

PROGRESSIVE FARMER

THE INDUSTRIAL AND EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF OUR PEOPLE PARAMOUNT TO ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF STATE POLICY.

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RAILROADS.

Reply to "A Unit."

BY OLD FOGY.

I am never happier than when I take up a paper and find some independent thinker has reviewed an article or argument of mine.

If I am in error, I am under obligations to my reviewer for pointing out the better way; if I happen to be in the right, I then have an opportunity of discussing the subject at greater length.

My reviewer, who signs himself "A Unit," says: "I agree with Old Fogy until he jumps on the railroads, and wants to hand them over to government control." I am delighted with the expression "jumps on the railroads." I am glad he thinks I deserve so great a compliment.

"A Unit" says: "A man need never travel on freight trains," etc.

The truth is, a man does not have to travel on any train. There is no law that makes it obligatory so to do. But it is convenient for us, and since the people gave the railroad companies the right to build and operate railroads for the benefit of the people, it is expected that the people will use the railroads for their benefit. Now if "A Unit" had been travelling for years, as I have he would know that it frequently is the case that you are compelled to lie over for hours, waiting for a passenger train, when two or more freight trains will pass the point you are detained at, and the freights would take you with but little loss of time to your destination.

Again, "A Unit" says: "If I am not mistaken, there is a law which forbids railroads hauling passengers on freight trains."

My brother must remember that THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER is no longer a local paper. While it discusses questions that relate to North Carolina, its articles are quoted in two-thirds of the States in this Union. Even "Old Fogy's" articles go the rounds, so that if there is such a law in North Carolina, it does not follow that such laws obtain in other States. But for argument's sake we will suppose there is such a law in North Carolina, and in every other State in our Union. What would it prove?

Nothing, only the fact that the legislatures of the States had passed such a law. It would not prove that it was right or just.

There was a law passed taxing every pound of cotton three cents and the injustice of the law still rankles in every true man's breast.

There is a law that gives to National Banks the power to virtually control the currency of our country, but we question the wisdom of the law. But if my brother refers to our good Old North State, he is either mistaken, or the law is a dead letter. Take that system of railroads that runs from Portsmouth to Raleigh and West; I have rode miles on freight trains on that railroad; indeed, from Weldon to Raleigh they run a sleeping car. The R. & D. carries passengers on freights

from Raleigh West, and a Pullman sleeper at that. We desire railroads to have passenger cars attached to their freights and carry passengers, so that the public will not be benefited as they now are. Is there any injustice in this? Do not the people need all the accommodations possible?

Will "A Unit" explain why a train whose average is not over 12 miles per hour, be more dangerous than one running 30 or 40 miles per hour, on the same road-bed, under the same rules and restrictions?

"A Unit" says: "There is no injustice in the companies charging the same rates on both classes of trains." I take it that my brother has given but slight attention to railroads.

In the courts and before the Railroad Commission, railroad have appeared as defendants and as plaintiffs. Their sworn testimony lies before me. Their testimony is in hundreds of cases "that it costs far more to carry passengers or freight rapidly than slowly." This, too, is in harmony with mechanical laws and principles. Now if it costs less to haul a given load slowly than rapidly, then it is manifestly unjust to charge as much for a slow haul as for a fast one.

My brother grows eloquent when he comes to the charge that a poor man cannot travel as cheaply as a rich one, and he asserts that "It does not cost a poor man one cent more to travel one mile, or a thousand, than it does a rich one."

I am willing to believe that my brother honestly believed this statement of his, but it is not true.

In the last eight months my diary shows over 20,000 miles of travel, and in my life many hundred thousand miles and I do know that my brother has his figures mixed. He knows, and so does every reader of THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER, that a poor man cannot buy a 5,000 mile ticket or a 1,000 mile ticket. There are, as I know, hundreds of farmers in North Carolina that after working hard all the year, cannot after settling up with their merchant and laborers, buy from the proceeds of a large farm a 1,000 mile ticket much less a 5,000 mile ticket. This statement is hardly entitled to respectful attention. I have been quite a tourist for 26 years and I have never seen a poor man travel on an annual pass. Unfortunately, the poor man is passed by when the railroads deal out their favors.

When it comes to the arranging of schedules for the purpose of diverting travel from one line to another, "A Unit" says: "Merchants, towns, newspapers and everything which comes into competition, arrange their schedules for their own aggrandizement, regardless of the injury inflicted on their competitors;" and not content with this wonderful (?) proposition adds, "if it is right for one it is right for another."

The competition of merchants and newspapers is for the benefit of the masses. The closer the merchant sells, the more reliable the newspaper, the better for the people. Not so with railroads. It affects injuriously the people who granted them the right to build and operate the railroads.

Charitably, I conclude that "A Unit" was endeavoring to make himself appear much more ignorant than he really is. The bare assumption that there is a parable in his cited case is enough to make a horse laugh. Many of his assumptions and special pleadings are based on the idea that railroads are under the same conditions that the farmer and merchant is. I will define the Status of both as held by the courts.

"Private railroad property is acquired by deed of gift, conditional occupancy or by purchase."
"Public, real property or government property is owned in common by all citizens of the government and is acquired by purchase, by forced concession, by treaty or by a combination of these principles."

"Corporate, real property owned by public carriers, is acquired by purchase, by gift, by forced concessions, but only after there has been a treaty, a compact, a contract made by the people on one part and the company on the other. The party of the first part the people, the State concedes certain privileges and rights, each to receive benefits from the contract."

No corporation can dispossess you of your farm against your will or of any lands which the State has previously given you a charter for, that is, a deed, either directly or been passed down from those the State did deed directly to, unless by consent of the citizens of that State, which consent is had when the charter is given, if at all. And as all contracts must have a consideration, the consideration on

the part of the railroad for its services is to be its fees, taxes, tolls or dues.

The State and the citizens receive such benefits as accrue in development of markets, of slumbering opportunities and the conveniences which the individual members of the body politic may receive, etc. Land, therefore, is granted public carriers on the same principle that it is granted to the people for highways—for their convenience and good. The details only differ.

So that when the State takes your land and gives it over to another or others, it can only set aside the deed you have on the ground of public good, and I assert and defy successful contradiction, that where the public good is not a constant consideration, that the charter to any and all roads becomes forfeited to the State.

Having thus explained the difference between the property of the servant and the property of the people, the master as laid down in the books, I now proceed to further dissect my reviewer. No sane man would hold that the case cited by "A Unit," (the merchant and railroad) is analogous unless some supposed benefit, for some direct interest, would lead him to the position.

Every farmer that reads our paper knows he has no sampling laws enacted to regulate the price he may charge for his wheat or cotton, or to regulate his charges for services at all. There is no law that says, "and he it enacted, that the farmers of North Carolina may receive 20 cents per pound for their cotton, provided, however, the farmer shall lower the price of his profits exceeding 8 per cent. after making all improvements, etc."

Again, my brother imagines that he has jumped on the facts that prove that less rates would yield a fair profit when he asserts: "That the Central, of New York, does a greater business in carrying passengers than any other railroad in the United States."

In the first place the statement is incorrect. The Central does not carry as many passengers as other railroads either as an entire system or per mile of railroad. The facts are, the Central is paralleled its whole length.

It has cost more than other roads, more than three times over the average of roads, as it has four tracks side by side much of its length, and after all this the stock is doubled and at two cents per mile it pays handsomely.

But when "A Unit" gets over to India he fairly dances with glee. He says that fuel is cheaper there than here. I demand proof. Please state where the railroads get their fuel and its cost? What is the actual cost per mile per ton for freight and transportation of passengers? Do not many of the great systems of our country own their coal? The sworn facts are attainable as to cost actual, in our country. Please give them, since you are the railroad attorney.

"A Unit" says rolling stock is lighter. I do not believe that the railroad will enjoy your defense. Admit that it is lighter, what of it? Does that prove anything to your advantage? If light rolling stock were more profitable, could not and would not our railroads put on light cars, etc. I think the water is too deep for you unless you can swim. The facts are, rolling stock is getting heavier year by year because it is more profitable, it cheapens the cost of transportation.

If under a monarchy railroads are profitable, ought they not under the same regulations and tariff rates be much more so in a republic?

Do not the inhabitants of India get so little for their services that they can ride but little and at low rates?

I noticed in Mexico, where the Peons got only 10 cts. per day, they were forced to go on foot. The Central has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to get the law repealed. The people had to threaten to take the property—to take the reserved prerogative of taking the road.

But when my brother gets to the point of vital importance, "Should roads used for the transportation of the people's produce or to further commerce be used for profit," he can no longer contain himself.

I wonder if "A Unit" and Icarus are synonymous?

He says that roads were put down at enormous cost, and they were built by private means.

This statement is true, but not as he intended it. I will tell the good people of North Carolina how it is true. I am ready to prove by the record every proposition. It is true that many of the railroads of North Carolina were put down at enormous cost—to the tax payers. It is true they were built largely by the private means

of the farmers of North Carolina, and not by the private means of the stockholders.

I assert and I challenge proof to the contrary that from the day legislation on the R. & G. (and it is a volume of itself) began until now, the taxpayers of North Carolina never ceased to contribute to the railroads of North Carolina. Commence, as I have and go over all the legislation in reference to railroads in North Carolina to the issuing of bonds, examine the Auditor's, the Treasurer's reports from 1835 to 1888, a period of over a half a century and it is tax, tax, tax for the railroads. The State indebtedness before and since the war is largely railroad and interest thereon.

Put this in your pipe and smoke it. The total amount of property ceded to railroads and the aid donated, and the interest thereon, paid by taxation, is greater than the assessed valuation of the railroads in North Carolina.

God being my helper I expect to do what little I can to ventilate the railroads and their claims in North Carolina when the next election comes and I will give due notice of the fact that I hold under their own or their agents signatures evidence that will be highly entertaining.

Leaving our State for the moment I want to say that the amount paid yearly in taxation for the benefit of railroads companies—paid by private citizens, and if not paid your sheriffs sell your property and dispossess you of your home or your all, amounts to more than the entire expenses of the United States Government in any year prior to 1860.

Don't talk to me about private means. The private who tramps in the rear ranks have had their means taken from them for the benefit of — pray tell me who? Are our railroads controlled by anybody that has any other interest in North Carolina than to draw dividends? Do they share our sorrows, our afflictions, our poverty? Do they not cry give, give, and then in Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia and other points spend the money drawn from us?

But "A Unit" gets down to solid work when he says: "The idea of taxing the people to keep up the roads, just try it once and you never in all your life heard such a howl as will rend the vaulted sky." Just as if the people were not taxed to aid in their construction to aid in repairs. Read the laws for issuing some of your State bonds and you will never expose yourself again. Ahem! Were not the people taxed to the amount of the lands taken for railroad purposes? Are they not taxed every time they ride on the cars? Are they not taxed every time they send away a bale of cotton or when they buy a pound of bacon, or for every pound of flour or bushel of corn that goes over the railroads?

It is because I know how heavily the people are taxed, it is this that makes me howl; it is the reason they howl, and we want it understood that we will keep on howling until we get a commission that will stop their excessive and extortionate charges.

At this point the brother, if indeed he is one, forgets his obligation. The statement I made, (see Jan. 21st, '90), was: "Let the tax be in proportion to use and let the tax be direct." Are not the people taxed in precisely the same way now? If you ship one bale of cotton your tax is less than if you ship 50, and the tax is direct—each shipper pays it.

Again, I said the railroads, like our public roads, like our rivers, should be kept in good condition by the people for the people. Evidently plain farmers' talk is not comprehended.

Are not our country roads worked by taxation? The State levies a tax of labor or money on its citizens. Labor used by the State is a tax on the person. I used it in the same sentence with rivers. They are kept clear by a tax on the citizen.

I shall not refer to the seemingly intentional misrepresentation, for I am ready to assume that my brother did not so intend it, but was carried away by his subject. Taking up another point: "A Unit" says: "Government control of railroads is all bosh." Is it? I suppose that when the St. Louis Convention adopted the plan, that it was made up of all bosh.

Do you think Col. Polk, Capt. Alexander, President Elias Carr, Major Graham and a host of others are all bosh? They voted for it. If the plan is all bosh, those from whom it emanated must be all bosh, too. I do not believe that the distinguished brethren named will lose much sleep on account of the all bosh.

Did you, in your unsophisticated innocence, not know that the ablest minds

living to-day advocate it? Have you read the discussions in Parliament and by the great writers of England on the subject? Have you read the reports of the French scientists on the point? Have you read the great German thinkers on the subject? Do you not know that in our own country our clearest thinkers advocate it? We have practically had this plan as to our mail facilities for near a century. Is that bosh? Explain why railroads under government control should cease to be for the benefit of the people? Is not the mail service under government control, and is it not for the people's good? Is it not cheaper and better than we could hope to have it if in the hands of monopolists? "A Unit" makes another charge. In fact he made a wholesale business in that direction. He adds: That it would become a vast political machine.

What proof is adduced for this? Does not North Carolina own some railroad stock? Does not our good old State have something to say about who shall be president of our railroads? Do you mean to say that Vance and Jarvis, Scales or Fowle have used the State railroads for a vast political machine? I do not suppose you would say so, yet reasoning by analogy it would lead up to that. Do you not suppose that when Capt. Alexander is Governor of North Carolina that he will be equally as patriotic and pure? Or that if these same gentlemen had charge of the railroads of the United States they would not prostitute the public service. I have not lost all faith in human kind, nor do I think all good is found in any one party.

After all these articles, he builds a man of straw and stuffs the following in his mouth: Place the roads in the hands of the present Administration and all the present employees not in sympathy with the Administration would be displaced.

The good people of North Carolina will justly conclude that a man's cause must be weak when he is forced to make his opponent say what he actually opposed.

Does he misrepresent "Old Fogy," or is "Old Fogy" misrepresenting him? Turn to your paper of January 21st and read for yourselves. You will read in my address "The State Superintendents to be elected by the people. Thus we would have no Administration patronage. Mail, express and telegraph superintendents would be elected by the people. We would lessen by more than 100,000 the number of appointees by the Administration.

Who proposes to place patronage in the hands of the government? We do not. We propose to put it in the hands of the people, and all my articles, as you will bear me witness, is for more State sovereignty and less centralization—even to electing postmasters by the people.

Again, "A Unit" says: "We would elect a King or some other nuisance, the weight of whose little finger would be heavier than the heaviest yoke ever fastened upon us by all the railroads in the country. I certainly sympathize with the ignorant. I know how little I know and no one can regret it more than I. So I feel for my poor brother. Now I would offer this advice in the kindest spirit. The railroad heels, anxious to keep in favor with their masters, want to abuse some one and show at the same time how little we poor hay seeders know, so I give this opportunity for them to spread themselves. We have in the United States six men railroad kings that with the weight of their fingers on the pen can and do collect more tax from the people of the United States than all the monarchies in Europe for monarchical purposes. If the government controlled railroads, "A Unit" could have a voice in the management; as it is he has now but little voice in the country's affairs and growing less year by year.

We want all our people to control railroads and the government. Today the railroads and banks control the country and control us all to a greater or less extent, and at last the old negro puts in his appearance. Is the old woolly head to be the Alpha and Omega of all arguments eternally? Yes, if politicians can control us he will.

How that woolly head that nursed us as babes, that played with us when boys, makes us shiver. Oh, how awful to see them helping us on the trains! Did you ever ride on a Pullman car? Don't they do that now? Were our fathers before the war afraid of their touch? There is such a thing as being over nice. It seems to me that I can hear the eloquent

words of the matchless Grady in defense of his old black mammy, and I pity those who forget all the past. But from sentiment to fact: The railroads of North Carolina are putting negroes in places occupied by white men in the North. There he is the assistant used in train service save on a Pullman car. So that the fears that negroes will crowd white men out—that they will fill places "once filled by honest, decent white men," is already realized. The practices of your friends—the railroads illy compares with your defense.

In conclusion, let me say to the readers of THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER that I should not have given "A Unit" the time and space I have, but the subject is one of great importance to you, to your children, and to our country. We must control all monopolies and trusts or they will control us. Monopolies and trusts are the outgrowth of our civilization, and if controlled will be to our advantage.

SYNDICATES, AGRICOLES, ETC.

Mr. Edross:—The intense depression in agriculture, the destruction of vineyards by phylloxera, the excessive profits of dealers and the frauds in seeds and fertilizers were prolific causes of loss and complaint among French farmers for years. Numerous attempts at association for protection and relief resulted in failure.

A bill to permit free right of association under discussion for several years became a law March 21, 1884, since which time co-operative societies called "Syndicates Agricoles" have had a phenomenal growth.

The law permits "persons of the same occupation, of similar trades, or of related occupations contributing to the creation of a given product, to unite themselves in associations without previous permission from the authorities." The law prescribes as the object of the syndicates "the study and defense of their economic interests, industrial, commercial and agricultural," also to combine with other syndicates to form leagues or confederations of many syndicates.

Professors of agriculture and government officials have taken active part in promoting and perfecting these societies.

The syndicates number many hundreds and their membership many thousands. Their avowed objects are improved methods in cultivating, manufacturing and marketing the products of the vine, sugar beet and other farm crops, the purchase through agencies of seeds, fertilizers, machinery and other farm supplies; the diffusion of knowledge by public meetings, papers, lectures and schools; the protection of the weak among producers against rapacity and greed in commerce.

The syndicates have been extremely successful in business. Seeds and fertilizers are placed under government inspection and purchasers secure a reduction in cost of 10 to 20 per cent.

The membership fee varies with the syndicate, running from nothing up to a dollar. The practical objects and methods of the syndicates agricoles seem quite similar to the Grange. The universal extortion, fraud and oppression practiced on the creators of wealth are producing their fruit and that fruit is co-operative association for mutual protection and profit.

The above synopsis is compiled from the December, 1889, report on the crops of the year by United States Statistician Dodge. The report is worth money. Send and get one free.

E. HOLLENBECK.

There is \$100,000,000 of gold coin under lock and key in our national treasury vaults pretended to be held for the cancellation of legal tender notes (green backs). The fact is the National banks control the circulating medium of our country and they have managed to restrict our currency to the extent of this amount. They again they cannot control the greenback as they can gold, silver and national bank notes and they are bent on wiping out the last vestige of the convenient and honest greenback. They have labelled and boycotted it, and what with cancellation and retirement, the poor thing has had a hard time of it in the hands of Bayard and Windom. Give us more greenbacks, and place them beyond the reach of bankers and money sharks.

The cotton crop of 1867, which aggregated only 2,097,254 bales, returned to the farmers \$279,354,232, while the crop of 1887, which was the largest ever produced and aggregated 7,048,833 bales only returned \$263,269,692.