

THE POSTAL SERVICES.

Some Interesting Facts Concerning the Expense of the System.

A three days debate in the house of representatives, which ended in tabling the postal bill (March 3), secured comparatively little attention in the daily press, but it brought out considerable information on alleged abuses by the railroads in connection with the postal service. The bill was vigorously attacked, and most effectually, it appears, not on the ground that the abuses at which it named should not be corrected, but on the ground that the real trouble in the postal service is to be found in exorbitant charges which the government pays to rail roads for transporting mail. Mr. Loud said, in presenting the bill, that if a private corporation or an individual were to operate the post office department, or if the department were to be operated by any one who had a financial interest in it, he would not fear even the present law. In the report of the post office committee, of which he is chairman, which accompanied the bill he expressed the opinion that private means could transmit the mails much more cheaply, with quicker dispatch and better satisfaction to the people, than the present system, adding: "There is not a sane business man in the country who has given the matter any thought but what knows that the post office department could be operated by private individuals on our present appropriations, and return a net profit of from thirty to forty million dollars per year." It was repeatedly asserted that while the government is paying about 8 cents a lb. for the transmission of mail matter, over an average distance of 448 miles, express companies have contracts with rail roads whereby they pay two fifths of a cent a pound for the transmission of similar matter a distance of 500 miles. The length of star routes is 265,558 miles; the annual travel is 154,123,416 miles; the cost for carrying for each mile traveled is 4.32 cents; annual cost per mile of length of route is \$20.19. Yet it will be observed that we are paying nearly nine times as much per mile for carrying the mails by rail as by other conveyance. Slightly over twice as many miles are traveled by railway as by other conveyance. But if the same rate per mile were paid for carrying the mails by rail way as by star route the annual expenditures to the railroads would be the sum of \$11,802,823.37, instead of \$30,171,542.69, which we now pay, and there would be a saving to the government of \$18,368,719.32. If this could be effected, the whole revenue question, so far as the post office department is concerned, would be settled, for there would be a surplus of over \$6,000,000 annually in the receipts of the department. One of the most serious elements in the exorbitant charges practiced upon the government relates to the rent of the postal cars used by the department where the mails are heavy. Of these cars there are now nearly seven hundred in use, and the government pays for an average rental of \$5,700 each. Yet when ex-Senator Vilas was post-master during Mr. Cleveland's first term he investigated the cost of such cars, and reported that they could be built for less than the annual rental paid by the government. "Careful inquiry," said Mr. Vilas in the United States senate, "discloses that very many of these cars, such as they are, would not cost to build \$3,000 each, and that, taking together all the post office cars in the United States, their value does not probably exceed \$3,500." In support of this estimate Senator Vilas cited Senator Brice, of Ohio, a railroad man whom no one ever suspected of anti-monopoly leanings. The average life of these cars, says representative Smith, of Michigan, is at least twenty years, so that an annual rental of \$700, or 20 per cent, upon the cost of these cars, would seem to be an exorbitant charge; yet the government goes on, year after year, paying the railroads an annual rental of \$5,700, or more than 150 per cent, of their probable cost. When a few of these cars were first tried as an experiment, this rental may not have been so preposterous, but these cars have become an established part of the postal system, and their number increases every year. The annual payment for them is now very nearly \$4,000,000. This outlay could, by the government's purchase of the cars, be reduced to far below \$1,000,000 a year. Postmaster-general Vilas recommended this course, and his recommendation has been before the country for years, commanding approval wherever it has studied, yet in the absence of a strenuous demand from the general public the abuse goes on unrectified.

It is reported that 20 per cent of the sheep in Lake county are afflicted with scab. The Dingley bill must have lost its grip on Lake county.

A Good Riddance.

A man hailing from Harrisburg, this state, and burdened with the un-euphonious name of Snodgrass, has written a letter to the Oregonian announcing the awfully solemn fact that he has withdrawn from the democratic party, and allied himself with the republicans. In his letter he goes out of his way to insult labor and scoff at religion. If his letter is a true index of the mental and moral calibre of the man, and we doubt not that it is, the democrats should feel grateful for his withdrawal. We want the co-operation of all liberty loving, fair minded men, but we do room for cranks and defamers. The man who will publicly revile and abuse the toilers and wage earners of this land is not eligible to a seat in the democratic party.

Republican papers are making fluttering comments on the patriotism of the New York Life insurance company in offering to loan the government ten million dollars to defray the expense of a war with Spain. Uncle Sam ought to be tickled almost to death for an opportunity to borrow money and pay interest in gold to this patriotic company. If the well fed members of this company have tumbled over each other in a mad rush to join the army or navy our attention has not been called to it.

Tom Reed will yet rival Ben Butler in sharp and pugent sayings: In commenting on the evasive and dilatory action of the administration in our complications with Spain, he describes it as "sixteen wobbles to one positive action."

Roseburg Plaindealer: "Up to the hour of going to press, we are unable to find any one who ever heard of H. Denlinger, Jr, said to be the fusion nominee for prosecuting attorney in this district."

Corvallis Mite: "The Plaindealer editor does not seem to realize that there are a few things worth knowing that he does not know. For his benefit we will say that H. Denlinger, Jr, is a worthy young attorney of Toledo, Lincoln county, and although probably not well known in the Plaindealer's narrow range of acquaintances, he has many friends in this part of the state. We are inclined to wonder if it is not to his credit that he is not too well acquainted with the Roseburg editor."

There is one thing we admire about our republican friends, it is their faith; and while this faith avails as little as did the courage of the bull when facing the locomotive, yet it is as sublime as the faith of the hindoo devotee. No mother ever clung to her wayward and dissolute son with more faith in his ultimate reform, than is exhibited by these disciples of the g. o. p. For years they have seen the good resolutions of their wayward party, formed at election time, broken when returned to power. Under its long misrule they have seen their homes pass into the hands of strangers and their sons compelled to seek employment in distant places. Year by year the national, municipal and private indebtedness has rolled up until the whole land most of the personal estate is covered by mortgage, yet they believe that some time in the far off future perhaps their reckless and criminally extravagant party will reform and do something for the long suffering people. Gentlemen we admire your faith but we can place no such estimate on your judgement. Implicit faith in a criminal son will encourage crime. Implicit faith in a party that usurps the liberties of the people grants further license to rob the people. The time has come when we should lay sentiment aside and all make a united effort to "turn the rascals out."

THE UNION STATE PLATFORM.

"United in a common cause for the sacred purpose of preserving the principles of government by the whole people, in fact as well as in name, restoring and maintaining equality, under that government, of all classes, we, the peoples, democratic and silver republican parties of the state of Oregon, waiving all points of difference, and uniting for the purpose of carrying out the great underlying principles, and to the carrying out of which we solemnly pledge each and every candidate upon our united ticket:

First—We demand the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1, without waiting for the consent of foreign nations, and we are unalterably opposed to the policy of the present republican administration in demanding the retirement of greenbacks, and the turning over of the money-making power of the government to the national banks, as presented by the bill drawn by the republican secretary of the treasury, and endorsed by President McKinley, and we especially denounce the avowed attempt by said bill to fasten the country irrevocably and forever to the single gold standard.

We demand a national money, safe and sound, issued by the general government only, without the intervention of banks of issue, to be a full legal tender for all debts, public and private; also a just, equitable and efficient means of distribution direct to the people through the lawful disbursements of the government.

We demand that the volume of circulating medium be speedily increased to an amount sufficient to meet the demands of the business and population of this country and to restore the just level of prices of labor and production.

We favor such legislation as will prevent for the future the demonetization of any kind of legal tender money by private contract.

We demand that the government, in payment of its obligations, shall use its option as to the kind of lawful money in which they are to be paid, and we denounce the present and preceding administrations for surrendering this option to the holders of government obligations.

We demand that there shall be no further issue of United States interest bearing bonds.

We demand that postal savings banks be established by the government for the safe deposit of the savings of the people and to facilitate exchange.

We demand the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people.

We demand the Initiative and Referendum system of law making in its optional form, local, state and national; and the submission by congress of all important national questions for an advisory vote of the people, until such time as the national constitution shall have been amended so as to provide for direct legislation.

We condemn as dangerous and unjust the surrender, in all the departments of the government, to the influence of trusts, corporations and aggregations of wealth generally; and the packing of the highest courts of the land with corporation lawyers, too ready to do the will of their late employers, and to set aside valid and wholesome laws passed by the states and government, upon flimsy pretexts, at the behests of such institutions.

We are opposed to government by injunction.

In state matters we demand: A simple and well guarded registration law.

A more equitable mode of appointing judges of election.

Stringent laws to regulate the operation of fish traps, fish wheels and all fishing gear in the waters within the jurisdiction of the state.

We denounce and condemn the corrupt and extravagant republican legislative assemblies and charge that the republican party, in its eagerness for the spoils of office, has become divided into warring factions, to that it is incapable of government, as exemplified by the condition existing in the office of the state treasurer, there being at this time more than a half million of dollars therein wrung from the people by the process of taxation, while state warrants are stamped "Not paid for want of funds."

We demand that all district and county officers be placed upon salaries commensurate with the duties to be performed by them.

Inasmuch as railroad and other corporate property is not bearing its proportion of taxation, we demand that such property shall bear its just and equal share of the expenses of government.

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C. E. HAWKINS,

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