



## Groaning Career



The Milwaukee Road is in the hands of a receiver—a bona fide receiver. The rest of us will be, shortly.

This receivership of a trans-continental line will have a tendency of convincing me that the road is actually in need of more spending money. The rest of us, likewise.

Why bum us?

Of course, I don't know how many millions the Milwaukee has paid out as dividends in the last ten years nor do I know how much it paid for the C. T. H. & E. R. R., I only know that I've spent less than 500 dollars per year of our money.

Why bum us?

Why is the road "received?"

Some think that it is highly desirable, at this time, in the face of embryonic western hydraulic manufacture to increase the freight rates on the "small" western roads—Milwaukee, ditto—you see, Idaho, Washington and Montana (and near future) contain, say, one-half of all the available water-power—in this country. Others think that since western lumber is in high demand east, increasingly—that it would be about the proper caper to bark-mark it a little with railroad tariff.

First haul it west, then east—without doubt! western commodities will travel east (proven by the fact that such heroic efforts are being made to civilize the high-priced workers with low wages, chicken-feed—(remember the time I sat in the jungles with \$830 in gold) and low standards.

Even today Montana gives respectful attention to nickles.

I'm off my subject.

No! No! No! That isn't why the Milwaukee is—well "received."

You see, the Milwaukee some time ago inducted agricultural experts into its machine shops to repair the walking-boom hand cars—cars that are worked under the same principle as rural pump handles, of 40 years ago (but, I understand, the company is considering a proposition of putting wind-mills on the cars as soon as "they" can spare the wind from their increased freight rate literature).

Indeed, the granger mechanics jamb the gears tight together, where they should have (much) play, almost clearance, and plant one set of wheels pointing north by northwest, on an east and west line . . . for pumping these cars the company pays 38 cents per hour—as fast as we quit. The gears grind that way a life time—the wood-work, in the cars, wear out in time—with the result that never in all its groaning career do you have a handcar. (I say this because I think old Byrum does not know this—a fit is easier to make than a driving-fit).

Out of eleven cars I found only one "fair" one.

Isn't it strange how only I know the cause of receivership?