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THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO FAIR SERVICE

IN GRANTING a public franchise to an individual or a corporation, whether by gift or sale, the people do not surrender their rights to exact from the holder of the franchise fair service. Fair service means adequate service at reasonable rates. Adequate service means the supply of the accommodation, whatever it may be, in an amount and of a kind sufficient to meet the demands of the community, and the extension of that accommodation so as to reach the community in the places of its needs. Reasonable rates, it is needless to say, will not be reached by the application of the principle of "all for the traffic will bear."

What is needed to secure this, in the first place, is a clear conception on the part of the people of their rights to the service, and this as against any or all theories of private ownership. Over against the corporation's view of the sacredness of its vested rights the people must place a clear conception of the sacredness of their right to fair service.

A further necessity in order to secure a recognition of this right is an effective assertion of it. A vigorous assertion of the right based upon a clear conception of it will often be effective. Corporations composed of big-minded men, are not seldom reached by such an assertion on the part of the people. If this is not sufficient, then the people are bound in self defense, if the service be important and the failure specially harmful, to go further, and make their assertion effective. If courts fail to afford relief they may, by lawful measures, resume the franchise in question, and operate the utility, whatever it be, in their own interest.

Resumption and operation, however, are not in themselves enough. In any case of resumption the people must show by actual experiment that they are able to operate the utility efficiently and economically. A few cases in which they shall thus exhibit their ability to operate public utilities satisfactorily will be enough. The influence of these examples of the people's disposition to operate public utilities, if necessary, and of their proved ability to do so, will be widespread and salutary. There will be no need to go far in this direction. Let it thus become thoroughly understood that the people know their rights in the premises; that they are ready, when necessary, to assert them; and that in the assertion of them they are able to make good in actual experiment; that they are, in fact, able to do for themselves what private enterprise has failed to do, they have gone far toward compelling private enterprise to furnish them with the service to which they are entitled, and which in one way or another they will have.

President Stickney of the Great Western railway, in his recent address, struck the true note, in the recognition he gave of the right of the community to fair service from any corporation to which it grants a public franchise. It would be wise foresight on the part of all transportation companies, and all corporations operating public utilities, thus to recognize the rights of the people. Such action on the part of corporations generally would save friction, and by bringing about a good understanding in the community forestall harassing legislation. In the long run, such a policy would be profitable to all concerned. All reasonable concessions on the part of corporations to the advantage of the communities they serve must in the end work to the advantage of the corporations themselves. Surely the time must soon be past when thoughtful and far-sighted men composing any corporation holding a public franchise can longer be blind to the fact that their interests and the interests of the community they serve are one.

THE COLLAPSE OF A "PEACH."

IN A CONSIDERATE MAN'S REPROBATION of the character and conduct of Senator Depew as a public man an element of pity will mingle. Poor old man! Yet it must be said that he fully deserves all he can suffer. For 50 years he has been false to the public whose great and special friend he pretended to be, false to high conceptions that a brilliant and promising man should have and held sacred of his duty to the public of which he sought and obtained favors and preferment, false to himself and to what must have been his own inner and higher ideals.

SMALL CHANGE

It is sometimes rough on a girl if a young man neglects to share. The carrying of England by the Liberals seems to be something like Missouri going Republican. The Missouri attorney-general's name rhymes equally well with "sandy" and "sandy."

TIMBER-LAND SWINDLERS.

FREQUENT ITEMS in the Journal's news columns make it known that certain rascals and thieves are still uninterruptedly credulous victims by pleasing occupation of robbing timber lands that are represented to be subject to entry at a nominal or small price, when in fact the lands shown or described are not subject to entry at all, and what the victims really get for their money are lands either wholly imaginary and non-existent, or worthless. Yet we are told that nothing can be done, that these audacious swindlers cannot be prosecuted and punished, that there is no law by which they can be reached.

THE TEN-HOUR LAW UPHOLD.

JUDGE SEARS evidently was in much doubt as to whether the law limiting the hired labor of women and children to 10 hours would stand the test of the higher court, but he decided it according to his best judgment, in the face of conflicting decisions, and perhaps in accordance with his sympathies to some extent, since the case would in any event go to the supreme court.

KEEP IT WHERE IT IS.

THE EFFORT being made by certain senators to take the reclamation business out of the hands of the interior department and turn it over to congress ought to be opposed vigorously by the united press of the country. The interior department has doubtless made mistakes; Secretary Hitchcock is not without faults; but he is a thoroughly honest man, and is doing as much as could be reasonably expected in the line of reclaiming arid lands by irrigation. With this business left where it is, more rapid progress will be made, people will know what to depend on, and they can depend on a minimum of grafting; but with the reclamation business turned over to congress it would become a great grafting machine from center to circumference.

M'CLELLAN HAS LEARNED SOMETHING.

MAYOR M'CLELLAN of New York City evidently learned something by the last election. He is not of the bourbon type of Democrat who never learns anything. The fact that Tammany was so nearly beaten, was in fact beaten and only partly saved itself and him by criminal frauds, may have given the mayor courage to cut loose from that organization, but he is to be commended for doing so nevertheless. If he had been courageous enough to give up the office to which in all probability he was not elected, he would have been still more admirable, but this was too much to expect; let us give him credit for breaking loose from Boss Murphy and becoming his own man. As such he ought to make a good mayor of the great metropolis, for he is a man of ability and, save for his alliance with Tammany in the past, of high character.

Crudity of Man to Brutes.

Brookers Correspondence of Blue Mountain Eagle. A case of crudity has just occurred which calls for a vigorous enforcement of laws against cruelty to animals. A four-year-old cow, left outside heavily loaded, died a painful death about 10 miles distant in a snow fall heavily all the week and most of the way there was no sign of a road. The poor beast, weak all that time of care, was forced to crawl until she dropped in her tracks, where she was left with horses on a road with no one to help.

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From the Charleston News and Courier. We would not discourage the Missourians, but the only time that anything was ever gotten out of H. H. Rogers was when he was operated upon for appendicitis. Can Use Their Frank. From the Indianapolis News. If it is no-pain business really does stick, the congressmen still have the privilege of franking themselves home by mail.

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE

There is a small group of people who are not aware of the danger that a smaller dose to the growing vegetation. There is at present a big lawsuit on at Butte, Montana, over a smaller. The vegetation has been killed for miles around I know myself; and at Salt Lake City, where they once raised everything, they now have a barren country. If there was a smaller at St. Johns they would not give us the idea of the new farm in Portland now, and in a few years our gardens, fruit and berries would be a thing of the past for miles around. If the St. Johns people will look this thing up they will soon discover that what is at present a small lawsuit is a big one. M. C. YOUNG.

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THE VERY LATEST IN CHURCHES

By Rev. Thomas B. Gregory. A wealthy St. Louisan, of strong spiritual convictions but thoroughly practical with all his religious machinery, is about to build a church in the Missouri metropolis which he intends to have run on forest principles.

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