

# The Public

## A GOOD DEAL LIKE MOST STATISTICS.

"Nothing like fake statistics for giving a fellow a reputation for scholarship dirt cheap," chuckled an astute citizen. Statistics are the most impressive things in the world, and the beauty about 'em is that nobody dares to contradict you. I've been working the scheme for several months, and my stock has advanced about 1,000 points a day. How do I do it? Well, to illustrate the thing, I was standing in a crowd on Canal street yesterday watching the big pile driver hammering down the walls for the drainage canal.

"Lot of power there," remarked a gentleman at my elbow as the weight came down, biff!

"Immense," I replied, 'and, by the way, I was just making an interesting calculation in regard to it. Do you know, sir, that blow is exactly equal to 9,562 carpenters driving tenpenny nails into two-inch oak planks with four-pound steel hammers? The man looked startled. 'You don't say so, professor?' he replied, respectfully, and presently I saw him whispering to the others, who sized me up with awe. The other day when it was raining I joined a group under an awning. 'Bad day,' said somebody. 'Yes,' I returned. 'I was amusing myself a few minutes ago in figuring up the quantity of water that has fallen in the city limits between six a. m. and noon.'

"At that the other fellows got interested. 'How much was it, doctor?' asked one of 'em. 'Poured into a row of ordinary half-pint tumblers,' I said, impressively, 'it would make a line once and two-fifths around the globe; it would fill a 13-inch gun barrel reaching from here to a point about nine miles east of Copenhagen; it would quench the matutinal thirst of 9,468,941 Kentucky colonels the day after Christmas; it would barely go into a tank 4,562 kilometers long and 2,411 millimeters wide.' By Jove! You ought to have seen those fellows' eyes stick out.

"When they see me now they all touch their hats. I squelched a smart Alec at our boarding house by informing him at the table that the pies consumed annually in New Orleans would form a column, piled one above the other, precisely 12,622 miles high. 'Oh, I admit it leaves about 16 pies over,' I said, when he ventured a question, 'but that's only 3½ dekometers and too small to compute.' That settled him. Now I'm the accepted authority of the establishment on everything from hash to hydraulics.

"I've found it a good idea, by the way,

to use the decimal system whenever possible. It mixes 'em up when you begin to talk about millimeters and hectometers and gives a finer flavor of learning to your remarks. I never ran across a fellow yet who dared to question a statement in decimals. If I keep up this statistician racket until summer I wouldn't be surprised if they offered me a chair in one of the colleges."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

## "BLESS THOSE WHO ARE OUT OF WORK."

For The Public.

At a church service recently when one of the most learned and eloquent ministers on the Pacific coast, Rev. Bert Estes Howard, officiated, and delivered an excellent sermon, he first prayed, as usual, for all classes and conditions of men. In asking God's blessing upon them he said: "Bless those who are out of work."

The thought at once occurred to me that he could find no better text for his discourse than that brief but significant sentence. I could but hope that he would devote at least a small portion of his remarks to a discussion of the unemployed problem, but he never again mentioned the matter, either in his prayers or his 40 minutes of such fine oratory as is seldom equaled in the modern pulpit. However, it was something for him to even publicly recognize the fact that there are people out of work, and that they are worth praying for. Especially as only a few months have elapsed since the president of the United States announced that the country was so completely submerged in prosperity that "jobs were hunting men instead of men hunting jobs."

The good minister did not inform his vast audience why men are out of work. Perhaps he did not know why. Perhaps he did not care to spend his valuable time in trying to find out. And then perhaps, like thousands of others, he believes that involuntary idleness and also poverty are among the foreordained conditions of society, and therefore society itself is not responsible for them. However that may be, the popular preacher struck a key note with which he could, if he only would, unlock the apparent mystery of increasing poverty with the march of progress and abject want in the midst of abundant wealth.

"Bless those who are out of work!" It is easy for anyone to invoke the blessing of Heaven upon the unfortunate who are seeking employment and are unable to find it. But such petitions to a throne of grace will not feed

the hungry, clothe the naked, nor repeal the infamously unjust laws that shut off would-be workers from natural opportunities. My clerical friend with the ready wit, eloquent tongue and admiring congregations, must know that there is a cause behind every effect and a remedy for every institutional wrong that exists. He must know that in this great country the natural resources are sufficient to afford a comfortable living for all; that there is enough on and beneath the earth's surface to employ all the hands and brains of all the people in California and many millions more; that no one who wants work in California need be without it for one day if nature's workshop were accessible to all. Nobody wants to work merely for the sake of working—for the sole purpose of getting tired and being called industrious. But it is ordained that man shall earn his bread by the sweat of his face, and in order to do that he must have something on which to sweat. That something is the earth. No man can work, or live, without using land, in one way or another. But by our wretched laws and customs, land the passive and labor the active factor in wealth production, are kept apart in countless instances, and men, women and children who desire to honestly earn a living are debarred from doing so. Monopoly of these natural resources intended for the free use of all mankind comes in between land and labor, so that the earth-lord practically owns the toiler, and as the labor market is always glutted the so-called owners of the earth are enabled to reap where they do not sow, while labor begs in vain for a chance to apply itself to the bountiful resources provided by our impartial and all-wise Father.

I will take the liberty of suggesting to my kind-hearted and eloquent clerical friend that in future prayers he should invoke the Almighty to open the eyes and stiffen the backbone of the average fool voter, so that he will put forth his best efforts to overthrow landlordism by legal methods. As long as the masses are forbidden to exercise their god-given right to earn a living it sounds very like hollow mockery to pray otherwise for them. The unemployed are out of work simply because our social system is out of harmony with natural laws and the demands of justice.

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When we speak of liberty we think of ourselves as exemplifying it, and a nation like Russia as expressing the opposite of it. But Russia has liberty, if it is liberty for a few men at the central