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## PUBLIC OWNERSHIP.

### OF RAILROADS AND MUNICIPAL UTILITIES.

Senator Allen's Statistics of Foreign Railroads as Given to the Senate—Brilliant Success of Public Ownership of Street Railways in Glasgow.

Senator Allen of Nebraska in a speech delivered in the United States senate, gave a list of governments who own, or partly own their railways as follows:

The Argentine Republic owns 620 miles of railway. Five-sixths of the railways of Australia belong to the various colonial governments.

In Austria-Hungary about 40 per cent of the mileage is owned and about 73 per cent is operated by the state. Three-fourths of the mileage of Belgium is owned and operated by the state. The state owns one-fourth of the total mileage of Brazil and does one-half of the entire railway mileage of the country. In Canada one-tenth of the mileage is owned and controlled by the government. One-half of the railways of the Cape of Good Hope, of English South Africa, is owned by the government. In Columbia the railways have been subsidized by the government with the understanding that at a certain period they will become government property. Denmark owns and controls three-fourths of the total mileage of her railways. Egypt owns and operates its railways. In France the railways are ultimately to become the property of the government. They have a mixed system of state and private ownerships. Ninety per cent of the railway mileage of Germany is owned by the government. In England, by the act of 1844, it was provided that the government should have the right to acquire any railroad constructed with its aid, of purchasing the same for a sum equal to twenty-five years of annual divisible profits estimated on the annual profits for three years preceding the date of purchase. A part of the railways of Greece are owned by the government. Guatemala owns and operates a part of her railway system. Holland owns one-half of her system. Two-thirds of the railways of India belong to the government.

In Mexico the charters granted to all railways contain a provision by which all shall revert to the government in fifty years from the date of the charter.

The roads of Nicaragua are owned by the government. Norway's railways are owned by the government and so are Paraguay's. Thirty-eight per cent of the mileage of Portugal is owned by the government, and the laws provide that all railways shall revert to the government in 99 years. In Russia the government owns and operates 40 per cent of the mileage. The railway mileage of Turkey belongs to private companies, but Turkey is the sick man.

The municipal ownership of street railways has proved successful in many instances. The latest success has been achieved in Glasgow. It was in July, 1894, that the city declared its independence of the companies that leased its lines. Mr. B. O. Flower says in the New Time that the inception of the venture was looked upon with some doubt. He narrates the circumstances which led up to it as follows:

"The lease would probably have been renewed if the company had treated its servants with greater consideration. About six winters' long hours and low wages led the men to strike, and before the struggle was over a strong body of public opinion was created in favor of municipalizing the tram traffic at the first opportunity.

"The city extended its lines, reduced fares, and the returns have fully justified the course that was taken. From July, 1894, to June, 1896, the city cleared over \$100,000 above all expenses. For the succeeding year the amount earned above expenses was more than \$400,000. As it is now the employees are better treated, the fares are greatly reduced, the service has been wonderfully improved, the lines have been extended, and the public has been benefited prodigiously by the change. Glasgow has certainly accomplished great things, and her example could be followed with profit by other cities."

## EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Nothing definite has been heard from Secretary of the Treasury Gage since Samuel Gompers, cigarmaker, published his letter on the evils of the gold standard as advocated by Mr. Gage and his silent partner, Mr. McKinley.

Of course, Tammany and other New York and New England political influences will do what they can to defeat the will of the people. Few are now simple enough to put any trust in politicians; especially New York politicians.

Practically all of the existing daily newspapers are plutocratic organs. Therefore, the Loud bill, which, among other notorious objects, is designed to prevent the establishment of new daily

newspapers, is certainly a measure which will serve the interests of plutocracy. Let us see how many so-called free silver senators vote for it.

"Imperative mandate" means that when executive and judicial officials are unfaithful to their trusts they may be removed by a popular vote.

We are not suffering from acute business depression. It has become chronic.

The Nebraska State Journal, plutocratic, says, editorially: "Every psychologist knows that when you employ a man in resultless labor, you destroy within him all ambition and hope and make him a wretched slave. It is not necessary to cite particulars, for the proposition has been scientifically demonstrated." Perfectly true. Yet the whole influence of the Journal is on the side of a social system in which the trusts and monopolies absorb the lion's share of all wealth produced, and in which the masses will be condemned to resultless labor.

All the land between London and Liverpool—a distance of 200 miles—legally belongs to six men, whose only claim to it is that they are the oldest sons of their fathers.—Commonwealth. The same men own still more land in the United States, and the sons and daughters of a great many Americans will work for the benefit of their oldest sons.

Organized labor is waking up. President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor wired the following to the Rocky Mountain News: "The plans for our political action in the interest of labor are only in a tentative state at present. The American Federation of Labor proposes, however, to take such political action as will compel the lawmakers, the executives and the judiciary to enact, to enforce and to define laws in the interest of our people. We shall elect our own representatives wherever possible, and at all times defeat the enemies of our cause irrespective of party. To achieve these purposes, however, we realize that it is necessary for the workers of our country, east, west, north and south, to unite and concentrate our entire efforts to attain the greatest success." And one of their cardinal principles, it should be remembered, is free coinage. Further than this, the platform of the American Federation of Labor is practically the same as the People's party platform.

The President says: "I speak not of forcible annexation (of Hawaii), for that cannot be thought of," but of those "who come of their own free will to merge their destinies in our body politic." Now it has been proved that only two per cent of the adults of Hawaii are permitted to vote, and not all of these are for annexation. No test by direct vote has ever been talked about, but so far as can be known, an annexation proposition voted upon by all adult white and Hawaiian males would be "snowed under." On the other hand annexation would probably carry by about ten to one in Cuba; but no one connected with this administration speaks up for Cuba.

Corporations do not pay high wages simply because they are able to. In Detroit street car employes can get 25 cents per hour with three-cent car fares, and in Cleveland 21 cents an hour with five-cent fares.

In an article in the North American Review for December, Robert P. Porter recommends that the Home and Farm inquiry be excluded from the census report of 1900. His excuse for so doing is that it will cost \$1,500,000. While it may be expensive, it is money well spent. The report on homes and farms, in the census of 1890 has been the means of educating the people on the real condition of the masses. This is the real reason why an attempt will be made to exclude it from the next report. The expense plea is simply a dodge. A bill to make the census department permanent will be introduced in this session of Congress. All voters should write to their senators and representatives requesting them to see that the Home and Farm inquiry is included in the list.

The backwoods philosopher, Big Eddy, says: "It is enough to discourage a man engaged in the production of the necessities of life to see the gang he has to provide for, who are no use to themselves or any one else. I am going to quit. If I ever produce any more grub I'll be blessed if I don't eat it."

The Highly Beneficial Surplus. The gold reserve in the treasury is at high water mark, whereas there is rejoicing among a certain set of people. I am one of them, says the editor of the Appeal to Reason. I like to see the country drained of all its gold and other money and have it held in the national treasury. This helps the corner on money. If we could somehow get all the gold in the national treasury so there would be none at all in the channels of trade what a good thing it would be! There is so much money floating around now that it is practically worthless.

## LIKE HEROD OF OLD.

### IMPERIALISM REIGNS AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

The Hosts of Plutocracy Make High Jinks at the Expense of the People—What the Ladies Wore—A National Disgrace.

The capital is itself again. Our Republican court has cast aside the trappings and the suits of woe and appears in sables. Let the devil wear black! as the Prince of Denmark explained. Mourning after the manner of royal courts is at an end. Our mighty chief magistrate agrees with the prince's mother—"but to persevere in obstinate condolence is a course of impious stubbornness." Shine out, fair sun! On with the dance!

It was a great function, the first of the McKinleys' high jinks, the gayety that banished official mourning. It was resplendent. Were there sighs in Cuba? They were not heard in the heavily perfumed salons of the executive mansion. Were cotton operatives suffering in New England? Let them eat cake if they cannot get bread. It was a time for brocades and satins, not for prints, and it signaled prosperity. There was no Jeffersonian simplicity. The scene was one of more than imperial splendor. The vulgar herd was excluded. None but our "best people" were permitted to bask in the bright effulgence of the sun of Canton. But yesterday that demigod was in the hands of a receiver, so to speak. He couldn't meet his obligations and a local newspaper was crying aloud for a popular subscription in his behalf. But Hanna's broad shoulder was put to the wheel and the stalled McKinley was, like Richard, himself again.

The Marine band, erstwhile by government command at a horse show, burst into triumphant strains as the presidential party, whose coming was announced by a bugle call and preceded by two flunkies in the uniform of United States officers, entered the reception room. The period of mourning was over—of financial mourning particularly. The "first lady of the land," we are assured by administration Jenkins, wore a dream of a gown, the lace vest of which sparkled with diamonds. What a blissful change from the day when the major couldn't meet his notes!

Jenkins advises us also that it was the most brilliant reception ever held in the White House. We may readily believe the assertion from a description of the gowns. The terms may not be intelligible, but the impression is therefore all the more dazzling. For instance: "Mrs. Hobart's gown was worthy of a queen's drawing room. It was of white bengaline, trimmed about the skirt with white ostrich tips, sigrets of which ran from the left side at the waist line across the front to the hem. A splendid aigret sparkling with diamonds ornamented the left breast of the low-neck corsage, while a diamond star fastened the aigret on her head. A double necklace of strands of immense solitaires and pearl completed the costume. She carried a white ostrich feather fan."

And the treasury was there: "Mrs. Gage wore a splendid directoire kown of cerise velvet that made her look as though she had just stepped out of a painting. Down the left side from the waist was a wall of Troy design in brilliants, each section fastened with a sparkling buckle of brilliants. The ostrich tip aigrets on the left breast and in the hair were fastened with a diamond star. A necklace of diamonds completed the costume."

And for those citizens of America who fancy this sort of thing what happens in the assurance conveyed by Mark Hanna's recent dispatch, omitting the audacious and egotistical blasphemy, "The Republican party still lives!"

## POINTS FROM THE PRESS.

Tell us the difference between Cleveland's hard time and panics and McKinley's prosperity and reduction in wages.—Silver Knight-Watchman.

Suicides occur among a people who do not have fireinsides oftener than anywhere else, or under all circumstances. It is seldom that the occupant of a good home, who feels there is no claim upon it, commits suicide. A home is a place to quiet nerves; it is next to heaven in its influence.—Colusa Sun.

The most troublesome problem before the country now is that of the unemployed. Roving bands of idle men are moving about from place to place preying on their fellows because they have nothing of their own and to use. Despair and pauperism are growing, burglary is frequent, larceny is common, and men and women who once had no need to take thought of the morrow are now driven by want into dissipation and crime.—Topeka Advocate.

The work of devastating and almost exterminating the forests of the United States goes on at a rate so rapid that the young men of the country will have

to see the end. Under such circumstances, it would be a better policy to offer a bounty for the importation of Canadian lumber than to shut it out altogether with a prohibitory tariff.—Volo Democrat.

It is beginning to dawn upon Mark Hanna that he is not the "whole thing;" that "there are others."—Grand Rapids Chronicle.

In 1894 the Department of the Interior paid the Bell Telephone Company an average (including salary of woman operator) of \$75 to each phone. The department put in a system of its own, 140 lines connecting scattered buildings in Washington, and the cost to the department now (including extra electrician and help) is only \$10.25 per phone. Still the capitalists tell us there is no economy in public ownership.—Social Democrat.

The percentage of bank failures to all banks was 1.06 in 1896, before "confidence" was restored and in the absence of "General Prosperity," but after "confidence" and "General Prosperity" were fairly installed in 1897 the percentage increased to 1.25.—San Francisco Star.

Gage has not ventured an answer to Gompers. We are curious to see what reply he can make to the strong argument of Gompers. Of course it would be simply predictions and empty phrases about "sound money," "safe currency," "national honor," etc. However, let us have a response.—Silver Knight-Watchman.

Money cannot buy honor in the administration of public affairs as long as the administration of public affairs is for the secure division of the dishonestly gotten spoils of labor.—The People.

The results which the senatorial election in Ohio has thus far had, inspire the belief in certain minds that popular election of members of the upper house of Congress will be hastened thereby. Our own opinion is quite the contrary. The debauchery and corruption inseparable from the present system of choosing United States senators merely recommend it to the exploiters of the people. The men who run our political machines know that as long as the present senatorial election system prevails they can hope to retain control of the senate. Allow the people to elect the senators and there is a possibility that men of the Hanna type may be defeated. Consequently, the flunkies and the corporations will insist upon the maintenance of things as they are. The more corrupt and debasing an institution is, the more likely it is to survive among us.—Twentieth Century.

It is also objected that a certain class will not work. If given an opportunity, but we believe that there are few indeed who will not do enough work to earn food and shelter; and we at least do our part when we give the opportunity. Governor Pingree's experiment in Detroit certainly proves that a very great percentage of the unemployed will seize hold of the offer to work for food. The strongest point the governor made was that it made independent men and women of them.—Colusa Sun.

Lucinda B. Chandler says: "Oh, for an impulse that shall revive the spirit of '76, that shall renew and strengthen our loyalty to the principles which, in the Declaration of Independence, were made the germ of our national existence." We have it, Lucinda. It has come in the shape of injunctions.—Peoria Labor Gazette.

## An Australian Experiment.

Premier Reid, of New South Wales, Australia, did not favor the partial adoption of the single tax in that state, but he now speaks very heartily in its favor and is in favor of its future extension. He says there are 124,000 land-owners, of which 88,000 pay no land tax at all, and the remainder paid \$1,300,000 last year, which they were exceedingly able to do, and will pay more hereafter. This \$1,300,000 is equal to \$1 per capita of all the people, but is \$35 per capita for the large land-holders, or holders of valuable lands, the owners of ordinary farms and homes coming within the exemption. In this way it has virtually the effects of a graduated income tax, but is more cheaply and certainly collected than an income tax, and no part of it is shifted to labor.—Topeka Advocate.

## Humbag of Free Seed.

This ridiculous extravagance has gradually enlarged itself from a modest beginning until it now represents an expenditure of \$130,000, that being the sum called for in the agricultural bill before the present congress. There is as much reason why the government should furnish farmers with their agricultural implements or their domestic animals as there is for this free distribution of seeds. We know of nothing in the written or unwritten law of the land which suggests, even indirectly, such a custom. It is paternalism in its most vicious and demoralizing form.

## HANNA PROSPERITY.

### FACTS FROM A WEEK'S NEWS-PAPER FILES.

This Is Another Hard Winter—Reductions of Wages Together with Increased Prices for Goods Show That the Trusts Are Supreme.

Do you hear the children weeping, O my brothers, Ere the sorrow comes with years? They are leaning their young heads against their mothers And that cannot stop their tears.

The lambs are bleating in the meadows; The birds are chirping in the nest, The fawns are playing in the shadows, The flowers are blooming toward the west—

But the young, young children, O, my brothers, They are weeping bitterly, They are weeping in the playtime of the others, In the country of the free. —Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Overseer Schmidt, of Davenport, Ia., had a Christmas celebration for poor children to whom Santa Claus is indeed a myth. He figured on entertaining 200 children, or so; about 600 came, and the result was that hundreds had to go away with practically nothing.

Owing to the increase of child labor in New York state, the percentage of children attending the public schools has fallen from 76.5 of the school population in 1851 to 57.8 in 1891.

The annual death roll in the United States is 800,000 persons, of whom 500,000 are children under 5 years of age, the high death rate among the children being due, physicians say, to lack of proper nourishment, clothing, shelter, etc.

Last year, in New York city alone, nearly 2,000 babies were found in ash-barrels, areaways, vaults, etc.

The wholesale reductions in wages that so started the mill hands throughout New England last month continue without any abatement. In Maine it is estimated that no less than 20,000 operatives will be affected by the reductions, which in most cases amount to 10 per cent, and in one case affecting 2,000 men near Lewiston, reach 15 per cent. Mr. Dingley, of tariff bill fame, is largely interested in mills in Maine and he is uttering the usual platitudes about currency agitation. Throughout Massachusetts the wage reductions are going steadily on and, although the men are very much inclined to protest, they recognize that they have little to do but submit.

The steel trust has advanced the price of steel structural material one dollar a ton. It also reduced wages a month ago 10 per cent. But reductions in wages are usually accompanied by rises in price. Thus the department stores of our large cities are warning their customers that prices are steadily rising and that purchasers ought to hasten to buy now in order to save money. That great and good man, John Wanamaker, continually warns the public, in his flaring advertisements, that the prices of textile goods are on the rise and that they will be on the rise for a good while to come. But, at the same time, we hear of nothing but 10 and 15 per cent reductions in wages in the textile mills of New England. There is a profound inconsistency in this situation. Why should wages go down if the prices of the products of labor are mounting skyward?

The answer to the riddle is that prices are increasing only in those lines of goods the manufacture of which is controlled by trusts, and which the new tariff has given a monopoly of the home market. These same trusts, while raising the price of their goods, can reduce wages because of the great surplus of labor seeking employment. This army of idle men would not exist if farm products were selling at prices to enable the farmers to consume a normal amount of manufactured goods. The single gold standard causes a world-wide reduction in prices of farm products; American farmers are, therefore, compelled to restrict their consumption on manufactured goods; this throws vast numbers of people out of work; but the tariff and trust trick enables the millionaire to actually raise the prices of their products, in the face of the general fall of prices, and at the same time to reduce wages. This is the necessary result of McKinleyism.

A correspondent who has made a personal investigation of the state of the principal industry of Danbury, Conn., the hat trade, finds it greatly misrepresented by a Danbury paper. He says:

"Without attempting more than the briefest notice of these deceptive reports, it will not be difficult to show to the dullest mind that some one has been telling what is not true. For ex-

ample, we are told that one hating firm are doing their usual amount of business, but we are NOT told that their shop is only running FOUR days a week, and that the prices paid for labor preclude their help making living wages. Then, according to the report of this concern, their chief business seems to consist in futures, prospects, speculations and hopes of the highly inflated order.

"Another concern is reported as having duplicate orders, and with prospects all right for a busy winter trade. Yet we are informed that since this report was published the concern has been shut down for THREE WEEKS. One firm report themselves as catering for something, establishing agencies and employing agents, but their help report business at this place as 'duller at the present time than for three or four years past.' Another firm, reported as having a very good season, are at this writing shut down 'as tight as a drum.' Still another concern said to have been busy all the fall and still busy on certain lines, are reported as paying such miserably low prices that their hat-makers cannot get more than SIX dollars a week out of it. Then the working hatters complain that prices have been cut so that it is almost impossible to exist on the wages they receive, and when questioned about the business repeat the stereotyped expression, 'Hating is no good.' This frequently heard expression accentuates the fact that a large number of working hatters and others are in sore straits."

## SAYINGS OF THE WISE.

The time is ripe, and rotten-ripe, for change; Then let it come; I have no dread of what Is called for by the instinct of mankind; Nor think I that God's world will fall apart Because we tear a parchment more or less. —James Russell Lowell.

Polluting the flag is a thousand times worse than pulling it down.—Altgeld.

In every country the nation is in the cottage, and if the light of your legislation does not shine in there, your statesmanship is a failure and your system is a mistake.—Canon Farrar.

Judges are but men, and in all ages have shown a fair share of frailty. Alas! alas! the worst crimes of history have been perpetrated under their sanction. The blood of martyrs and of patriots, crying from the ground, summons them to judgment.—Charles Sumner.

Man-made statutes are valid only so far as they conform to the law of nature. Equal freedom is impossible if privileges are made legal. Where privilege is, there democracy cannot be. The only mission of democracy is to abolish privilege and restore freedom.—C. J. Buell.

The Irish famine was not a true famine arising from scarcity of food. It was what an English writer styled the Indian famine—a "financial famine," arising not from scarcity of food, but from the poverty of the people.—Henry George.

So long as people refuse to think, so long as they chuckle in selfish glee when they see "the other fellow" burdened the same as themselves, or possibly a little heavier, so long as they do not strive for an understanding of first principles of taxation and good government, just so long do they deserve to suffer under the iron heels of their masters, the politicians.—John W. Etzel.

## The Heritage of All.

Thus saith the Lord: "You weary Me! With prayers, and waste your own short years! Eternal truth you cannot see Who weep and shed your sight in tears; In vain you wait and watch the skies— No better fortune thus will fall! Upon your knees, I bid you rise, And claim the earth for all. "Behold in bonds your mother earth, The rich man's prostitute and slave; Your mother earth, that gave you birth, You only own her for a grave; And you will die like slaves and see Your mother left a fettered thrall! Nay! live like men and set her free As heritage for all!" —Gerald Massey.

## When the World Grows Fair.

I tell you this for a wonder, that no man shall then be glad Of his fellow's fall and mishap to snatch at the work he had Then all mine and all thine shall be ours, and no more shall any man crave For riches that serve for nothing but to fetter a friend for a slave. For all these shall be ours and all men's, nor shall any lack a share Of the toil and the gain of living in the days when the world grows fair. —William Morris.