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EDITORIAL

Progress of Emancipation.

Another Emancipation Act went into effect when President Wilson ended involuntary servitude on American vessels by signing the seamen's bill. But the work of emancipation is still far from complete. It will not be ended until the last vestige of Privilege shall have been destroyed. The seamen released from one form of slavery must bear in mind the great fight, still to be won, to put an end to economic slavery, and economic slavery can not be abolished while a favored class is allowed to monopolize natural resources.

S. D.



A Congress That Might Have Done Worse.

In bidding farewell to the 63rd Congress, the country can at least congratulate itself that, as Congresses go, this one has to its credit a fair record. Thanks to the insistence of the President, it did do a lot of work; and, thanks also to the resistance of the President, it refrained from doing some mischief that it might have done. The two great obstacles that lie in the way of enlightened legislation are ignorance, and the spoils of office. Men are elected to the House of Representatives, and to the Senate, who are qualified for anything save legislation. The philosophy of government, and the fundamental principles that underlie social order, and control human relations, are to them as a closed book. Consequently, with the utmost sincerity of purpose and the best of intentions they can do little more than cut and try. Sometimes, however, their sincerity is undermined by the subtle influence of the spoils of office. The desire to return for another term and the wish to get on in the world prompt the weaker brethren to listen to the seductive offers of the genteel lobbyist. It prompts them also to plunge their arms shoulder deep in the pork barrel in order to secure for their own districts needless and extravagant im-

provements, and win favor of constituents less scrupulous even than themselves.



These political excrescences are of the past; they will in time be outgrown. We have but to note the change in public opinion in regard to the use of railroad passes by public officials in order to appreciate the possibilities of a higher conception of civic obligations. Not all judges and Congressmen were corrupted by these railroad favors, though some were; and it was necessary to eliminate this evil influence. As the public conscience evolves, the same influence will be brought to bear on the Congressmen who stand for spoils. Gradually men will be brought to see the necessity of managing the public's business as they would their own. And, as public opinion comes to condemn the Congressman who clutters the civil service with relatives and useless hangers-on, and spends the major part of his time in securing big appropriations for his own district; so it will condemn his lack of intelligence. Instead of the grab-bag system of appropriations, we shall have an intelligent budget order; and in place of haphazard methods of taxation, we shall see the raising of revenue from natural sources.



In nothing, perhaps, was the measure of the Sixty-third Congress better shown than in its refusal to accept the Bailey amendment to the Alaska railroad bill. Here was the plain proposition that the land value created by the government-constructed railroad be taken to pay for the road. Never were the rights of property, and the reward of industry more clearly defined. And yet, because it was contrary to precedent the amendment was overwhelmingly defeated. But just as the men who laughed uproariously at Congressman Robert Baker, when he publicly returned a railroad pass, came within a few years to return their own passes, in deference to a new public opinion; so the Congressmen who voted down the Bailey amendment may live to see the principle therein involved given universal application. On the whole this Congress has been so much better than most of the Congresses that have met at Washington, that there is every reason to look forward hopefully to those that are to follow.

s. c.



The Sixty-Third Congress.

The Congress just adjourned shines most brilliantly by contrast with its predecessors for several decades at least. It has more good acts to its credit and probably no more than the average

number of doubtful or of bad acts. To be sure what good work it did was grudgingly done and—but for the President's insistence—would probably not have been done at all. This good work consists principally in reduction of the tariff, in curbing the despotic power of the federal judiciary, in repeal of Panama tolls, in admission of foreign ships to American registry, in abolishing involuntary servitude on American vessels, in providing for a government-owned railway in Alaska and in providing a leasing system for Alaska Coal lands. Compared with what remains to be done these accomplishments are wretchedly inadequate. Even compared with what might have been reasonably expected they are far from what they ought to be. So while comparison with predecessors makes the record of Congress seem creditable, comparison with what it should have done makes it look otherwise.



Among the serious sins of omission must be put the failure of Congress to provide for Philippine independence. This was not merely violation of a party pledge. It would still have been a very great wrong had there been no pledge. Retaining stolen goods in one's possession is as great a wrong when no promise has been made to return them as when it has been made. Other serious omissions were failure to adopt the Bailey amendment to the Alaskan railroad bill which would have ensured to the public the land values created by a publicly built railroad; emasculation of the George bill providing a proper assessment for the District of Columbia; failure to pass the Crosser bill for municipalization of the street railways of the District; failure to pass the Lewis bill for postalization of telegraphs and telephones; failure to pass a number of adequate conservation bills pending, and other failures too numerous to specify. Probably the least excusable act of commission was adoption of the iniquitous emergency revenue act, which has not even provided adequate revenue. Lack of time fortunately prevented passage of an inexcusable undemocratic measure of a different kind—a Jim Crow street railway law for the District of Columbia. The Republican Congressman who still appeals to dead issues of the civil war period has his match in the Democratic Congressman who still caters to race prejudice.



The new Congress does not lack opportunity to improve on the record of its immediate predecessor. It should not let the opportunity pass.

s. d.