Alpert Proposes Subsidies For "Sick" Railroads

George Alpert, Chairman of the Board of the New Haven Railroad, gave his views on "Management Problems in a Regulated Industry" Wednesday, October 17. Mr. Alpert, former president of the same railroad, spoke on the problem of railroad management in this lecture sponsored by the Industrial Management Society.

The troubles of the railroads are many, Mr. Alpert said, but he doubted that these problems would be solved by industrial dynamics. The problems, he went on, are those of "political dynamics" and can only be solved by a complete revision of the "archaic regulations and inequities." Mr. Alpert, who has been described as a "socialist" and "an advocate of rationalized railroads," denied that he or anyone else desired the nationalization of the railroads. But he added that, "Nationalization is inevitable if discriminatory barriers are not removed." Subsidization is a part of a solution offered by Mr. Alpert.

Fifty to seventy-five years ago, Mr. Alpert noted, railroad presidents were traders, not statesmen. With the advent of interstate commerce laws and the Interstate Commerce Commission all of this was changed. The railroads were not allowed to raise or lower rates without the permission of various regulatory bodies, nor were they allowed to discriminate unconscionably in the sale of commodities. These regulations were designed to regularize commodities in a time when the railroad was the principal form of transportation," continued Mr. Alpert.

Loss of Revenue

The railroads have lost much of the freight which they were carrying to other forms of transportation such as trucks, barges, and airplanes. The eastern railroads lost together a total of $100 million in freight to other means of conveyance in 1931. Senator Seaborn of Florida in one study of the railroad problems asserted that the railroads are in "dike and precarious times." Others have called the railroads "the unbalanced sick man of American Transportation." But the studies have brought nothing new into the railroad Railroad.

The railroads were brought to death, "stated Mr. Alpert. Mr. Alpert noted also that the State Department spent $500 million for the nationalized railroads of Cuba, Italy, Spain, and Yugoslavia. He asked about upgrading the American railroads through subsidies. All the railroads are in "equality of enterprises," he stated.

This lecture was the first in a series to be presented this term by the Industrial Management Society on the various problems of management and industrial dynamics.

Fuertes’ Bird Paintings

Now At Science Museum

Bird paintings by Louis Fuertes (1874-1927) are being shown in the Wadsworth Gallery of the Museum of Science. They are part of his "Birds of Massachusetts" and other New England States" collection, most birds appearing in their natural habitats.