

THE RAILWAYS AND THE PEOPLE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649686186

The Railways and the People by Sterling P. King

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BY
STERLING P. KING

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"Prize Essay on the Tariff," etc., etc.*



BOSTON
THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

WITHDRAWN

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PREFACE

This book is intended, primarily, as a discussion of the railroad problem, but there are other auxillary questions which, in a measure, are dependent upon a proper solution of the transportation problem for their settlement. This is especially true of the farmers and producers difficulties in finding a market for their output. The consumers are interested in any solution of the transportation question which brings to them adequate supplies at prices within their purchasing power. Labor regains a feeling of ease and contentment when it realizes that the wage has been doubled by laying down the family needs and comforts at half former prices. These are some of the big problems that are affected by railroad legislation.

This treatise is along entirely new lines of thought and present the whole subject in a new light. It is not expected that every reader will agree with the author in his conclusions, but it is confidently expected that every reader will get some ideas on the policies discussed which will enable him to form a more intelligent opinion when called upon to pass judgment on the transportation question. Every person in the United

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States is vitally interested in this discussion, in so far as it will lead to a lowering of freight charges and thereby largely decrease the burden of high prices for the necessities and comforts of life; and also in so far as it will supply those necessities and comforts in adequate quantities.

This is not a technical presentation of the issues involved in the proper solution of the railroad problem, and the questions which cluster around it; but it is rather a popular treatise intended for general reading, and so presented that any one who can read it will understand its meaning.

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I

SUPPOSING

A news item from Orlando, Florida, under date of December 24, 1920, contains the following information regarding the orange market: "The fact that the markets are dead, at least for the present, cannot be glossed over. Packers and buyers have lost a hogshead of gold dollars and all within the last six weeks. The worst is that there is no relief in immediate sight. It is idle to talk of who or what agency is to blame. We've got to face the music and it has got to be faced on a lower level of values and a saner attitude toward volume of shipments and buying power in Northern consuming centers." At the date mentioned oranges were selling on the trees at \$1.00 a case. This then is the amount that the growers were getting for their fruit. This \$1.00 per case was their full compensation for the necessary fertilizers and labor for growing oranges.

A case of oranges means approximately 200. It depends on the size of the fruit—cases containing small fruit will run more to case while cases containing very large fruits will fall very much below that count. But all cases will contain approximately the same amount in weight.

Taking 200 as the average number of oranges to the case, and \$1.00 as the compensation paid the growers, gives them six cents per dozen, or half a cent per orange for their crop of fruit.

Let's change this and allow them one cent per orange, two dollars per case as compensation for their crop delivered on the cars. This two dollars per case would make the growers good money, and at that price—a penny an orange—it would seem that every table in the country would have an abundance of this luscious fruit.

The United States produces, annually, about 21,000,000 boxes or cases, of oranges. The census places the population of the United States at a little more than 105,000,000. This gives every individual in the country one-fifth of a box of oranges every year, and there is not a well child in the United States who cannot take his one-fifth of a box of oranges and completely clean them up within five days and feel better for having eaten them. Oranges are one of the healthiest fruit on the markets and a food that children should have an abundance of. If every person could have at least two oranges daily it would materially improve the health of the American people, if along with the oranges there was the other necessary food. I fancy there will be no controverting the statement that two oranges daily added to American diet would materially improve the health and prolong the life of the people.

Two oranges daily would mean an aggregate consumption of 210,000,000 oranges by all the people. This reduced to boxes, or cases, means a daily consumption of 1,050,000 cases. On this basis the present orange production of the country would last only twenty days. The present annual orange production measured in carloads, calculating 24,000 pounds to the car, is right at 70,000 cars. And this production if properly distributed among the people at a price which they could afford to pay, would all be consumed in twenty days if each person ate only two oranges daily.

If oranges were sold at such a price, and so distributed, as to enable every person to use two daily, there would be a market for 105,000 carloads per month, 1,260,000 cars per year; and American health and happiness would be greatly increased by this regular addition to the daily diet.

The social workers will say, yes, it will improve the happiness of the people to have the increased fruit diet; the health board will rejoice in the anticipated improvement which would follow the change; but the mercenary individuals will want to know what pecuniary profits would result from the change. Since money should have its place in the consideration of economic and industrial questions, this is a proper question to propound. The present production of oranges