

**GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP  
OF RAILWAYS CONSIDERED  
AS THE NEXT GREAT STEP IN  
AMERICAN PROGRESS**

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Government ownership of railways considered as the next great step in American progress by  
Anthony Van Wagenen

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**ANTHONY VAN WAGENEN**

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# Government Ownership of Railways

2 vols.

Considered as the Next Great Step in  
American Progress



By

Anthony Van Wagenen



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## PREFACE

ONE object of this book is to call public attention to the world-wide triumph of government ownership of railways. So complete is this triumph that the world may now be said to be upon a government-ownership basis. In four-fifths of the nations of the world, government ownership is the rule and private ownership the exception; while out of the fifty considerable nations of the earth, there are only four in which government ownership does not prevail to a greater or less extent. This book is a plain history of the growth of the system of public ownership from the time when the Government of Belgium pioneered in railroading with private capital to this day of the general adoption of nationalization. The argument herein is meant for the general reader. It is burdened with few tables or statistics, and the author hopes that, while not lacking in clarity, the book is so written that the busy man may be able to read it

restfully. No claim as to exhaustiveness is made, but it is hoped that no omissions will be found which will vitiate the conclusions presented. The author believes that the time is ripe for public discussion of this subject, and he hopes that this book may stimulate such discussion. Events of the most unquestioned importance and intense interest relating to the matter are occurring frequently, about which little is said in the press, and nothing at all in public discussion.

Seven years ago, in a speech at Waterloo, Iowa, the writer first publicly advocated government ownership of railways for the United States. That the minds of the people are awake to the subject is proven by the surprising effect of this utterance in stimulating debate and awakening enthusiasm in Iowa and the Middle West. Subsequent events of a political nature have tended to obscure the subject, but in the writer's opinion it cannot be much longer kept in the background. The inability of private ownership to meet the multiplying demands of the nation for the services required, must soon, it would seem, be generally recognized.



I shall be satisfied if this book shall do any part of the work of awakening the people to the futility of leaving our highways in private hands, or of failing to reap the reward of the enormous economies which government ownership will surely effect.

It is with much hesitation that I have approached the publication of this book. I had hoped that the agitation of a few years ago would encourage some abler writer to make public a plea for government ownership. As a matter of fact, the interests opposed to public ownership have caused to be written books which are briefs for the private companies, full of laudation of them, and stuffed with sophistical arguments against the system which the world has in the main adopted and is rapidly pushing to complete acceptance, while the other side has remained silent. No one else having published the people's side of the question, I offer this little work as my contribution to a literature the poverty of which is my excuse, if excuse be required.

A. V. W.

STOUX CITY, IOWA,  
March 15, 1910.



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