

**BRYAN AGAINST GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP.**

Federal Regulation Should Not Be Allowed to Exclude Exercise of State Authority, He Contends—Thinks Railroad Stocks Should Represent Actual Value and Be Stable as Government Bonds.

Washington, Dec. 11.—William J. Bryan, who startled the country ten years ago by advocating government ownership of railroads, appeared before the Newlands Joint Committee on Interstate Commerce last week in support of the claim that the states should be allowed to retain authority over the regulation of all transportation lines within their borders. Mr. Bryan explained that he had long regarded government ownership as inevitable, but only because of railroad opposition to effective regulation.

**Against Government Ownership.**  
"Personally I cannot say that I desire government ownership," he explained, "because I lean to the individual idea rather than to the collective idea; that is, I believe that government ownership is desirable only where competition is impossible."  
Alfred P. Thom, counsel to the Railway Executives' Advisory Committee, previously had presented before the members of the Newlands Committee as one of his reasons for urging a better balanced and more systematic regulation of railroads the argument that this is the only alternative to government ownership. Calling attention to the restrictions imposed upon the transportation lines by conflicting state laws and regulations, to the practical cessation of new construction and to the impossibility under existing conditions of securing the new capital needed for extensions and betterments of railway facilities, he warned the Congressmen that unless they provided a fair and reasonable system of regulation that would enable the railroads to meet the growing needs of the country's business the national government would be compelled to take over the ownership of the lines with all the evils attendant upon such a system.

**Preservation of Competition.**  
Mr. Bryan, on the other hand, holds that the further extension of federal authority over the railroads would be a step in the direction of government ownership. He advanced the view that the centralization of control in the hands of the national government would impose too great a burden upon the regulating body, would offer strong temptation to railroads to interfere in politics and would encourage the general movement toward centralization of power in the federal government at the expense of the states. He said that he did not object to consolidations of railroad lines so long as they did not destroy competition, that he knew of no complaint against great railway systems because of their size and that he believed that the preservation of competition was the test to be applied to all consolidations.

**Regulation of Securities.**  
Mr. Bryan declared himself in favor of national regulation of railway stock and bond issues, but added that he saw no reason why that should exclude the states from acting on the same subject as to state corporations. "I would like to see the stock of a railroad, as long as it is in private hands, made as substantial and as unvarying as the value of a government bond," he asserted.

He suggested that railroad capitalization be readjusted to equalize it with actual valuation of the property represented, making due allowance for equities, and that when this was done the roads should be allowed to earn sufficient income to keep their stock at par and to create a surplus. The latter, he tentatively proposed, might be allowed to amount to 25 per cent of the capital.

**Railway Earnings Low.**  
This subject of railroad capitalization and the amount of railroad earnings received further attention from the committee during its recent sessions. In answer to questions by Senator Cummins, Mr. Thom submitted figures showing the net earnings of the roads in recent years. These figures show that during the five years from 1905 to 1910 the average net earnings were 5.25 per cent of the net capitalization, while for the five years from 1910 to 1915 the average was only 4.56 per cent. The total earnings on the stock, computed by adding to the net operating income the income from the securities owned and deducting bond interest, were for 1910, 7.09 per cent; for 1911, 6.17 per cent; for 1912, 4.97 per cent; for 1913, 5.94 per cent; for 1914, 4.06 per cent; for 1915, 3.44 per cent, thus showing an almost continuous decrease throughout this six year period. It was announced that Halford Erickson, formerly chairman of the Wisconsin Railroad Commission, would submit more complete information on this subject to the Committee at a later date.

**Where They Were Located.**  
Two wretched-looking tramps were brought up before a justice of the peace. Addressing the worst looking one, the justice said, "Where do you live?"  
"Nowhere."  
"And where do you live?" said the justice, addressing the other.  
"I've got the room above him."

**FIREMEN RESCUE A PIGEON**

Hydraulic Ladder Raised to Otherwise Inaccessible Place Where Bird Was Imprisoned.

A pigeon, an ordinary one of the common garden variety, held up traffic along Washington street for about a half hour, brought together a crowd of more than 100 people and caused an exhibition performance of the fire department's big hydraulic ladder, the Boston Journal states.

T. G. Toomey, whose duty it is to protect the Filene property, had been deluged all day long with telephone calls to the effect that a pigeon was imprisoned on the side of the building between the second and third floors. Filene employees had tried to reach the bird from the windows above and below, but to no avail, nor could they find any ladder long enough to reach the spot.

When six o'clock came the pigeon was still unrescued, and Mr. Toomey's big heart would not let him go home until the bird was free. He finally got in touch with Captain Watson of Ladder 17 at Fort Hill square. After the chief's permission had been obtained the motor truck was brought to the scene and the big hydraulic was raised. One of the firemen then scooted up the long ladder, which was stretched to its utmost, and extricated the pigeon. When the bird had been "landed" it was given a drink of water and then showed its gratitude by scurrying out of the watchman's hands and flying off to parts unknown.

**MAKES STUDY OF BOOMERANG**

Chicago University Student Thinks Principle Can Be Made to Apply to Aerial Navigation.

Many years ago the black fellow of the Australian bush mystified his white brother by means of the boomerang. Through some agency not yet entirely clear to the able physicists who have studied the matter, this most benighted of all savages was enabled to make his peculiar weapon do such wonderful things as to suggest the uncanny. In time he was successfully imitated by the white man, and exhibitions of boomerang throwing have entertained multitudes, but without disclosing just why this instrument does as it does. Its outward flight is simple enough, perhaps, involving the underlying principle of the aeroplane, but its return flight is not so easily explained. To master this, and to apply it to aerial navigation is the inspiration of a series of experiments being carried on by a student at Chicago university. His work so far has progressed to the point where he has greatly improved on the black fellow's boomerang, and he hopes to unravel the entire mystery of its flight. When he does, he will have almost unlocked the real secret, and have mastered not only the art of flying, but the more important and infinitely more difficult matter of alighting.

**United States Corn Belt.**

Somebody has discovered that the corn belt has the habit of moving, and announces the fact, which is likely to cause surprise in quarters where this staple is planted, gathered and is the subject of discussions and predictions.

At one time the belt stretched across Iowa, Illinois and Indiana, and then it shifted, or was extended to certain parts of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota. There it remained stationary for a period and then resumed its travels, going south into Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas.

But like most belts it did not long remain still and has now migrated to the Northwest to Oregon, and that state, which is so rich in scenery, fruit, timber and political nostrums, is letting the world know of the latest shift. Of course, when the term corn belt is used, it does not mean the nation's center of corn production, but is intended to include those sections which rise far above the average in bushels per acre raised.

And where the corn belt is, there is rural prosperity. At least, the farmers' prospects of buying new automobiles are considerably increased.

**The Airman.**

Yet every man of them (the Royal Flying corps) appeared true to what I have since come to recognize as a rapidly developing type—the "flying type."

The army aviator of today is picked for his quickness of mind and body, and the first thing that strikes you about him is a sort of feline, wound-up-spring alertness. Then you note his reticence, the cool reserve of a man whose lot it is to express himself in deeds rather than words.

And lastly there is the quiet seriousness, verging almost on sadness, of the man who must hold himself ready to look death between the eyes at any moment, and yet keep his mind detached for other things.—Lewis R. Freeman, in the Atlantic Monthly.

**Republican Distinction.**

The "Legion of Honor," which, like the "Victoria Cross," is heard so often today, although instituted by Napoleon is still republican in its origin. It was in the year 1802, the year in which he was created First Consul, that Napoleon overcame the objections of the senate to the "playthings of monarchy," as Berthier called them, and instituted the famous order of merit. At present the Legion of Honor embraces five classes, Grands Croix, Grands Officiers, Commandeurs, Officiers and Chevalliers. The president of the republic is grand chancellor of the order.

**War of Rivers.**

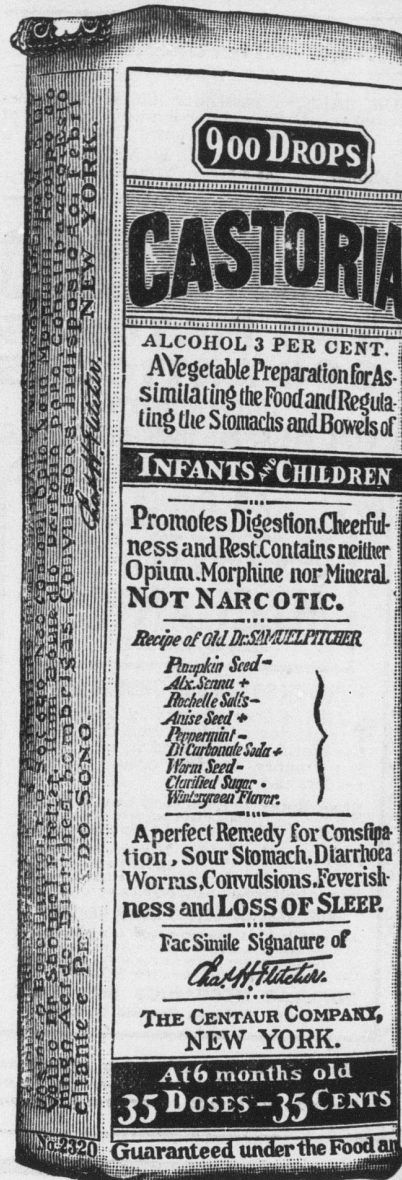
One curious fact may be noted in passing: This war is a war of rivers. The important battles on the western front have all been connected with some river, namely, the Marne, Aisne, Meuse and Somme. On the eastern front great conflicts have taken place on the Vistula, Dvina, Pruth, Dniester, Bug, Styr and Lipa rivers, while the river Tigris was the scene of the British disaster before Kut-el-Amara.—Literary Digest.

**In National Forests.**

Increasing use of the National forests for municipal camp sites and summer school locations is reported by the forest service. Permits have already been issued to several cities and educational institutions and other applications are expected. Officials say that far more people use the forests for public playgrounds than for any other purpose, and that this use promises to be one of the most important to which they can be put.

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