

Belleville, Pa., Feb. 15, 1901.

SHIP SUBSIDY BILL.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—The advocates of the Hanna-Frye-Payne ship subsidy bill continue to retreat before the critics of that measure.

When it was first presented to the senate by Senator Hanna during the first days of the now expiring congress, they said that it was the result of many months of study by the shipping experts and the best law constructors of the country, that it condensed into a congressional bill lifetimes of study upon the best means of building up the merchant marine and that it was as perfect as human brains could make it and ready for passage without any amateur legislative tinkering.

This was when it carried an unlimited appropriation. What it would have done for the country in its thus perfected state the Lord only knows. Very soon a howl of protest went up from Dan to Beersheba against the "unlimited provisions" of the measure, and an amendment was accepted limiting the appropriation to \$9,000,000 a year.

Ever since this time the elasticity of the bill's perfection has been drawn upon. Its advocates have yielded inch by inch until the bill has quite a different complexion from the unphotographable countenance that it at first presented. But with all this carving and splicing and remodeling it retains its essential feature of taking out of the pockets of the whole people some \$200,000,000 for the benefit of a favored few composed mainly of the lifetime experts who drew the bill.

The critics to whom its original promoters have been yielding are all within the Republican party and among those whose support has been counted from the beginning. If the supposed friends of the measure have brought upon it the disfigurement that now appears, what would it look like if its opponents drove their criticisms through it? Verily it would only be useful for waste paper!

This constant retreating of the advocates of the bill does not indicate that it is a measure founded on principle, but that it is a desire to pilfer from the treasury many millions for the benefit of private parties. None of the changes that have been made apply to the principles or purposes of the bill. Those originally provided for wanted to transfer from the taxpayers' money to their pockets \$9,000,000 a year. Finding that they had overreached themselves, they have gradually let others into the "divide."

Now all of those originally in and those let in and their various pot swabbers and bottle washers are declaring that the bill has been perfectly adjusted to the needs of the times and that its passage is only a matter of a few days. In sending out this bugle note of victory they have forgotten all the Democrats and all the Populists who oppose this sort of grab on principle. They have also forgotten a number of Republicans who feel the same sort of opposition. They have forgotten the miscellaneous but ever active pie hunters who have not yet been let into the "divide." The result of this forgetfulness will be the failure of the bill.

There has been no lobby in Washington opposing the ship subsidy bill, but there have been some very strong men who have worked hard against the measure as a matter of principle. Some of these men have been Republicans and some of them have had no connection, directly or indirectly, with the shipping business. They have been intensely in earnest. It is largely due to the fact that they have not worked along the usual lobby lines that this bill has not yet been passed and in all probability will not be passed. They have absolutely stripped it of its pretenses and shown to the world that the Standard Oil company, which controls the Pennsylvania Railroad company, the International Navigation company and the National Transit company, would receive not less than \$50,000,000 out of the \$90,000,000 provided for within the next ten years and that it would be a very easy matter for a combine to be formed by which they would receive practically the whole subsidy. Those who were inclined to favor the bill as a party measure are becoming alarmed and are not willing that the Republican party should shoulder the responsibility for such a scheme.

There are many Republicans who do not oppose Boss Hanna in the caucuses or the steering committee meetings who will still lend the weight of their influence to the postponement of the bill. These Republicans are still not satisfied with the methods of division. During the last days of this rapidly waning session they are getting all the concessions that they can get. They know that they can now get many more concessions than they could get in a long session, where there would be the greater probability of their being driven into line by the party whip. Having made these concessions in this congress, "he favored few who at first started out to bag all the game can hardly revert to their first purpose when the next congress convenes. The hope of the reasonably good Republicans is that in the next congress they can pass a ship subsidy bill having in it the elements of fairness to those engaged in the shipbuilding and the ship sailing business. The hope of those opposed to the subsidy principle is that the stench this bill will leave in the nostrils of the fair minded public will make it impossible to pass in the next congress any sort of a bill transferring by any kind of a division \$200,000,000 from the pockets of the people to the pockets of special beneficiaries.

SHIP SUBSIDIES.

The Division of the Spoils. Who Will Get the Subsidy Under the Pending Bill?

When a proposition to loot the public treasury, like that of the Hanna-Frye-Payne ship subsidy bill, is brought forward, it is always loudly heralded as a beneficent system of prizes for which all citizens so disposed can engage in stimulating competition. There is usually a "nigger in the wood pile" with such assertions, as we all know, but it is not often that he is so easily discovered as in the case of this impudent measure. Accepting on their face the figures put forth by the friends of the bill, some of which are most palpably falsified, the facts are that about nine-tenths of all full subsidies upon existing steamships of 12 knots speed or over would be gobbled up by just four concerns, which it is well known are those from whom the bill has emanated. These are the International Navigation company, owned by the Pennsylvania railroad and the Standard Oil circle, which would get over \$1,100,000, or with the Paris on her full service again about \$1,500,000; the Pacific Mail, \$157,000; the Ward line to Cuba and Mexico, \$442,000, and the American Mail company, owned by the principal stockholders in the Ward line, whose share would be \$102,000, bringing up the interest of that clique to from one-half to one-third that of the Standard Oil crowd.

Outside of these companies, receiving in all about \$2,000,000, there are nine more whose vessels would be eligible to a share in full subsidy, but who must be content with a meager \$200,000 divided up among them. More than half even of this sum goes to one concern, the Pacific Coast company, which has already enjoyed an exceptional amount of governmental favors in connection with transfer service to the Philippines.

Of foreign built ships which are to receive only one-half subsidy the International Navigation company is estimated to claim only a modest \$350,000, added to the subsidy on its express steamers as noted above, but the Standard Oil interest in its ownership has quite a little fleet of vessels of its own which, unless excluded by the tank oil amendment introduced in the senate, will probably come in for an additional \$250,000, while the Atlantic Transport company, whose affiliations have been growing close through Pennsylvania railroad shareholdings, is set down for a \$334,000 plum in the pie. Still another railroad interest, the Chesapeake and Ohio, will have a right to demand \$102,000 on its boats, but a search outside of this little family party does not reveal enough American owners to enjoy as much all told as the smallest of the interests just enumerated.

That there may be changes in the future cannot of course be disputed, but these must come slowly for outside interests that had not been laying their plans in advance as had the group which have prepared and are backing the bill. That these latter gentlemen have not been anxious to pose as foolish virgins may be discovered on looking up the position of affairs as to vessels now under construction in the various shippards. On the Pacific waters the leading interest next to the Pacific Mail and Pacific Coast companies has always been that of the Spreckels sugar monopolists. Like the Pacific Coast companies, they have been engaging a particularly large meal of government pap in transport service, and this may have rendered them a little sluggish at getting into the pool, but they are just putting some new boats into operation, from which they expect to draw \$212,000 subsidy annually, about a fifth of their value—something, at least, to keep the wolf from the door.

In the way of looking to the future, however, no one can accuse the International Navigation company with being imprudent, and we accordingly find among the owners of vessels under construction entitled to subsidy they again lead the list with about \$468,000 prospective benefits to their credit, while the Pacific Mail are close on their heels here, as they look for \$433,000 additional when they get their new boats. Customarily enough, the Ward people have only \$185,000 subsidy capacity under way, the smallest of any of the leading conspirators, although for requirements of trade proper we might expect them to be at the head, as a number of their vessels are growing old, and theirs is notably the most prosperous of all our transportation companies, with the exception of the Mallory line, who are honorably distinguished by the way, in a practical absence from the list of subsidy beneficiaries.

Still another classification under this inquiry is that of vessels building abroad, and here we find that the ubiquitous International company with \$397,000 in sight and the Atlantic Transport with \$510,000 are the only ones that seem to have improved the shining hour, but as those two will have nine times as much coming to them from this source as all outside interests they are readily seen to have nobly kept up the average.

Summarizing the situation, it would appear that of subsidy benefits that can now be calculated upon the International company would have about \$2,500,000 annually; the Ward interests, \$729,000; Atlantic Transport, \$844,000; Pacific Mail, \$590,000; Standard Oil, \$250,000; Spreckels, \$212,000; Pacific Coast, \$126,000; Chesapeake and Ohio, \$103,000, or say, \$5,350,000 among these eight concerns, while all other possible interests in sight (including \$383,000 to the Great Northern Railroad, which has not asked for subsidy at all), would be able to draw \$673,000 only. Further comment seems unnecessary.

Subsidize for the WATCHMAN.

Substitutes for Ship Subsidies.

The North American Review for January contains an article by Mr. Louis Windmuller of New York, entitled "Substitutes For Ship Subsidies." Mr. Windmuller approves the avowed objects of the ship subsidy bill, but emphatically disapproves of the bill itself, claiming that in its present shape it will fail to accomplish them. "The subsidies for which it provides," he states, "would chiefly accrue, for some time to come, to American lines which cross the Atlantic and Pacific for the purpose of carrying passengers and expensive freight. What the country really needs is carriage at reasonable rates for the immense yield of our agriculture and for the bulky products of our mines." This is precisely the purpose for which the pending subsidy bill does not provide.

"We might try the experiment," suggests Mr. Windmuller, "of allowing our merchants to buy ships where they can get them on the most favorable terms and offer them American registers on condition that they engage in transportation of our foreign commerce, when conducted by officers trained in a United States naval reserve. The privilege of sailing foreign built ships, commanded by American officers under our flag, would lead toward a modification of our antiquated, whimsical British navigation laws. These statutes, by which British shipping had been protected since Cromwell's time, were practically abandoned by England in 1849, while we were her formidable rival. British merchants were then permitted to buy our ships and sail them under their own flag, while engaged in foreign commerce. All other American nations have followed this example except the United States, and the merchant marine of all other nations has increased while our own has during that time diminished. One of the consequences has been that American vessels, who have found it to be for their interest to buy English steamers, actually sail them under the British flag—thus adding to the power and prestige of that country instead of their own. Germany, since Bismarck's time the most ardent advocate of protection, has no reason to regret that she upholds free trade in ships. The steam tonnage of her merchant marine has increased 1,000 per cent. in 29 years, and Stettin has begun to rival Glasgow in furnishing ships for the world's trade."

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Leave Belleville, 9:53 a. m., arrive at Tyronne 11:10 a. m., at Altoona, 1:00 p. m., at Pittsburg 4:50 p. m. Leave Belleville 1:00 p. m., arrive at Tyronne 2:15 p. m., at Altoona, 3:10 p. m., at Pittsburg, 6:55 p. m.

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Table with columns for stations and times, including Tyronne, Clearfield, and other locations.

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WEEKLY TRAINS.

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Table with columns for stations and times, including Belleville, Harrisburg, and other locations.

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