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The Nationalisation of Railways. By A. Emil Davies. (Adam and Charles Black. Pp. 125. Price 1s.)

THIS book is a poor effort to put forward the case for railway nationalisation. When it is compared with Mr. Pratt's "State Railways," which was reviewed in the December JOURNAL, the inevitable conclusion is reached that if Mr. Pratt was biased in favour of private ownership of railways, Mr. Davies is even more strongly biased in the reverse direction. The result is a piece of writing calculated to mislead the general public, and to make more careful readers wonder whether there is any case at all for the nationalisation of our English railways.

To take a single instance of the manner in which Mr. Davies handles his figures, on p. 15 the fact that 195 millions of pounds have been added to the capital owing to stock conversion, consolidation and division, is emphasised, but there is absolutely no reference to the amount of capital raised at a premium. In dealing with the question of capital, Mr. Davies might also have given some consideration to the difference in capital cost per route mile and per mile of single line. Many railways leading out of London have had to make four or more lines of rails for many miles out to meet the needs of the suburban and long-distance traffic, and it is absurd to treat these miles as exactly the same as the miles of line serving the country districts.

This misleading use of railway mileage shows that Mr. Davies either deliberately misrepresents the railways or is thoroughly ignorant of railways and railway working. Whichever be the truth he is clearly disqualified from being taken seriously.

When Mr. Davies attempts to discuss competition and co-operation between railways, he contradicts himself repeatedly. In one place he rates the railways soundly for wasteful competition, whilst in another he holds up the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway to ridicule because they have made an agreement to avoid competition at Eastbourne by sharing the profits from the traffic with another railway. Again, he pleads the advantages of single administration, and fails to appreciate that he is thereby making an indictment against the State control of the past rather than against the railways which have continually been prevented from joining hands and so abolishing competition. If Mr. Davies had studied the history of the union of the South Eastern and Chatham and Dover Railways, he would have realised how very difficult and expensive it has been for railways to obtain Parliamentary sanction to unite.

At the close of the book Mr. Davies gives the address of the Railway Nationalisation Society. That society will be well advised not to depend on the facts or arguments set out in this book for its case in favour of State ownership. That there are good arguments for State ownership there is no denying, but the arguments for and against nationalisation appear to be unknown to Mr. Davies.

W. T. STEPHENSON

Socialismus und Sociale Bewegung. By WERNER SOMBART. 6th edition. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1908. Pp. xi. + 395.)

PROFESSOR SOMBART has reissued in a new form his valuable work on "Socialism and the Social Movement." The plan of the book is similar to that of the original version, but it has greatly increased its contents since the publication of the edition which Mr. Atterbury translated into English ten years ago, and even since it was reviewed in this JOURNAL two years ago.

A portion of the early introduction describing Owen and the Utopian Socialists is now omitted, and the author concentrates his attention on a realistic representation—very solid and satisfying—of the existing conditions of actual Socialist parties, with a critical discussion of their tendencies. So rigorous is his self-restraint that it is only after the perusal of some three hundred pages of the work that any definite conception as to the writer's personal attitude towards the doctrines of Socialism begins to take form in his reader's mind. It is a valuable example of the objective treatment of controversial matter, touched with imagination and insight which prevent its becoming a mere photograph of actualities.

His treatment of Marx is typical of this judicial point of view. Marxism, he says in effect, represents "une orientation," an attitude of mind rather than a creed (to borrow a phrase recently applied to a very different sphere of thought). Though modern Socialism is permeated with it, it is Marxism with most of the doctrines of Marx omitted. Imperceptibly they have been undermined, as history has shown the falsity of the "doctrine of increasing misery," &c., until the followers of the would-be philosopher and economist opened their eyes at length to find his system, "like the campanile at Venice," in ruins before them. So far as theoretical calculations could assist them, Marx and Engels could claim to have discovered "the new star" which was the symbol of the social movement that they helped to shape;