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PORTLAND, SATURDAY, MAY 20, 1905.

THE PRESIDENT UNDER FIRE.

That President Roosevelt should need defense in the court of public opinion of the American people seems absurd. Yet so it is.

If there is a man who says what he means, in the clearest words, and unmistakably means what he says, all know that the President is that man. In the Denver speech he made formal declaration of policy regarding the Interstate Commerce Commission and the rate-fixing power. His exact words follow:

"While I am of the opinion that if it were not for the fact that the commission has been given authority to fix railroad rates, I do believe that, as far as security to shippers, the commission should be vested with the power, where a given rate has been challenged and after due hearing found to be unreasonable, to decide, and shall be reasonable rate to take its place; the ruling of the commission to take effect immediately and to stand unless and until it is reversed by the court of review."

The railroads strongly object, one and all, to any authority being set over them in this relation, claiming, with one voice, entire discretion, governed only by such competition as they may be able to get rid of in advance. The President claims that the Nation has the right, and should enforce it—not to establish rates over the 25,000 miles of railroad in the United States, but to hear complaints, through a delegated body of competent men, so to determine whether or not such complaints are well grounded, and then to put in force a corrected schedule, until if the railroad appeals against it, the special court had passed on and decided the question.

And this programme, limited by the President, as his words prove, to the redress of specific grievances, is twisted by a spokesman after another before the Senate committee, into a proposal to bestow on the Commission the power and duty of making rates for all railroads, to be general, compulsory, and immediately effective.

If but one witness before the committee had been guilty of this trick (no other word fits the case), it might be passed with a smile. No fair Judge, in any court of the land, would suffer witness or counsel so to misrepresent the other side. Were such perversions repeated, until it became evident that on a defense was based, stern rebuke would follow. How is it that while, day by day, one railroad spokesman after another circulates this stigma on the President's good sense before this committee, no one is heard to correct the false impression? If such a good deed is ever done, it must be done in secret and the doer blushes to find it fame, for nothing of it passes out through wire or letter to the world at large. So the word goes out that what the railroads are striving to prevent is an interference with current business which no one—certainly not the President—has even had in mind. They must be desperately afraid of the real thing, that they should try to substitute for it in the mind of the committee first, and of the public afterwards, this bugbear, this scarecrow, this perversion of a policy. Tactics of this variety are bound to fail; that is the consolation. But the scandal will recoil on its promoters, and establish more firmly the deliberate purpose conveyed in the Denver speech.

The people, the plain people, who are the ultimate tribunals, have about decided that the commission for bearing complaints of specific rates, of determining the justice of the complaint, and putting amended rates in force until the court shall otherwise decide, shall become an established fact. "Would it not be bad," said the English commentator to old George Stephenson, "if a cow got in the way of this train of yours?" "Yes," said the witness, "ever bad—for the cow."

Portland exporters yesterday cleared more than 10,000 tons of flour and wheat for the Orient on two steamers which will sail today. One of these vessels carried a full cargo of 5,000 tons of flour and 650 tons of wheat, while the other carried something over 4,000 tons of flour. Four-fifths of the entire cargo

shipped on the two vessels originated in territory adjacent to Portland, and this is about the usual ratio of local cargo as compared with the overland freight supplied by the railroads. The showing is in a degree a good one for the port, but were the railroads inclined to route a small portion of their overland freight to Portland instead of sending practically all of it to San Francisco or Puget Sound, our shippers could enjoy a much more frequent service and could accordingly sell more flour and grain, the shipment of which is now hampered by the infrequent sailings.

THE DEMOCRATIC PLAN.

The real purpose of the so-called "citizens' ticket" is to beat the Republican ticket and thus throw the city into the hands of the Democrats. Its cry for "good government" is bogus. It cares very little about good government, and everything for the offices. An excellent illustration of the fraud of its claim that it stands for purity and reform is its conspicuous failure to place Thomas C. Devlin on its ticket for City Auditor. Mr. Devlin is universally conceded to be a competent and honest official. He was the unanimous choice of the Republican party in the late primary. His personal strength and fitness were understood by the Democrats, who put up no one against him—not that they would not have desired to fill his office with a Democrat, but because no Democrat thought it worth while to run against Mr. Devlin. But the "citizens," under the able guidance of the Democratic campaign committee, have found a candidate and they have put him on the ticket. They hope to defeat Auditor Devlin. They want to have an administration, if they can get it, in entire harmony with Candidate Lane. If he shall be elected, they want to turn all the "racists" out; and all are "racists" because they are Republicans.

If Dr. Lane shall be elected, we shall have in Oregon a Democratic Governor, in Multnomah County, a Democratic Prosecuting Attorney and Democratic Sheriff, and in Portland a Democratic Mayor. A powerful Democratic machine will have been formed whose purpose will be to rehabilitate the party, place it in position to re-elect the Democratic Governor and control indefinitely the important offices of city and state. It is a very excellent scheme, from the Democratic viewpoint.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION.

Wide as the importance of the Lewis and Clark Exposition is conceded to be, there is yet a wider meaning to the part the United States Government is assuming in the undertaking. Currently with the systems of irrigation and forest conservation and protection now under way in the Northwest comes a decisive step in the improvement of the Columbia River that is to be followed by definite shaping of that waterway into a permanent highway of commerce. These concessions are not in as large a degree the result of strong representation on the part of the people as they are of realization on the part of the Government of the vast resources and future importance of the Northwest as an integral part of the National domain.

The social status, whether of races or individuals, cannot be fixed by act of Congress, nor by force in any direction, or from any source. An attempt to do this can only result in unnecessary humiliation and certain failure. In the Frazier decision colored persons were not discriminated against, though the plaintiff in the case is a colored man. It was made to cover all persons, for any reason undesirable, or whom the manager of a theater does not wish to have seated in his house or in special sections thereof. But it is sufficiently specific to give colored persons a hint that, if taken in a friendly spirit, will protect them from annoyance and discomfiture upon this score in the future.

The body of the theater is a pretty good place from which to witness a play. There are very many people who are excluded from the boxes of the playhouse for a financial reason—as inscrutable a reason as any other. These would only draw attention to their inability to meet the requirements of the house by attempting to override the disability that they cannot remove. As before said, the decision of Judge Frazer in this case is probably good law; it is clearly good sense.

HEAVY EMIGRANT TRAFFIC.

Immigrants are still pouring into the United States from the various European countries in record-breaking numbers, and the capacity of some of the German liners is taxed to handle the crowds. The number of passengers carried on a single trip of these liners is sufficient to populate a city; several of the steamers arriving since January 1 carrying more than 3,000 people. This emigrant traffic undoubtedly cuts quite an important figure in the revenues of the steamers engaged in the trans-Atlantic trade. In the annual report of the Hamburg-American line, as well as a number of other German lines, special mention is made of this business, and not a small portion of the credit for the proportions it has attained is due to the energetic rustling of the steamship companies.

Their efforts have been rewarded by the fact that the Hamburg-American line, which last year carried more emigrant passengers than were carried by any other line, has declared a dividend of 5 per cent on a capital of \$25,000,000, compared with 6 per cent for the previous year. This excellent financial showing was made without the aid of a subsidy, the big German line long ago abandoning the subsidy plan as unsatisfactory and detrimental to its best interests. That a German line without a subsidy can pay such handsome profits, while there is continual complaint that an American line in a similar un-subsidized condition cannot be made to pay, is due to conditions which cannot be remedied by a subsidy, and the emigrant trade is one of these conditions. The emigrant travel from the United States to Europe is of inconsequential proportions compared with that which originates in Europe and comes to this country.

It is quite natural that the steamship companies owned and operated in and from the countries where this traffic originates should have the first call on the business. There is no method by which an American steamship, subsidized or un-subsidized, could make inroads of consequence on this traffic, which is proving such an important factor in swelling the profits of the German companies. With the German railroads under government control and forming trade alliances and connections with those of adjoining countries, it is but natural that all of the passenger traffic originating in the country should be turned over to the German steamship lines. For the same reason, what little traffic of this kind there is returning from the United States is handled by the lines which center nearest the point for which that traffic is bound.

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The black rust, red rust, Hessian fly, chinch bug, woolly aphids and other pests failed to destroy all of the growing wheat in the United States Thursday, and as a result the market, which soared to dizzy heights on damage reports, came down with a crash yesterday. The conditions in the wheat market have been so abnormal throughout the season that it is difficult to predict what the outcome will be when the old season trails over into the new. Nothing but hysterical speculation, however, can keep up a crop scare which will advance prices 3 cents per bushel in a few hours at a time when Spring seeding is not yet completed. With Armour and Gates alternating with the shears, the lambs who venture into the Chicago wheat market under present conditions are more certain than ever to come out with their fleece abbreviated.

An unnatural father has been convicted upon his own admission of guilt before the Circuit Court in Roseburg, of a most abhorrent crime, the victim being his 15-year-old daughter. Some years ago Judge Hanna, of the Southern Oregon district, sentenced a man convicted of a similar crime to thirty years in the Penitentiary. The sentence was a just one, and it is hoped was not abridged by pardon. A human creature so destitute of all moral sense is a menace to the community, and should spend his life in prison. It will be well if the man recently convicted at Roseburg can be given a term of imprisonment that will cover at least the greater part of his remaining years.

No greater civic outrage has ever been committed in this state than that of Philadelphia's giving a seventy-five-year monopoly to a gas company. The limit of unjust taxation was reached when the City Council fixed the price of gas for the coming half-century. In these times of startling discovery and invention, who dare say that, twenty years hence, gas cannot be made for 25 cents a thousand, of as good quality as is sold today for \$1? Never before has gas figured so largely in city domestic life. It may be that five years hence it will serve as the exclusive kitchen fuel. To empower a corrupt corporation to rob posterity is such an act as justifies open rebellion.

Secretary Taft seems to have "backed water" on his determination to purchase where they could be secured cheapest the vessels needed in connection with the Panama Canal work. It is now stated that the Canal Commission will charter such ships as will be added to the fleet until Congress has an opportunity to pass on the matter. This will be very cheering news to the ship-subsidy seekers, who have so persistently fought this common-sense method of impressing our merchant marine, but, even with this newly created necessity for American ships, it is doubtful about the subsidy bill becoming a law.

The social status, whether of races or individuals, cannot be fixed by act of Congress, nor by force in any direction, or from any source. An attempt to do this can only result in unnecessary humiliation and certain failure. In the Frazier decision colored persons were not discriminated against, though the plaintiff in the case is a colored man. It was made to cover all persons, for any reason undesirable, or whom the manager of a theater does not wish to have seated in his house or in special sections thereof. But it is sufficiently specific to give colored persons a hint that, if taken in a friendly spirit, will protect them from annoyance and discomfiture upon this score in the future.

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Both Togo and Rojstvensky seem to be amply provided with press agents, the same as Mitchell and Sullivan, still the great American public wants less talk and more fight.

President Shea thinks the Chicago strike has not been settled, because he hasn't settled it. But all the same the end is plainly in sight. It is settling itself.

For an American-line to get into this

profitable trade at all it would be necessary for it to cut rates, which are already so low that the expensive built and operated American ship would find them far less profitable than they are for the Germans. An American subsidy in this case, were it granted, would be merely payment of money out of the American Treasury in order that the foreigner could come to this country on a cut-rate ticket. This, at a time when it is not at all clear that it would not be to our advantage to have an immigrant passenger tariff so high that the volume of business would be reduced.

The unsubsidized German lines have other advantages besides a good firm grip on the emigrant business. These have all been mentioned in detail below.

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