

the United States. The Territorial system, in our opinion, is not constitutional nor in accord with the principles that inhere to a republican form of government. It is regarded as merely a temporary expedient even by its strongest defenders, and sooner or later it must go and be superseded by State organizations in which republican institutions prevail. But if there is any reason or necessity for withholding the powers of political freedom from any inopulent commonwealth in the country, it exists in reference to Idaho. A Territory that applies its limited powers to the throttling of liberty and the enslavement of its citizens because of their belief, no matter what that belief may be, proclaims its own unfitness for the enlarged authority which comes with statehood, and invites the intervention of national restraint instead of exhibiting the qualities essential to independent sovereignty.

The facts in relation to the political history of Idaho only need to be made clear to the powers that be, to postpone for a season the sudden accession to supremacy which certain ambitious schemers in the north are reaching for with eager hands.

All in good time, Idaho, with the rest of the Territories now left out in the cold, will be gathered into the Union of States, and enjoy the rights, liberties and powers of free government. But like the others she will have to wait awhile, and the best thing for Idaho to do is to establish as much of a republican form of government within her borders as is possible under a Territorial organic act, and by abolishing oppression, class legislation and petty tyranny, exhibit the qualities necessary for State autonomy, and pave the way to that liberty which the whole body cannot enjoy while it is denied to a goodly number of its members, who are worthy and intelligent and among the most valuable and progressive citizens.

ANTI-RAILROAD LAW.

THE inter-state commerce law has operated generally in the interest of the companies which handle the traffic of the country. The public have derived little if any good from its supposed restrictions. In some respects, of course, it has been the cause of considerable difficulty. But this has been measurably over-

come, and while creating a little more labor and rendering necessary a little more ingenuity, the provisions of the law have been met in the letter but evaded in the spirit and the capitalists rather than the multitude have been the gainers.

During the closing hours of Congress, some amendments to the unpopular statute were made, and the bill received the President's signature. One of its provisions supplements the fine heretofore imposed for violations of the law, by imprisonment for discrimination in rates and charges. Any railroad official or other person connected with a railroad company who connives with a shipper or other person in making rates that are not general, is liable to pay for his infraction of the law behind the bars of a penitentiary, instead of condoning his offense by a light fine liquidated by the company. The process known as "under-billing" is punishable in a similar manner, and three days' public notice is required before a reduction of rates shall go into effect.

This has spread consternation among the railroad people and great caution has to be exercised in arrangements for freight and passenger rates of a special nature. But it is a sure thing that no ultimate disadvantage will accrue from the new provisions to any one but the patrons of the roads. Railroad men are a little too cute to place themselves within the penal provisions of this law, or to remain in any financial difficulty which at first it may occasion. As no act of Parliament can be passed through which, in the language of the famous Daniel O'Connell, a coach and four cannot be driven, so no law of Congress can be enacted, through which an American railroad company cannot rush a locomotive and a train of freight or Pullman cars.

By the by, this excessive desire on the part of our national legislators to do something exhibiting hostility to railroad corporations, as though they were unmixt evils instead of great developers of our country and its products and interests, is just as absurd, and proceeds from a similar cause, as the furore that has led to inimical legislation against Utah. It is simply a pandering to an unreasonable popular prejudice, that does not weigh both sides of a question, but raises a howl which is only the expression of ignorant passion. Statesmanship declines to yield to such ignoble influences, but politics, in the gross,

material sense of the term, is willingly swayed thereby, and hence the legislation which often disfigures the statute books of the nation, and the omission of needed laws for the correction of real abuses and the promotion of the general welfare.

That there are evils in the railroad systems which need correcting there can be no dispute. But that these will be removed and the country benefitted by laws passed in a spirit of hostility and repression to the railroad corporations, we do not believe. However, these companies are too strong to be materially crippled, and the railroads are too much of a public necessity to be greatly injured by acts of Congress, or by that jealousy of railroad magnates which is always aroused among the multitude by great financial success.

The new provisions of the interstate commerce law will, for a time, prevent secret special rates in some directions, but in private business transactions, railroad as well as other negotiations will be conducted as will best suit the interests of the parties; and special enactments which stand in the way will be complied with only in the letter, and respected simply in appearance. Commerce is so mighty that it will to a great extent regulate and govern itself.

THE BEEF "COMBINE."

IN ST. LOUIS is a gathering of representative citizens from various quarters, whose object is the adoption of measures to successfully resist the great beef "combine." So large and growing has this close corporation become that some measures such as suggested above seem to be an absolute necessity. It is to be hoped the delegates will act with deliberation, precision and ability, avoiding all things that savor of the improper use of power or money, and that the result of their labors will be a decided check to a spreading evil.

The country may be said to be honeycombed with such associations. Combines, trusts and limited corporations have become so deeply imbedded in our social system that we do not at present realize just how powerful they are nor what they may become if let alone. It looks ominous enough when a large aggregation of public men is held for the purpose of opposing the spread and influence of only one branch of the