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RAIL FUTURE IN LIGHT OF PUBLIC OPINION IS TOLD
I. C. Railroad Head Holds Optimistic Viewpoint for Betterment.
 Country Starts to Realize Value of Railways to New Civilization.

By C. H. Markham

Editor's Note.—C. H. Markham is president of one of the great railroad systems in the world. He speaks with the voice of absolute authority and knowledge. His opinions are accepted and hailed by railroad executives throughout the United States and because of his close touch with the executives of other railroads what he says may well be considered a reliable statement of the sentiment of the American railroads as entertained by their governing heads.

For twenty years the American public has withheld sympathy for the problems of the railroad, problems that were vital to the welfare of the people.

For twenty years the American railroad has proven too often to be the football of peanut politics, the "horrible example" for the pointing finger of demagogues and the sounding board for the mean or less-silver tongues of spellbinders.

Constructive legislation has been hindered rather than helped by this attitude for in their desire to please a suspicious public even fair minded legislators have leaned so far toward repressive legislation that the constructive sort has been lost and entangled in the maze of restrictive red tape of the former.

A better service to the nation at large, a wider scope of production to the city and a lessening of cost to the farm producer who must move his product would have resulted long ago if the railroads, often as unseeing as the public that frowned upon them had been met half way in friendly spirit and problems that were real and tangible been thrashed out together rather than attacked from varying angles that neither solved the problem or tended toward the creation of mutual benefit.

Both Sides Blamed

In thus placing blame upon the public, I do not wish to give the impression that I believe railway men always have followed the blameless course; in fact, I hold them jointly responsible for the mistakes of this dark period. I believe they erred in not pursuing at all times a policy of taking the public into their complete confidence and telling the public frankly what their problems were and what was being done, or should be done, to solve them. Railway men have largely pursued a policy of reticence where their own actions were involved, seemingly proceeding upon the theory that the public did not need their counsels. Recent railway history has proved that their attitude was wrong.

But, regardless of where the blame is to be placed, the fact remains that the impression gained popularity that the railroads needed no protection. That, in fact, they were entitled to no protection, and that the public welfare could best be served by attacking railway management, embarrassing it and putting every hindrance in its way. Every action undertaken by the railroads looking toward an improvement in their capacity for rendering service was viciously attacked; every application for rates which would provide revenues sufficient for operating expenses, fixed charges and a return which would be attractive to the capital needed for financing extensions, improvements and betterments was bitterly fought; hampering legislation and restrictions were adopted, increasing the cost of rendering transportation without increasing the capacity for it. Baiting the railroads became popular political sport. The public grew to look upon the critics of the railroads as being always worthy of belief, and the defenders of the railroads as being always in the wrong.

Roads in Future.

My optimism for the future of the railway situation is based upon a belief that this deleterious period is passing. One finds it still cropping out in some quarters, but it is on the wane. We as a people seem to have learned the lesson the last few years have taught us; namely, that the future of our country is tied up with the well-being of transportation, and that the two must develop together.

But, even though I entertain an optimistic belief in the future of America's second largest industry—second only to agriculture—I believe there still remains a great and pressing need for further public education on railway questions. The public must be constantly reminded of what it has at stake in a solution of railway problems. Our efforts must not lag.

One of the most important steps, I believe, in creating a wholesome public sentiment which will assure progress in transportation is inspiring public confidence in the men who stand at the head of America's great transportation systems. I have been in railway work a great many years and I know the calibre of the men who hold positions of trust in the railway industry. I know them to be honest, conscientious men, trained in their calling, and I know their ambition is that American railroads shall maintain their high rank among the transportation agencies of the world. I believe them worthy of the public trust.

At Public's Mercy.

The growth of public regulation has placed the railroads literally at the mercy of the public. The railroads are controlled through governmental agencies in the service they shall charge, the wages they shall pay and the conditions under which their employees shall work; while to management is given the power of directing operations within these limitations. But I hold for management a greater task than of impressing upon public opinion the need of constructive policies, and of outlining what those policies should be. Railway management is the trustee of vast properties valued at nearly \$19,000,000,000, and it would be derelict if it did not exert its utmost effort toward

constructing as against destruction, toward progress as against retrogression.

When we are ill we call upon men trained in the diagnosis and treatment of human ailments to effect a cure; when questions of jurisprudence arise we consult the best legal minds at our disposal to guide our actions; in railway matters men trained in that science should be our advisers. In the consideration of every public question there always is proposed a plethora of untried remedies, fake cures, quack panaceas; these have exercised, in the past, too great an influence upon public thought in railway matters.

The first principle of railway progress is the necessity of placing at the disposal of the railroads a net income which will be sufficient to pay obligations and attract the savings of investors in order that extensions, improvements and betterments may be carried out. The only source of this revenue is in the rates charged for transportation service. "What the traffic can bear" is the misnomer. The movement of traffic can be more seriously hampered by physical inability to handle it than by rates which seem high as compared with those of another period. Rates, of course, should be so distributed as to allow for an easy flow of products from producer to consumer, but the importance of protecting the railroads against rates which will impair service to protect other industry from rates which might upset the scale of price adjustments.

Oppressive Regulations.

Another important element in assuring railway progress is the need for curtailing oppressive regulations which increase the cost of producing transportation without increasing the capacity for production or transportation. In one of the states in which the Illinois Central operates bills were introduced and passed for passage in the recent session of legislature which, if they had been passed and approved, would have increased the expenditures of the railroads of that state more than \$100,000,000 annually without in any way increasing their efficiency. Practically the same situation has existed in the regular sessions of every state legislature of the forty-eight states for years past. Fortunately, for the railroads and for the public, which must underwrite the railroads' bills, the measures to which I have referred failed, but that has not been the history of such legislation. Too often the ill-advised burden has been placed upon the railroads. This shortsightedness has been to place the railroads under great handicaps and to increase unnecessarily the cost of transportation.

The hope of the railroads lies in the establishment and maintenance of a wholesome public sentiment toward them. The public should bear in mind that whatever hurts the railroads hurts the public. Anything that affects railway service and rates detrimentally is opposed to the public welfare, for anything that increases the cost of transportation without a comparable betterment of service has a bearing upon rates. The welfare of the railroads and the public welfare are so interwoven that it is impossible to separate them. That the public has not been inured to accept this viewpoint is unfortunate; that the public is now more favorably minded toward the railroads augurs well.

On the Illinois Central System we are exerting our best efforts to acquaint our patrons with railway problems and the best methods of their solution, and are asking their constructive criticism and suggestions. We are being rewarded by the co-operation of the public served by our line in a degree hitherto unknown.

We have passed through trying times and our lesson in railway economics has been a hard one. If we have profited by it, it is well, I believe we have.

Two bedrooms for rent; near Main street. Inquire this office.

ROUGH SEA SAILORS

I love to talk with fellows, with a glitter in their eye, in defiance of the panic that is slowly passing by. . . I love to see 'em swagger, an' to elevate their chin—an' to hear 'em speak of pluggin' till their ship comes in, I like to run across 'em, as we travel on our way. . . I take a lot of stock in what they do, an' what they say. . . I get my inspiration, and the firm desire to win, from the feller that's a-pluggin' till his ship comes in.

I ain't got time to listen at the bird of grim despair,—that dotes on disappointments, till they get him by the hair,—but you'll see my spirit quicken, like you'd stuck me with a pin—when my neighbor speaks of pluggin' till his ship comes in!

From "Uncle John"

HOMEY PHILOSOPHY for 1922

What a wonderful boy they say he is—David Gladstone, fifteen years old, four feet tall, and yet a freshman in the College of Arts and Pure Sciences of New York University. He plans to enter law school as soon as he has completed his college requirements. Education? A prodigy, one of the seven wonders of the world. Ain't it a funny idea when those who see the setting of the sun know that a boy of seven—the age of reason—always has a much better education than Gladstone when he is taught, and really learns that happiness comes from making the other fellow happy. That's the meat. Why fuss over the trimmings?

Will Soon Be Over.

Fortunate indeed is Wallawa county in the campaign being waged in western Oregon over the school bill. Certain factors have entered which have broken up old friendships and divided families into hostile groups. Perhaps years will pass before the animosity will die down.

The campaign will be over in a little more than a week. The count of the votes presumably will tell the verdict of the people, and in a popular government majority rules. In this case the majority must act with great forbearance and the minority also must be charitable.

No man should stake his happiness and peace of mind on the outcome of a political contest. There is an ebb and flow to the affairs of man and sometimes one opinion prevails, while again quite a different view is adopted. No one year is final; no one campaign settles the fate of humanity.

The majority which controls a mass meeting or an election is not always right; in fact very often it is unfair and unjust and wholly wrong. But it must have its day just the same, while all must await the day when the light dawns. The people of a state or nation are greater than any faction and in the long run, no better form of government has been found than that in which the people rule. So their verdict must stand, and if it is a blunder, they should seek to correct it later.—Enterprise Record Chieftain.

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POEM by Uncle John

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Punchettes

by **Rev. M. A. MATTHEWS D.D. LL.D.**

HAS LOYALTY VANISHED?

When one looks carefully at the passing through he is forced to ask the question, Is loyalty a lost art? Have the people forgotten its meaning? Or has it ceased to have power over the people?

Loyalty in its truest and deepest meaning is free from every element of selfishness; loyalty means absolute devotion to principle, to party, to person.

Absolute devotion takes into account the sacrifice that has to be made to be loyal. It may mean the loss of everything; but loyalty never counts that a cost too dear.

If this is a correct definition of loyalty then it is highly probable that it has been supplanted by the meanest kind of selfishness because men are sacrificing principle, party and person for their own selfish interest, or to fill their own greedy purses.

They seem to have but one God—the God of Gold. They worship at his shrine; they bow before him morning, noon and night; they carry his image in their pockets; they burn incense to him; his image is stamped upon their features; they would sacrifice their homes.

Yes; they would give up their families to satisfy their own selfishness. What can you expect when loyalty in its truest, and most glorious aspect is surrendered and selfishness is enthroned?

Many business men have ceased to fight for great business principles because they are afraid it will cost them something. Politicians have long since mortgaged their souls. They are taking anything that will buy votes. Nearly every election has on its bargain counters cheap politicians. Loyalty to the government, devotion to fundamental principles are foreign subjects, alien ideas, and ancient history to modern politicians.

Oh, for a power that would bring back to the throne of business statesmanship, and to the religious altar unswerving, untainted and unadulterated loyalty.



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