

generally, the last issue of the Street Railway Review, dated February 15, has a very interesting article, which is a discussion of the assertion that while everything has been cheapened in price the past few years, street car fares alone remain the same. As an offset to the claim thus set up it is pointed out that there are two methods of cheapening railway rates, viz, cutting down the price and improving the service; and that the improvement from the old horse and two-horse cars to the present electric cars, the lighting, the heating, the trackage, etc., has been a rate-cutting which surpasses the cheapening in any other branch of business. Then the declaration is made that by the transfer system, longer hauls, and all improvements in service, "the price of car fares not only has been reduced, but that no other article of as common use has been as greatly reduced in price." The street car rides have been enlarged enormously, but the price thereof has not been increased.

A series of comparative charts between conditions in 1887 and 1897 make a showing for twenty-eight cities in the Union of an average increase in the length of a five-cent ride in the latter year, as against the ride in the former year, of 357.5 per cent. In other words, in the matter of increased distance alone, if the same rate that prevailed in 1887 per mile were maintained today, the present full average five-cent ride would cost the passenger 16.85 cents. This is independent of the better service in cars and speed. The comparative long-distance rides in 1887 and in 1897 in a number of cities, which are a fair sample of all, show the reduction in fares from that standpoint:

Rochester, N. Y., in 1887, 3 miles; in 1897, 7.3 miles.
 Paterson, N. J., in 1887, 2 miles; in 1897, 8 miles.
 St. Louis, Mo., in 1887, 5 miles; in 1897, 22 miles.
 Wilmington, Del., in 1887, 1.89 miles; in 1897, 5 miles.
 Baltimore, Md., in 1887, 8 miles; in 1897, 18 miles.
 Springfield, Mass., in 1887, 3 miles; in 1897, 17 miles.
 San Francisco, in 1887, 5½ miles for 10 cents; in 1897, 14 miles for 5 cents.
 Cincinnati, in 1887, 7 miles; in 1897, 28 miles.
 Portland, Ore., in 1887, 3 miles; in 1897, 14 miles.
 Chicago, in 1887, 5 miles; in 1897, 15 miles.

A great many more cities are given, showing the same general increase; in summing up the whole situation in his city, a St. Louis manager tells the tale for the whole country, outside of the lengthened ride, in the following: "1887—speed 6 miles per hour, small cars, rough track, cars not warmed, and no transfer; 1897—speed 12 miles per hour, large cars, smooth track, cars heated and a transfer system, doubling and trebling the present increased length of roads; fare five cents, including transfer." In some cases the haul is nine times as long as in 1887.

This shows that there has been a vast reduction in the cost of street car rides during the past ten years, in the value received for the price of the fare. The matter of being carried over the ground without the effort of

walking is not the only question; there are the items of speed and comfort. And as to the suggestion often made that many passengers are for short distance rides, the last named items apply with full force.

Then there is the relation of wages to fares. The wages of street car employees have lowered in some parts and in others have advanced, so that the average is stated to be slightly above that of 1887, requiring, of course, training of a higher order. The proportion of wages paid to the entire expense of operation ranges from 40 to 70 per cent. Hence it can be seen at a glance that the laboring men's point against legislative reduction in street car fares is well taken; while at the same time the general conditions that prevail is such as to keep those fares in touch with any general reduction of prices which a community or the country feels.

ENGLAND HELD RESPONSIBLE.

The famine in India, which, according to all reports, threatens to be the most disastrous on record in that country, furnishes a text for severe criticisms of the British government. It is charged with having caused it by a system of spoliation comparable only to that of Rome in ancient days, or that of Turkey in our own times.

One of the accusations made is that the opium trade is a factor in the famine. China war, as will be remembered, forced by British arms to admit the poisonous drug into the country, after the Chinese government had prohibited its importation, and large tracts of land are now used in India for the cultivation of the poppy—extremely fertile land in provinces where rain hardly ever falls. The very granaries of the country on which the population could depend in times of scarcity for a supply of bread-stuff have been converted into poppy fields. The government receives an export tax of three hundred dollars for every chest of opium, and the few owners of the fields make fortunes, but the majority of the people who are employed in the manufacture of the drug are subjected to starvation whenever the rain falls and there is a shortage in the grain crop. To this comes that they nearly all are addicted to the opium habit and become mental and physical wrecks.

A London paper (quoted by the Literary Digest), speaks of the condition of the millions of India in the following manner:

India is inhabited by 250,000,000. Their average income is 15 shillings [\$3.75] per year per head. Over \$70,000,000 [\$350,000,000] have been spent during the last eighteen years on frontier expeditions for which the people of India have been made to pay. The famine relief fund of £15,000,000 [\$75,000,000], raised by crushing additional taxation, has been spent in the same way. Europeans have been employed more and more to the exclusion of natives as officials; their salaries, saved largely to be spent in England, amount to £20,000,000 [\$100,000,000] annually; £25,000,000 [\$125,000,000] are drawn from India annually to pay interest and the pensions of English officials. All this has to be paid in gold, although the government has stopped the coinage of silver, thus reducing one half the exchange value of the small savings set aside by the people in the shape of silver earnings, bangles, etc., to meet the pinch

of scarcity. If we ceased to extort so outrageous a tribute there would be no serious famine. England herself has directly caused and is now daily aggravating the famine in India.

The St. James Gazette does not take kindly to the unfavorable criticism. That journal thinks they all are "very ill-bred persons, who appear to think there is something heroic in scolding at England." Well, it is not considered pleasant to be told of faults, but nations as well as individuals need to have set before them sometimes the results of wrong-doing in the past as a guidance to wiser conduct in the future. India's millions are patient because conscious of their weakness, but every tear that falls on the native soil from the sufferers from injustice and wrong is liable to turn into a spark of fire that some day may cause a conflagration. A great empire steadily extending her borders among so-called inferior races of the earth cannot afford to forget that its different parts will be held together permanently only by the bonds of justice and brotherly love.

A PIONEER ITEM.

The commendable interest of the Pioneers of 1847 and their descendants in preserving historical items of the pioneer period for Utah is adding much to the public store of information on the subject. The News trusts that this interest will not be allowed to abate, but that every name entitled to a place among the honored band of Utah's early settlers will be enrolled now, and that history will record any events through which they are deserving of special mention. The Pioneer Semi-centennial Commission is anxious to get all data attainable at the earliest possible date. Letters relating to this matter, received by the NEWS, are either turned over to the commission or published, that that body may have the information they contain. Among our letters today was the following interesting note concerning the carriage in which President Young crossed the Plains:

OONEN CITY, Feb. 18, 1897.

To the Editor:

Learning through the NEWS that it is desirable to obtain the names of the survivors of the Pioneers of 1847, we, the daughters of Thomas J. and Rozetta Thurston, who crossed the Plains in the company of Captain J. M. Grant, in 1847, send you our names and addresses.

We also forward to you a scrap of history connected with the carriage in which President Young came West, and which is designed to be one of the prominent features of the parade in the coming celebration.

Our parents joined the Church in Ohio, after the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph, and knowing that the Saints were going West they took with them to Navoo a nice family carriage and a span of very fine horses, which they designed for their convenience on their westward journey; but finding out that President Young was cramped for means to get an outfit for his journey, and that he intended coming with a wagon, father presented him with his carriage and horses, which he insisted on President Young's taking, telling him that the way would open up for him to fit himself out, and he would not be far behind him. President Young pronounced a blessing upon him and in a marvelous manner his blessing was fulfilled. Father was very soon on his journey with a splen-