

he was not asked by the Industrial Commission to explain this apparent inconsistency. S. D.

and starting at the same time, could not have gained like fortunes.

### Misdirected Energy.

The testimony of Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, Sr., before the Commission on Industrial Relations reveals a remarkable state of affairs, and betrays a still more remarkable state of mind on the part of our two richest citizens. Amazing as it is that two young men—one an immigrant—should have begun life with nothing, and should have amassed such gigantic fortunes, the wonderment is still greater that they should have reached such an age, and remained untouched by the new thought on political and economic lines. They are men of keen perception, and their reasoning along commercial lines is sound; but regarding the laws that govern social relations, and underlie the progress of civilization, they seem to have no knowledge whatever. Commercial life to them has been a game whose rules were laid down by those who went before them. They have accepted the rules, and have played the game. That they had an unfair advantage is not apparent to them; for did they not start with nothing, and has anybody begun with less? Since all had at least as good a chance as they, why should those who failed complain of those who succeeded?

There are chances, it is true, in all kinds of business; but the varying fortune that attends all competitive business is such that the losses check the gains; and it is only exceptional ability and great industry that receive considerable rewards. But those who by accident or foresight acquire a business from which the law bars competition would be poor managers indeed if they did not prosper. Mr. Carnegie entered a business that was protected by an enormous tariff. As he was able he bought mineral lands, in which he was protected by laws that give to individual holders values that are created by the community. In all this he displayed great shrewdness, it is true, but he was all the time protected by unjust laws. Mr. Rockefeller had much the same experience. By agreements with railroads he secured advantages over his competitors. Ownership of mineral and oil lands favored him as it did Mr. Carnegie; but his control of public highways, railroads, waterways, and pipe lines enabled him to control the marketing of his products. The amassing of these fortunes were not therefore dependent so much upon ability, as upon first seizing the privileged businesses. Ten thousand men of equal ability,

Though these two men seem to be absolutely unconscious of the fact that they played the game with loaded dice, they do realize that the great mass of the players have failed; and they are eager to share their winnings with those who lost. They have pensioned many of those whom they think deserving. And they have established Foundations for the purpose of carrying on the work in a systematic and efficient way. Both men expressed the wish that the wage earners might share in the profits of the business. Mr. Rockefeller said he had thought of many plans by which stock and ownership could be transferred to the workers. But that would not solve the problem. To make his employes sharers in his monopoly privileges would in no way benefit the victims of those privileges. That would be merely an application of the fable of the perch that protested to King Pike because the pike ate the perch. The King thought the point well taken, and ordained that in the future two perch should each year be admitted to the ranks of the pike. The industrial problem is not to be solved by admitting a few perch to the privileges of the pike, but by stopping the depredations of the pike.

Mr. Carnegie and Mr. Rockefeller are no different at heart from other men. They have simply followed the rules we all try to follow; but, favored by exceptional ability, and more exceptional opportunity, they have outstripped their opponents. Change the rules, remove the legal privileges, that must of necessity be enjoyed by only a few, and the great talent of such men as these, which now works to the harm of society, will then work to its good. It is not the men, but the rules that are at fault; and the victims are to blame for the rules.

S. C.

### Taxing Liberty.

When a community imprisons a man charged with no crime, and holds him prisoner until he pays an amount demanded for his freedom, is that not morally the same as blackmail? Miami, Florida, is a community guilty of this act. The city council has recently levied what it calls street tax. Every man between 21 and 55 years of age must pay three dollars or go to jail. This is not to be confused with the poll tax, which also exists in Florida. The street tax is a supertax levied on poll taxpayers. A man may be destitute and out