam in the near future, for nearly all the purposes for which the latter is used, and the demand for such power in Montana can be supplied to an almost unlimited extent from the Missouri river. Any number of dams can be built, and the power transmitted to such points as may need it.

The displacement of steam by electric power is the subject of an interesting article in the Globe-Democrat, which says two railroads in Colorado have decided to change their motive power from steam to electricity, this step having suggested itself long ago to engineers and even casual observers. Work is about to begin in installing electric power on the Pacific coast branches of the Canadian Pacific railway. A paper published in the state of Washington says a similar transformation will soon take place there, for every railroad going through the Cascade mountains is within sight and easy reach of water powers of enormous magnitude. From every gorge and canyon mountain torrents pour down, ready to be harnessed, and in that climate they are not ice-locked in winter. Electricity generated by water is now the motive power on the urban and interurban car systems of western Washington, and has proved to be an important economic advance. That point was settled many centuries ago in favor of water power, and is one of the fundamental facts of engineering.

A bill introduced in congress lately proposes a lease of the water power along a deep waterway from St. Louis to Lake Michigan, by way of the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, on terms that are represented to cover interest on the cost of constructing the ship channel. According to the reports of engineers, a 14-foot channel could be built for \$31,000,000. A company of New York capitalists will invest \$50,000,000 in utilizing the Feather river in northern California to supply electric power, light and heat to San Francisco, Sacramento, and a long chain of other cities and towns. What has been done at Niagara in generating electricity by water is a familiar story.

A recent prediction of the leading periodical devoted to the iron interests is that the electrification of the steam railroads of the United States is a

question of but a short time. The traction lines have started on that basis and are multiplying their links throughout the country. Every judicious saving that can be applied will be adopted in the business of transportation, which is increasing with great bounds. The world today has 550,000 miles of railway and 24,000,000 net tons of carrying capacity on the ocean, three-fourths of which vessels depend on steam. In the last century the increase was 500 per cent in ocean tonnage, and the whole business of railroading had its rise within that period. With steam railway lines beginning to change to electricity generated by water power along the routes, the trend of transportation, and other activities calling for power, is clearly foreseen.

Hard On the Dog.

A year or two ago a well known New York financier, who was visiting China, was the recipient of many courtesies. When the financier's mission had been accomplished he conceived the idea that it would be the proper thing to tender to the viceroy some token in recognition of the courtesies mentioned. So he sent to the official in question an uncommonly fine bull pup that he had brought with him. In a few days came the viceroy's acknowledgment of the gift. "I myself am not in the habit of eating that species of dog, but I may say that my suite had it served for breakfast and accord it unqualified praise."

He Needed a Lantern.

A rancher who is known for working his men long hours recently hired an Irishman. A day or so later the rancher said he was going to town to buy a new bed for Pat. "Ye need not git extravagant on me account," said Pat: "if it's just the same to ye ye can cut out buying a new bed, and thrade the ould wan for a lantern."

Peculiar and Persistent.

It costs London \$20 a year to educate a child in school. In Germany the average cost is about \$14, in New York about \$31.

A bushel of bituminous coal is different in different states. In Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Kentucky its weight is 80 pounds; in Pennsylvania, 76 pounds, and in Indiana, 70 pounds.

A court of law is a reminiscence of the time when the justice sat in the open courtyard, and the "dock" is from a German word meaning a receptacle, while the "bar" is a Welsh word, meaning the branch of a tree used to separate the lords of justice from their vassals.

Alfred Beit, the South African mining king, is said to be richer even than Rockefeller. Half the mines in South Africa belong to him, including the fabulous wealth of Kimberley's diamond output. The aggregate of his wealth can not be stated, but a rough estimate places it at \$1,000,000,000. His yearly income is \$52,500,000, which means that he gets \$100 every minute of his life, or, to put it another way, \$1,000,000 a week.

Convict Wins Big Prize.

LINCOLN, Neb., Feb. 7.—The winner of a \$25,000 prize for correctly naming the attendance at the St. Louis exposition in 1904 was Frank Campbell, a convict in the Nebraska state penitentiary, who still has one year more to serve for embezzlement.

The winner, however, will receive only \$12,500, as fearing that he might have difficulty in securing the money while imprisoned, he agreed to pay a lawyer half of the prize in case he was successful in securing it.

Another Road For Montana.

DENVER, Feb. 7.—With the intention of locating a route for the proposed extension of the Colorado & Southern railroad from Orin, Wyoming, to a junction with the Canadian Pacific in Assinibola, a party of surveyors left here last night. The line is to connect in Montana with the road about to be built by the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul company.

Tells Mormon Secrets.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8.—In the investigation of protests against Reed Smoot, senator from Utah, before the senate committee on privileges and elections, Prof. Walter M. Wolfe, who was a teacher in Brigham Young college at Logan, Utah, and a member of the church until recently, was today subjected to a severe cross-examination by S. A. Worthington, counsel for the senator.

On re-direct examination the names of a number of residents of Provo were read to the witnesses and ten of them, he said, were living in polygamous cohabitation. He said he knew George Taylor, brother-in-law of Mr. Smoot, and that Taylor had asked him (witness) to give up his democratic faith and come in with "the great majority."

This was just previous to the election of the legislature that elected Smoot to the senate, he said, and further, that Taylor asked him to do all he could for the election of Smoot.

COAL MINERS MAY STRIKE.

Threatened Labor Trouble Would Affect Over Half a Million Men.

NEW YORK, Feb. 6.—President Roosevelt, it is suggested today, may be called upon in a few days to use his influence to avoid a general strike of anthracite and bituminous coal miners and operators indicate that without the interposition of some potent influence outside of the conflicting forces, a strike of greater proportions than has ever been known in this country is inevitable.

According to the figures given out by the national officers of the miners' organization, they expect the strike to bring out 600,000 men—about 150,000 nonunion miners in West Virginia and Pennsylvania with the 450,000 union miners. Mr. Mitchell said that never in the history of this country was there an organization that could call out as many in one strike, having such widespread effect.

"I have said," he declared, "that the responsibility of bringing on such a strike was a grave responsibility for any people. We have been slow to assume any such responsibility, and the responsibility rests, as anyone can see, on the operators."

"The prosperous condition of the country warrants an increase for the miners. We accepted a decrease by our votes two years ago, when at the time we were convinced that the conditions of the country demanded it. We have ever been ready to stand right, and we stand right now."

When questioned about the cost of the anthracite strike he said that its cost had been estimated by the anthracite strike commission to be a loss of \$25,000,000 of wages to the miners, \$50,000,000 of profits to the operators and \$26,000,000 loss in freight rates.

There were other items of loss that raised the total figures much over \$100,000,000 for the strike. It lasted a little over 26 weeks.

President Mitchell estimated that four people are dependent on every miner. On this estimate a national strike, such as is planned, will affect over 2,000,000 persons dependent on the mining industry for their daily bread.

Engineers Favor Lock Canal.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6.—The report of the Isthmian canal commission, transmitting to the secretary of war the majority and minority reports of the board of consulting engineers, together with the view of the canal commission, was laid before Secretary Taft today. The commission's report sets out in 24 typewritten pages the reasons which influenced all of the commissioners, save Admiral Endicott, to accept the views of the minority of the board of consulting engineers rather than the majority, which favored the digging of a sea-level canal. The engineers' report consists of no less than 100 printed pages. To the minority engineer's report, which secured the approval of the majority of the commission, was appended a letter from Chief Engineer Stevens, re-enforcing the reasoning of the minority of the engineer board, after a careful analysis of the two plans of sea-level and lock canal.

Accompanying the commission's report is the minority report of Rear Admiral and Commissioner Endicott, the only member to accept the views of the majority of the engineers. Secretary Taft intends immediately to begin formulating his own conclusions upon the radically different views presented to him, for the information of the president.

Zero Weather In the East.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6.—A statement of weather conditions by the weather bureau today shows that the cold wave has reached the New England and middle Atlantic coast, and cold weather is general this morning east of the Rockies, except in the south Atlantic states, the temperature ranging from ten to thirty-five degrees below the season's average. In central and northern New York the minimum temperatures were from eight to more than twenty degrees below zero, and the line of zero temperature extends into northern Kentucky.

PITTSBURG, Feb. 6.—With the thermometer at ten below zero, Pittsburg today experienced the coldest weather of the winter. Last night the police stations were filled with the homeless and a gas shortage in several sections of the city caused much suffering. Colder conditions are expected.

Moody Appears Against Packers.

CHICAGO, Feb. 6.—United States Attorney General Moody took an active part today in the trial of the packers' case. At the opening of court he was called upon by Attorney John S. Miller, who represented Armour & Co., to produce the original copy of a letter written to him by President Roosevelt, or to admit the authenticity of a copy which Mr. Miller produced in court.

The attorney general admitted the authenticity of the document as a

copy, but declared that the clause in the letter which the attorneys for the packers construed as meaning that the department of justice and the department of commerce and labor were working on the case in unison, was not correct. His assertions caused much excitement among the attorneys for the packers, and they objected to the statement of the attorney general as being improper before the jury. The latter was not offered in evidence but was marked for identification.

But three witnesses were on the stand during the day and their evidence was not of general interest. The afternoon session of the court was taken up by the reading to the court of the Garfield report on the packing industry.

Townsites On Flathead Reserve.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6.—Representative Lacey, chairman of the house committee on public lands, has introduced a bill, which, if passed, will make it lawful for the commissioner of the general land office to place on the market and sell for not less than \$1.25 an acre, any isolated or disconnected tracts or parcels of the public domain of less than one-quarter section, which, in his judgment, it would be proper to expose for sale, after 30 days' notice.

The house passed Dixon's bill, which provides for the establishment of the following townsites in the Flathead Indian reservation: Tolson, Dayton, Roman, Dixon, Arlee and Stignatius. The measure further provides for a 400-acre reserve, to be known as Camas Hot Springs, and also confirms water rights and water appropriations heretofore made to Flathead Indians for domestic and agricultural purposes.

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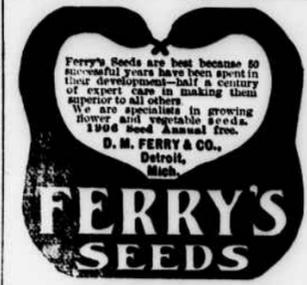
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