

Current Opinions on Live Topics

The Cost of a Boy.

(Chicago Tribune.)
In no way embarrassed or discouraged by a socialistic utterance in America setting it forth as a fact that it costs \$25,000 to bring up an American boy "of the middle class," English statisticians have seen this estimate and gone it \$500 better. They have taken the boy "with a liberal education" and have calculated his expenses from the nursery to and through Eton and Oxford, with allowance for travel and finishing touches, and thus arrive at the figures suggested. It is an interesting compilation, the accuracy of which it may be left for the English themselves to impeach.

As for the total amount in the American calculation, it is one of these wild and futile attempts at figures which at the best may be looked at compassionately. In the first place, the expression "middle class" has no general significance in the United States. If it is used at all it has intelligible reference only to financial rating and is more sympathetically expressed by allusions to persons "in comfortable circumstances." It is possible that the socialistic orator referred to in a general way to a majority of fathers who give or try to give their sons a college education, and it must be assumed that he was not speaking of isolated but of average cases. Presumably the years of a young man's college or university course are the most taxing on a father, yet the statistics of the University of Chicago show that expenses for the college year run from an average estimate of \$396 to a liberal estimate of \$655, while the moderate estimate at Harvard is \$454 and the liberal estimate \$569.

It is not contended that there are not a number of young men who do not greatly exceed this estimate, but this has nothing to do with the question at issue. The point is that there is no requirement for the expenditure of \$25,000 to bring up a boy until he is of lawful age, and furthermore that a vast majority of boys whose fathers are in comfortable circumstances, or "middle class," if the expression is preferred, do not approach such disbursement. It is manifestly unfair to take a group of young fellows either at Chicago or at Cambridge, students who spend money riotously, and deduce from their profligacy what it "costs" to send a boy to college. It is equally unjust to advance as an average of "total cost of bringing up a boy of the middle class" the sum expended by a father of wealth and corresponding indulgence.

The trouble with many statisticians, socialistic and otherwise, is that they build their general conclusions on special conditions. It is altogether likely that the "actual case" in England will excite laughter among the many middle class boys who have never seen "the subscription for a London club" and the "\$500 yearly traveling and holiday expenses" even in their wildest dreams. Making figures is a pleasant and easy diversion, particularly on the stump and to vindicate a theory, but figures which go against all known averages are not to be accepted seriously or as proof of honest intent in calculation. The American boy may well feel that he has obtained the name without the game.

Postal Savings Bank.

(Boise Statesman.)
Postmaster General Meyer is planning to recommend the creation of a postal savings bank system. That system has been established in most European countries and has proved a success. Therefore it seems certain it would be a success here. The public mind is prepared for the establishment of such a savings system and the postmaster general will strike at an opportune time if he makes such a recommendation at the forthcoming session of congress.

Mr. Meyer, through his residence abroad, has had an opportunity to study the workings of the postal savings banks there, and he no doubt understands the subject far better than most of our public men. His recommendation will therefore have peculiar weight, and it is probable it will meet with such popular approval that congress will be obliged to give it serious consideration.

The postal savings bank would be of great benefit to our people cannot be successfully questioned. Such a system affords an easy method of depositing savings, and the depositor has the assurance that they are absolutely safe. He receives interest and is able to build up the foundation of fortune without incurring the risk incident to financial flurries and panics.

The poor man can lay up something for an emergency with full confidence that his money will be ready for him when he may need it, and persons of moderate means will find the system a great convenience. No money is safe from being spent so long as it is in the pocket of the owner, but when it gets into a bank of any kind it is far less likely to melt away. This is especially true with respect to savings banks. There the money earns interest, and the owner is not likely to draw it out unless it becomes absolutely necessary.

But only a small portion of our

people have an opportunity to make regular deposits in ordinary savings banks, while a very large proportion of them hesitate about doing so when they have an opportunity because they do not always feel that their money would be safe. In a postal savings bank there would be absolute confidence and it would cultivate the savings habit among the people in a manner that would be of the highest benefit to the individual and to the country. It is safe to assume that the savings in a postal savings bank would exceed those in all private savings banks many times over after a few years. There would be so much more money saved by the people, and these increased savings would constitute a powerful factor in improving the condition of the people as a whole.

Never Was Honest.

(Boise Statesman.)
A statement has been issued by the Standard Oil company asserting its innocence of the charges upon which it has been convicted. The company makes itself foolish by such protestations. The world knows it has been a pirate for 30 years, and no amount of denial on its part will dislodge that knowledge.

It has never been honest in its dealings with the people. At the beginning of his career its president was not honest, and there has never been a moment since when it has not violated the statute law as well as the law of morals whenever it has found a favorable opportunity to do so.

At the very outset of his career as an oil man, Rockefeller bribed employees of other houses to make regular reports to him respecting the business of their employers. A more dishonest thing could not be conceived, but this man who now stands out as a financial magnate did not hesitate to employ such methods. He debased the railway companies when he founded the Standard, and up almost to the present hour his company has continued to employ the methods he then adopted, so far as the officials thought it could be done safely. The Standard has crushed competition and driven competitors into poverty by means that would be scorned by an ordinary huncno stealer, and yet it wishes now, when brought to book, that it is as innocent as a child.

People would think far better of Mr. Rockefeller and his company if they should frankly confess they have been law-breakers throughout their careers. If they are anxious to be thought honest, they should admit and ask pardon for what all the world knows and start out manfully to lead better lives. This whining,

this protestation of virtue, this appeal to public opinion upon false allegations—it is all revolting to the average mind. It shows just what abandoned characters they are.

A man with any conscience left would be willing to make frank admission and manly promise of reform upon being caught in his evil practices, or he would close his mouth and endeavor to keep out of the public eye. None but the hardened criminal brazenly protests his innocence and doggedly insists that he is wronged when the proofs of his guilt are spread before the world.

When Will Directors Meet?

(Pacific Banker.)
According to two of the Oregon Trust and Savings Bank directors it is a case of too much one man banking. They say that the cashier bought these bonds without any authority from the board of directors. This attempt to shift the responsibility will not stand and for two very good reasons. First by retaining the cashier in his position for months after the act complained of was done they ratified it; and if as is suggested they knew nothing of the bank's condition until a few days before it closed, their ignorance is criminal in its density. What are directors for? Had they no idea of the duty which they owed the depositors? They are business men. This plea of figurehead immunity will not be accepted in this day. If they didn't know, they should have known. They held themselves out to the world as knowing something about the bank's condition. Their names gave the bank a position it would not otherwise have possessed and they knew it, and the duty they owed the depositors was one of the most sacred that can be conceived.

The failure of this bank ought to be a marked lesson to every bank on this coast. In the first place it ought to hasten the day when directors will direct, when public opinion will force a sense of duty and obligation upon directors before they accept their positions.

And this failure shows, it seems to us, a marked weakness in all the state laws we have examined and in the National law as well, in that they do not provide for such a case as this. They limit the amount of loans that can be made to any one interest, but they do not limit the amount of other obligations which the bank can assume of any one interest, nor is any regulation whatever attempted of the purchases which a bank can make. Here is an inconsistency. A bank can loan to a company only a certain portion of the bank's capital. But it can purchase the bonds of that company without stint.

a well-versed official said, "we find that during the last few years syndicates simply have walked into the western states and laid their hands on the people's water power, acquiring without payment invaluable privileges; that they are in a fair way to command the industrial situation of the future; that they will soon be in a position to levy tribute on the people, utilizing as their chief asset the water which they took from the people, paying absolutely nothing therefor."

"Have not the states slept on their rights? Have not they sat idly by, witnessing the monopolization of the magnificent resources of the mountains and hills and have not they given away privileges which some time will be, even now, in places, worth countless millions?"

"If there seems to be aggression by the federal government as compared with the state governments, if there seems to be so-called encroachments by the federal on the state, is there room for wonderment? Shall the federal be derelict because the states have been? Shall the federal fail to preserve the rights of the nation because the states have been neglectful of the rights of the people of their commonwealths?"

"This is the trend of thought among many federal officials, some of whom are high up in the administration. As we study the relationship of the government lands to the individual, often we run up against lax conditions such as direct giving away of the people's property and we are expected to conform our policies to such unsatisfactory state policies, or rest under the imputation of federal usurpation."

"Presume some man were to go, not to the state, but to that appropriator of water, and say, 'I take forth 50,000 of your 100,000 horsepower and, as compensation, will render to the public service in maintaining an industry.' Upon what would the title of the appropriator rest to resist the second appropriation? Certainly, title must rest on consideration. What consideration did the first man render for his 100,000 horsepower? It has come to the knowledge of certain federal officials that more than 500,000, perhaps 1,000,000, horsepower has been appropriated on the Pacific coast during the last five years. The power sites have been located by the syndicates at advantageous places, commanding industry and street car lines in most of the larger cities. Previously immense numbers of units of power had been appropriated similarly. Syndicates Take People's Water. "As we have looked into this phase of the utilization of water and land,"

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STATES HAVE BEEN LAX

Syndicates Have Grasped Falls in Western Cities For Private Gain Only.

Washington, Aug. 30.—In every state in which there is a national forest there is bound to arise the issue as to whether or not private corporations shall pay for the land privileges procured through the appropriation of water for power in the government forests. The subject is at this time not well developed, and the forest bureau refuses to be quoted in any respect. Privately, however, some of the officials discuss it, and the trend is towards holding that such corporations should pay something for the land privileges enjoyed.

Extensive inquiry among those officials who are regarded as more or less expert interpreters of the basic law involved, reveals the growing disposition to take advanced ground, much as municipal economists have marched forward to the dismay of those who have heretofore always appealed successfully to the courts on the ground of vested rights.

It is a fact familiar to all that the "vested rights" plea has been the harbor of safety for every franchise-favored corporation that ever was brought face to face with modernized demands for recognition of the popular rights. Street car companies, when asked to submit to municipal

regulation, control of fares, enforced increase of service in the form of more cars and extended lines, larger taxation, and other phases of the new franchise regime, have resorted to the courts, and the contention has been that it was "proposed to take away our property," as was argued last winter here in Washington, when the congress showed signs of adopting a law for "no seats, no fares."

People's Rights Come First.
But it has become one of the accepted doctrines of court interpretation in recent years that "vested rights" must give way partly to the rights of all the people, and, based on this doctrine, courts have swept away many of the bulwarks once utilized by the franchise corporation.

It is conceded that the rights of the people nowadays are more rigidly guarded than in former years, and this newer attitude augurs a change in conditions affecting the use by private corporations of water and land for power purposes.

The creation of national forests has not in the least affected the appropriation of water for power purposes by private corporations. As in the past, the corporation files on the water under the state laws, even although the water originates on federal government national forests.

The forester and his associates do not hold that this should be changed, recognizing in this instance the line of demarcation between federal and state rights.

It is likely, however, that before long some sort of change will be made for the land privileges given to private corporations who go on federal lands to appropriate water under state laws. It is to be expected that the officials of these corporations will howl long and loud and resist the fee-paying with all possible ardor. But it seems to be inevitable that in time they must yield and pay something for what they get now for nothing.

Claims Made to Falls.

Naturally, the study of this phase of national administration leads one across the line into the realm of the

commonwealth and it is discovered that a strange situation exists. A given fall of water, capable of developing say 100,000 horse power, lies contiguous to a growing city. Some one nails up a shingle on a tree on the land at the falls notifying the world that he has forthwith taken that power to be his own, and files it with the clerk of the county, paying \$2 for a horse to ride to the falls and 50 cents for filing the notice.

Henceforth, forever, that man or his assigns claims that 100,000 horse power for his own.

The question has arisen in the jurisprudence of the country. Does that man or his assigns really own that 100,000 horsepower? What has he rendered to the state for what he took without compensation?

It is argued by the lawyer for the appropriator of the water that he renders to the state the service of providing some public utility or develops some enterprise, employing men and paying wages and maintaining industry.

At this point comes in the newer philosopher and says:

"Presume some man were to go, not to the state, but to that appropriator of water, and say, 'I take forth 50,000 of your 100,000 horsepower and, as compensation, will render to the public service in maintaining an industry.'"

Upon what would the title of the appropriator rest to resist the second appropriation? Certainly, title must rest on consideration. What consideration did the first man render for his 100,000 horsepower?

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