

Government Ownership of Railroads, and War Taxation by Otto Hermann Kahn.txt
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Government Ownership
of Railroads,
and
War Taxation

OTTO H. KAHN

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE
NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCE BOARD
NEW YORK, OCTOBER 10, 1918

I

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP OF RAILROADS

Paternalistic control, even when entirely benevolent in intent, is generally harmful in effect. It is apt to be doubly so when, as sometimes occurs, it is punitive in intent.

The history of our railroads in the last ten years is a case in point.

In their early youth our railroads were allowed to grow up like spoiled, wilful, untamed children. They were given pretty nearly everything they asked for, and what they were not given freely they were apt to get somehow, anyhow. They fought amongst themselves and in doing so were liable to do harm to persons and objects in the neighborhood. They were overbearing and inconsiderate and did not show proper respect to their parent, i. e., the people.

But the fond parent, seeing how strong and sturdy they were and on the