

Cleveland is to my mind a splendid Democrat, without an equal in business sagacity. Of great executive ability, he would make a wonderfully fine Democratic President. But if he be living at the time, there is only one possibility—Mr. Bryan himself. His services in two campaigns, his conspicuous part in making Democratic history, but, above all, the knowledge of him which his countrymen have gained as he stood in the bright light, giving them the assuring confidence that he is their man, their warrior, with skill and strength and courage for the warfare, his personality and democratic worth, all make him unquestionably the leader of the people in the next fight for the people by the people.

He would be the first to resent the phrase that the nomination is his due. There is nothing due to any man. The human race is to be considered, not the individual, and the best of us cannot pay our debt to the martyrs who have gone before nor fulfill our obligation to the coming generations. It is only due him in the sense that he is the best man for the public duty.

When the early sun was extinguishing the hard, bright glare of the electric lights in that enormous pavilion in St. Louis in 1904, when the long, hard fight for the plain people was clearly lost and the Hill-Belmont-Parker forces sat serene in their conscious power, Mr. Bryan took the platform and stilled the howling mass of humanity which packed the floor and the galleries and clung like flies to the trusses of the roof, and said: "You may dispute whether I have fought a good fight, you may dispute whether I have finished my course, but you cannot deny that I have kept the faith."

Such a cry went up as would have told all but fools soddin in their folly that Democratic votes would defeat Judge Parker, and that after he was submerged a returning tidal wave would pick up the orator standing there, a democratic Democrat, for the common people always and openly and fearlessly, and would land him in the Presidential chair.

And so it will be.

It will be useless to try to disrupt the party, unless to appeal to the solid South to lead a revolt, for the issues formerly obscure are now clear and the lines have been drawn by Mr. Bryan himself. It is not a question of party names—it is whether you are for the people or against them. Mr. Bryan's whole career bespeaks him the people's champion; that is his real strength, not his particular economic theories.

It is said Mr. Roosevelt will be forced to run against Mr. Bryan as the only Republican democratic enough to oppose him.*

But he will not run, and if he does Mr. Bryan will defeat him. I have heard suggestions that

*It will be remembered that this was written two years ago.

the great corporations and property interests would throw their weight for Mr. Bryan as against Mr. Roosevelt. Undoubtedly Mr. Bryan is not so impulsive, so sensational and emotional as Mr. Roosevelt. Mr. Bryan is more calm, more judicial, more truly just. Yet, if the choice had to be made, entrenched privilege would swallow Mr. Roosevelt with all the party chains upon him, rather than give up their whole camp to the conspicuous, clear-headed leader of the popular rebellion. Against Roosevelt's courage they would have to match Bryan's; against his honesty, Bryan's; against his respect for the people's rights, Bryan's long, luminous efforts which have given Roosevelt all the support he has. And in Bryan they would see a quiet determination, a clear conception and unflinching execution more to be dreaded than dramatic outbursts.

Generally a boom sounded early dies prematurely. But this is not a Bryan "boom." It is only the sure and steady rising of the tide. At certain times in human events things are instinctively felt, as cattle feel a coming storm. We sense the future, scarcely knowing how or why; and so it is I feel that if he lives Mr. Bryan will be the next President of the United States.

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THE PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF RAILROADS.

For The Public.

VII.

Freight Service and Rates.

2. Sweden.

The freight service on the Swedish State railways is handled on lines uniform with those mentioned for Germany. The average ton-mile rates for both State and private railroads in the country are given in Table XV. This table shows plainly the fact that the private roads do not give nearly as cheap a freight service as the government railroads. It also indicates the constant tendency of freight rates to become lower under public management.

TABLE XV.

Average Freight Rates, Cents per Ton-Mile, Swedish Railways.*

Year.	State railways.	Private railways.
1870.....	2.49	3.14
1875.....	2.28	3.14
1880.....	2.28	3.18
1885.....	2.25	2.80
1890.....	2.06	2.54
1895.....	1.89	2.24
1896.....	1.65	1.93
1897.....	1.64	1.93
1898.....	1.52	1.93
1899.....	1.49	1.98
1900.....	1.43	1.94
1901.....	1.47	1.94
1902.....	1.47	1.98

*One metric ton = 2,205 pounds.

Of course the average rate for the Swedish State railways is higher than the average German rate, which would be expected in so sparsely settled a country as Sweden, as compared with Germany. The average rates appear high when compared directly with average American freight rates. But, as was referred to in connection with German rates, the *average* freight rates, when compared with the same rates in the United States, do not present any comparison at all. It was also mentioned that the fallacy of comparing average freight rates becomes apparent even upon a superficial comparison of traffic conditions; we must consider that the average rates are not based on the same calculations, and that there are important differences in the handling of freight there and here, all of which may be summarized as follows:

The average freight rate for Sweden includes the express rates. Imagine that our express rates, given on a ton-mile basis, were embodied in our average freight rate, would the figure then appear as modest as it does? We have in this country examples of charges of 13.5 cents per ton-mile of express goods even for distances considerably over a hundred miles, which in fact is nearly twice as long as the average haul of freight in Europe. This charge is made in the most thickly populated portion of the country, and a comparison with this rate is therefore rather unfair to Sweden with its sparse population. However, most express shipments are not on a ton-basis. Most are small packages. Consider the rate for 10 pounds. Then we will find rates amounting to 44 cents per ton-mile for distances of 250 miles, or more than four times the average European freight haul. Consider these ton-mile rates, and see if our much spoken of cheap freight rates would remain at 0.78 cent per ton-mile, were the express considered here, the same as on European State railways.

Other tendencies to higher ton-mile rates in Sweden are the length of haul on American railroads, which is more than three times the average length of haul in Sweden. This tends to reduce expenses, and consequently *should* reduce ton-mile rates. The size of the average shipment greatly affects the reasonable ton-mile rate. It is clearly in evidence that it is more expensive to handle small shipments than car load freight, and in the United States the normal shipment is car-load freight, while in Sweden the smaller shipments, are far more common. There is also a vast difference in the nature of the goods carried. Raw products constitute a large proportion of the freight carried in this country; coal and iron ore, for instance, occupying a large proportion of the total, while in Europe the larger proportion carried by the railways is manufactured goods, requiring more careful handling, and more extensive

terminal facilities for the proper care of the goods. Finally, it must be considered that the ton-mile rate referred to for European railways is for the metric ton of 2,205 pounds.

Taking all this into consideration it is very evident that the common comparison of average freight rates per ton-mile, by means of which American railroads are held up before the public eye as the cheapest freight carriers in the world, is entirely misleading. In connection with the freight service on German railways we mentioned what in all probability would be a fair comparison for that country. Basing our comparison on the same conclusions as were there referred to, which we must admit are as authoritative as we can possibly obtain, the ton-mile rates for the Swedish State railways would probably be 1.03 cent, while the real American ton-mile rate should be given as 1.44 cent, this providing for a fair and equitable comparison. We have here a comparison of the rates for the *same service, and the same classes of goods.*

If the comparison is thus made on fair and equal terms, it reverses entirely the claim of American railroad managements that they haul freight cheaper than the railroads in all other countries. It places the American roads as far more expensive than leading State railway systems, not only in regard to passenger traffic, but in regard to freight and express service as well.

The freight rates in Sweden are calculated on the basis of gradually diminishing mileage rates as distances increase. In the following are given the actual ton-mile rates for various fuels, for different distances, in shipments of 6 to 9 tons:

Distance, miles.	Ton-mile rate in cents.			
	Wood for fuel.	Coal.	Charcoal.	Peat- coal
100.....	1.21	1.04	1.38	0.84
200.....	0.94	0.81	1.07	0.65
400.....	0.75	0.68	0.75	0.55
600.....	0.68	0.64	0.68	0.51

The rates stated are for metric tons of 2,200 pounds. If comparing with rates for tons of 2,000 pounds, the above figures should be lessened by ten per cent, making the ton-mile rates for 600 miles for instance, 0.61, 0.58, 0.61, and 0.46 cent, respectively. This we think, can well stand comparison with American rates.

3. Summary of Freight Rates in Other European Countries.

The following table gives a comparison between average freight rates on some European State railway systems compared with the American ton-mile rate, both reduced to the same terms, permitting a fair comparison, and based on the conclusions of prominent German railway authorities, sent as Commissioners to the United States to investigate this very subject.

It is, of course, understood that these figures can only be approximate. Any comparison with

American roads will in general be an approximation, owing to the lack of uniformity of rates. But we can easily see the tendencies exhibited, and safely draw conclusions from these.

Comparison Between Average Freight Rates; Foreign Rates Reduced to Permit Direct Comparison; American Rate Including Express, Etc., Permitting a Fair and Equitable Comparison of Charge for Same Service.

Country.	Condition of system.	Ton-mile rate.	American rate.
Germany	State	0.95	1.44
Germany	Private	1.22	1.44
Sweden	State	1.03	1.44
Sweden	Private	1.36	1.44
Norway	State	1.46	1.44
Switzerland	State	1.90	1.44
Netherlands	State	0.82	1.44
Roumania	State	1.04	1.44
Russia	State	0.92*	1.44
England	Private	1.40	1.44
Italy	State	1.23	1.44
Austria	State	0.97	1.44
France	Private	1.02	1.44
Belgium	State	0.88	1.44

This table exhibits the following facts: In countries where there are both government owned and private railroads, the rates of the State lines are from 25 to 30 per cent lower than the rates of private roads; with the exception of Norway and Switzerland, where mountainous country has made railway construction extremely expensive, all systems have a lower freight rate than England and the United States, the only two countries having exclusively private ownership.

The low freight rates of the Belgium state railways are very significant in view of the fact that the length of the average haul in that country is shorter than in any other European country, Switzerland and perhaps some of the very small states in Southeastern Europe excepted.

In order to avoid misconstruction or misunderstanding, the average European freight rates per ton-miles, as given direct by statistics, *no allowance being made for equitable comparison* with American rates, are given below:

	Cents per ton mile.
Germany	1.35
Sweden	1.47
Norway	2.10
Switzerland	2.72
Netherlands	1.17
Roumania	1.49
Russia	0.92
England	2.00
Italy	1.76
Austria	1.39
France	1.46
Belgium	1.25

Before leaving this point of our investigation, let us make a direct comparison between results obtained by large publicly owned and private

*For Russia the regular ton-mile rate has been given, as the length of haul, amount of bulky freight, etc., probably resembles conditions in the United States.

systems. The best example for a comparison between government and private ownership, and the fairest to private management as well, is that offered by the German State railways and the British roads. No one would deny that for private roads the English are the best managed, and give the most satisfactory service. We have even examples of American railway officials of high standing admitting the superiority of British roads over American, if all factors are fairly considered. A comparison between German and English roads makes a direct comparison of all matters permissible, inasmuch as the conditions in the two countries do not materially differ. These countries are located in the same part of Europe, both are densely populated, and highly developed industrially. This comparison will show us that private railroads, even when given the same working conditions, will charge higher rates for the same service.

The matter of passenger rates first shows us that the average English rate is 2 cents per mile, while the average Prussian rate is less than one cent. Comparing freight rates is a more difficult matter. While German freight rates are uniform, British are not, and a comparison will by necessity be a comparison of averages only. The following table gives, however, the average rates between certain terminals in England for various classes of goods, and the freight rates for the same distances in Germany, the table being one for comparison only:

	Germany.	England.
Bar iron	\$2.03	\$2.95
Iron wire	2.03	3.98
Hardware	2.55	5.14
Cutlery	2.33	5.12
Cotton goods	3.39	4.64
Woolens	3.76	6.85
Machinery	1.12	4.69
Cotton	1.04	1.79
Wool	1.04	2.29

A comparison of the figures above shows plainly that freight rates in England are nearly, and in some cases more, than double the rates in Germany. Here we have then two countries, the conditions of which are practically the same, the only difference, if any, being that England has an even more intense railway traffic than Germany. If then it has been possible under government ownership to bring down freight rates, as well as passenger fares, to a level far below what has been attained under private ownership, is not that one of the most forcible arguments in favor of public ownership, and a strong indication of its possibilities?

ERIK OBERG.

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Men who assert that certain of their fellows are not fit to govern themselves usually want the job for their own profit.—The Silent Partner, of Cleveland.