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REMARKS OF

H. G. DAVIS,

AT

Parkersburg, West Virginia,

OCTOBER 11, 1905.

At the Opening of the New Building of the Young Men's Christian Association.

(Also his remarks at Elkins, W. Va., before the Board of Trade.)

We are here to-night to show by our presence our interest in the Young Men's Christian Association, and especially in its work in this State. This building which we are dedicating to high aims and lofty purposes, reflects great credit upon the citizens of Parkersburg. They have responded nobly to the sentiment of good will and fellowship based upon Christian principles, which is being awakened in the State, particularly among the young men.

You are fortunate in having among you men like Senator Camden and others, whose generosity and public spirit make such an institution possible in your midst.

The Young Men's Christian Association stands forth preeminently as an agency for the doing of good of a most practical kind. No greater work can be accomplished than the creation and upbuilding of character. The influence of environment is very powerful. The germ of good is in everyone, but it needs wholesome and healthy surroundings to encourage its growth.

Everything that makes for the good of the citizen helps to strengthen the State itself. The foundation of character is laid early. Temptations beset the path of the young man, but it should be easier for him to avoid the pitfalls of life now that beacons of safety are being erected by agencies like the Young Men's Christian Association. Business men want, above all else, in their employees honesty and uprightness. Corporations appreciate the advantage of good character in all branches of their service. The larger railroads and other corporate interests that give attention to the social and material affairs of their workers, recognize that what helps the individual helps the community, and are providing Young Men's Christian Association buildings for the use of their people. It is not alone in their moral, spiritual, and social influences that these institutions are useful. The educational features, which in many of them are being introduced, provide the kind of temptation that I hope will be set before all young men to make the best use of their spare time. The gymnasium affords facilities for physical development, which is quite essential in the strengthening of mind and body.

I have been associated with the history and progress of the State of West Virginia since its formation. Its advancement and development is a matter of personal pride to me. It is going rapidly forward to a place of great importance in the family of States. The vital force of civilization is power; power for the accomplishment of material things which we have in abundance

and power for good which needs only cultivation. We must have churches, schools and other public institutions, which raise the standard of citizenship, and in this list the Young Men's Christian Association stands well to the front. Its influence is far-reaching, as through its membership it permeates the whole community. It helps all the churches by strengthening the moral spirit of the members and inspiring others to religious thought. It is a unification, in a sense, of the different religious denominations, where creeds are forgotten and brotherhood remembered. Our young people deserve our attention, and I think, from indications, they are going to have it. The young man of to-day is the governing force of to-morrow. The State has no better asset than its young men, and the value of this asset can be increased or diminished as their moral and material growth is expanded or contracted.

The Sunday-School, the Church, and the Young Men's Christian Association are the three great moral agencies of the times. The Sunday-School creates in the child respect for the Bible and the Sabbath, and prepares the boy for the Young Men's Christian Association, where he develops morally, mentally and physically.

Five years ago Wheeling had the only Young Men's Christian Association in the State. Now there are between twenty and thirty with more than five thousand members, and with a daily attendance of about two thousand.

The statistics of the Young Men's Christian Associa-

tion show that in 1904 the United States and Canada had more members and expended more money than all the rest of the world. Great Britain and Germany come next.

The members in the United States and Canada were	380,000
Total members in the world	699,000
The amount expended in the world for buildings, etc	$36,000,000
Of which the United States and Canada expended	$28,000,000

I congratulate Parkersburg in being the first in this noble movement to provide homes in West Virginia for its Young Men's Christian Associations. I can assure her that her good example is being followed. Already the citizens of Wheeling, Charleston, Huntington, Fairmont, Clarksburg, Elkins and other places in the State have either commenced, or are planning, to build homes for their Young Men's Christian Associations. They are enterprises in which all can safely invest with an assurance of good returns. The work the Associations are doing has my full sympathy, and shall have my earnest and active support.

REMARKS OF

H. G. DAVIS,

AT THE

FIRST ANNUAL DINNER

OF THE

BOARD OF TRADE,

OF

Elkins, West Virginia, November 2, 1905.

You have invited me to-night to speak on the subject of railroads, but I shall not undertake to discuss so broad a subject at any length, but be content with a few general remarks pertaining thereto, and more particularly with regard to our own locality.

While serving a second term in the United States Senate, I conceived the idea of building a railroad from Piedmont up the Potomac River to its headwaters, known as the "Upper Potomac Region." I was familiar with the country in that section, and knew of the large timber areas and the vast deposits of coal it contained. Two years before my term expired, I expressed, by letter, to the people of the State my appreciation of the honors I had already received, and, on account of my desire to devote my entire time to the building of the railroad, my decision not to be a candidate for re-election. After the project was under way, Senator Elkins and myself made a trip through this country, to ascertain if it was feasible to build a rail-

road to this point, and if so, whether it would be likely to pay. That trip resulted in the building of the West Virginia Central Railway to the Tygart River.

At that time, about 1887, the nearest railroad was fifty miles away. The vast timber and coal resources of this county were of comparatively little value. Timber and coal lands were then selling at an average of from three to five dollars an acre, whereas now, they are selling at from thirty to forty dollars, and coal lands as high as one hundred dollars per acre. Beverly, then the county seat, was, perhaps, one hundred years old, and had made little progress for years. There were two or three houses and a blacksmith shop upon the site of the town of Elkins, which now has from four to five thousand people. What has brought about this great change in conditions in so short a time? I am sure you will all agree with me that it has been wrought by the railroads.

When there were no railroads all sections of the country were on an equality, but now a community without a railroad is considered as being behind the times. They develop the resources of the country, bring in the people, build up the towns, and add to the general welfare and comfort of all. They increase the value of property, pay taxes, and help support the community. They give employment to many men, both in the shops and in operating trains.

I was quite a lad when railroads came into existence, the cars at first being drawn by horses, and we looked upon their introduction and evolution in much the

same light that the present generation views the advent and development of electrical power.

It is the railway that has made possible the present greatness of the United States. It took two hundred and fifty years to penetrate even a thousand miles from the Atlantic Coast, and in fifty years the railroad took the tide of civilization across the Mississippi, the Rocky Mountains, and the alkali plains to the golden shores of the Pacific. Without it, the vast wealth of many western States would yet be but a dream, and their fertile fields an untracked wilderness. Space is practically annihilated. Each section of the country contributes its resources to the comfort and happiness of the others. It took twenty-four hours in early days to make the journey that we now accomplish in one, and at one-tenth the cost. We have the difference in time and money to devote to other things. It has a great influence upon the customs of the country and of the world. It quickens life, brings communities into closer relations, and increases mutual interests. It is an interesting fact that, in 1832, when railroads came into existence in this country, there was but one city in the United States with over one hundred thousand inhabitants, and now there are about forty.

The railroad came into being as a local necessity, and its development has been marvelous. It creates the basis of its own growth. It has kept pace with the requirements of changed conditions. The facilities of yesterday are inadequate to-day, but it has continued to build and improve its rolling stock, its road-bed and

its terminals, until now it is the greatest of what is known as "public utilities." It has by these methods, and in increasing the train capacity, reduced the cost of transportation, and thus greatly enlarged the home and foreign trade.

Considering how largely railroads enter into the affairs of every citizen, there is but little cause for complaint in their management. Rates, on the whole, are reasonable, much less than in other countries, and, with regard to freight, bear a fair proportion to the value of the commodity transported. What dissatisfaction exists is principally with the trunk lines, on account of discrimination against individual enterprises, localities and lateral roads.

There has been a good deal of discussion lately on the subject of rate-making and railroad ownership by the Government. One seems to be a step toward the other. Should the Government undertake to regulate the revenue of railroads, the power to do which is denied by many of the best legal minds of the country, it would practically be one set of people managing the property of another, and would discourage the furthe building of roads. The ownership of railroads by the Government would undoubtedly be detrimental to the interests of the whole people. It would stifle competition, and retard the growth and development of the country, which is so dependent upon the activity of private capital. It would also create a great political machine of over a million workers to be used by the party in power. As far as tried in this country, where

the conditions are very different from those abroad, municipal ownership of railroads has been a failure. The people, in some instances, were taxed to help pay their running expenses. Cincinnati owned the "Cincinnati Southern R.R.," tried to operate it, lost money, and then sold it; and Baltimore, after many years of futile attempt to run it at a profit, sold the "Western Maryland R.R."

It is only necessary to refer to a few statistics to show the magnitude of the railroad interests of this country. It is estimated that over five million people are dependent upon the railroads for a livelihood, one in every fifteen of the inhabitants. The total value of all railroad property is 15,000 millions, or about one-eighth of the entire wealth of the United States. This is two and one-half times as much as the deposits in all the national and savings banks of the country. The gross earnings are about 2,000 millions, and the railways pay out annually for labor and material twice as much as the entire revenues of the National Government. There are over two hundred thousand miles of railroad and there is in use a million and a half of freight cars, which, if placed in one train, would be long enough to stretch from New York to Buenos Ayres, a distance of over ten thousand miles.