

The Public

An International Journal
of
Fundamental Democracy

Shall the Government
Mobilize Transportation
The Challenge to
American Democracy

Contents on Page 518

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The Public

An International Journal of Fundamental Democracy

Editorial

The kind and extent of change in the German social economy are matters about which precise knowledge is of course lacking. What isolated indications are available incline to the belief that Germany is in process of profound political transformation. Not only has the Chancellor to trim his course carefully between the radical reactionary factions, but public opinion which we always assume to have a merely permissive existence, shows a power and persistence that argue an enfeebled control. A writer in the current Atlantic, describing conditions in February, tells us that real power is in the hands of Ludendorff and the General Staff, that the Kaiser has receded into the background, and that Junkerdum is on its last legs. Apparently authority has shifted from Wilhelmsstrasse to the military machine which is officered in the main by middle class elements. The strength of the military machine depends upon confidence and morals, and these depend upon the events of this summer.

* * *

Secretary Lansing ventured upon uncertain ground when he invoked the Logan Act of 1799 as authority for withholding passports from the American delegates to the Socialist conference at Stockholm. The State Department was undoubtedly within its right in denying to American citizens the right at this time to meet with citizens of enemy countries; and prudence as well as propriety might bear out the Secretary in his ruling. Yet one cannot but harbor the thought that this was an instance where the spirit if not the letter permitted a broader interpretation. For, exercised as it was this power to withhold passports takes on the nature of censorship, and the suppression of opinions is ever fruitful of evil. Even had there been the smallest probability of agreement at the conference, still it would

have been better for the world to have known of the agreement; but as a matter of fact there was scarcely a possibility of concord. Socialists are divided on national lines as much as Christians. Neither the French nor the English Socialists would recognize the conference; and the American Socialists are divided. Coming as it does when the Administration is insisting on a censorship amendment to the Espionage bill, and the Board of Censors is ruling that newspapers should not discuss "differences of opinion among Allies," "difficulties with neutrals," and "speculation about possibilities of peace," this ruling of the Secretary of State bears an ominous appearance. Democracies may safely surrender in time of extremity all but two rights: The right to vote; and the right to discuss how to vote. Free speech is indispensable to free men, and Secretary Lansing's ruling will give comfort to those who do not want to see the world made a safe place for democracy.

* * *

Conscription may force a man to sacrifice his business or his job as well as his life, but it does not release him from obligations to his landlord, Assistant Federal District Attorney Knox of New York has decided. The drafted man may not move without his landlord's consent from premises which he has leased without foreseeing the approach of war and conscription. If the draft renders him unable to help his family pay the rent, his goods will be liable to seizure as though he were still a civilian. The landless citizen may die for his country, but if he wants to live in it he must pay a private landlord for the privilege.

* * *

It is reported that some of conscript age, in whom repugnance to participation in war is insurmountable, will resist coercion by failing to register on June 5. They could

make no greater mistake. Refusal to register will only place them at a disadvantage when the real issue has to be met. It will serve no purpose to incur penalties in connection with something merely preliminary. The American people must soon decide how large a place will be made for the conscientious objector. Our feelings were clear enough when the matter was distant from us by the width of the Atlantic. The line of exclusion cannot be coincident with any religious sect, nor can its determination be resigned to the crudity of the Adjutant General's office. There are hundreds, if not thousands, with whom military participation in the war would be a tragedy. They must, however, register and trust that those who carry on our national affairs are not immune to the finer feelings of humanity.

* * *

War has its humorous aspects no less than its pathetic. When business men discharge employees because they happen to have been born in a particular country one is disposed to lament the narrow vision and the feeble philosophy that cramp their thought; but when distinguished guests at a London luncheon smash the plates from which they have eaten because they were made in an enemy country, it is to smile at the exquisite humor of it all. Nor was the explanation of the hotel manager to the outraged guests less delicious. The dessert plate, he said, happened to belong to an old set which, on the breaking out of the war he had given to the hospitals. It would require a subtle analysis to determine the degree of patriotism that would remove foreign made plates from the tables of voluntary guests and place them before the involuntary inmates of the hospital.

* * *

The wit who defined dirt as matter out of place gave a quaint turn to the old saying that what is one man's meat is another man's poison. Rabbits that were so carefully protected in England that snaring one meant transportation, taken to Australia and New Zealand become such a menace to crops that millions of dollars were spent in attempts to exterminate them. Poisons were used, diseases spread among them, and hundreds of trappers were at work every winter. Still they throve beyond the power of man to stop. But war has made meat so scarce that these same rabbits are welcomed in Great Britain,

as they never were before. Last season 20,592,000 were exported from Australia. And now the British Government has contracted for all that can be caught. Poisoning of the animals has been suspended, and trappers are urged to conserve the supply. Again is it made apparent that Nature serves or opposes man, according as he puts himself in harmony with her laws.

* * *

Two objections are urged against heavier taxation of large incomes. One is that the wealthy will invest in bonds in order to evade the law. The other is that the sale of bonds will be hindered, since prospective purchasers will be compelled to give the government money which they would otherwise lend. Each objection contradicts the other, but assuming either one to be founded on fact, it follows that had the Government conscripted all unearned incomes there would now be no need to sell bonds.

* * *

That employment of "flunkies and valets" is a waste of labor which might be more usefully employed, is a fact which Samuel Gompers presents as an answer to complaints of labor shortage. No doubt Mr. Gompers is right. But it should also be said that few, if any, laborers would be employed unproductively if there were no large incomes drawn without rendering of equivalent service in return. The useless flunky, as well as the tramp and pauper, is one of the products of a social state which gives to some the power to deprive others of what they have earned. The abolition of such power would lead to abolition of "flunkies and valets." And if those employed at useful work were to get all they produce, unproductive menial employment would not attract laborers.

* * *

A bill which, if passed, might pave the way to proper settlement of fundamental social problems, has been introduced by Senator Sheppard of Texas for a land settlement and homestead commission. Senator Sheppard represents a State which has been transformed from a commonwealth of home owners to one wherein fifty-two per cent. of the farmers are tenants. He must have noted the failure of efforts to deal with this situation by palliative measures such as arbi-

trary regulation of rent by law. His bill probably expresses a desire for a remedy that will actually cure. Among other things the proposed commission is to inquire into proposed means to keep home owners on the soil, regulate land speculation and absentee landlordism and prevent concentration of land ownership. Although political economists have solved these problems an endorsement of their conclusions by a duly authorized commission will give added weight thereto, so far as congressmen and other legislators are concerned. Senator Shepard's bill is a wise one. It should be pushed to passage.

* * *

Economy and waste appear to be a source of confusion in the minds of some who are eager to conserve the fighting strength of the Nation. A prominent suffragist rebukes millionaires for sending out cheap wedding presents, and says they should spend freely now as at no other time. It is true that the rich should spend now as at no other time, but their money should go to meet the wants of this particular occasion. Mechanics should be employed as before, but at making rifles instead of golf clubs. Boat builders should be kept busy, but in making submarine chasers, not yachts. Weavers should be kept at work, but in making bandages in place of ribbons. This shifting of labor from one kind of work to another is not always pleasant, but it is necessary to meet the new requirements. And just as the plowmakers were turned into gunmakers, so the various unnecessary employees throughout society can be converted into servants of the Nation. This is literally a time of beating plowshares into swords, and pruning hooks into spears. The only question is how the rich can be got to pay the workman at his new job. It is not a matter of economy alone, but a transfer of the employing power from what is superfluous to what is necessary. It is a rare opportunity for Congress.

* * *

Rather one sided is the action of the West Virginia Legislature in passing a bill requiring every able-bodied man in the State to work at least 36 hours a week. To penalize one man for idleness, while permitting another to withhold opportunities from labor is decidedly unfair. If enforced, such an act must put the seeker for work more than ever

at the mercy of the opportunity owner. One of the great industries of West Virginia is coal mining. Conditions in the coal mines have been frequently so unsatisfactory as to cause great strikes. The new law would make criminals of workers on strike more than a week, and, if enforced, would offer them the choice of going back to work on the owner's terms or going to jail. But no penalty is provided for the owner of idle mineral lands who holds them out of use, while men are looking for work. Why this discrimination?

* * *

"He is a patriot who cultivates an extra rod of land," said Secretary of Commerce Redfield in addressing the National Association of Commerce at New York. What does the Secretary call the man who withholds land from use? And what term would he apply to legislators and other citizens who block measures which would force into use land now withheld?

* * *

Three and a half per cent. interest on war bonds seems too low to tempt investors. So persons with money to spare are urged to buy on patriotic grounds. But if purchase of these bonds is a patriotic duty, why should any interest at all be offered? And why should the volunteer system be retained in securing funds, when it has been discarded in securing men?

* * *

The futile threat of jail for food speculators is urged to avert threatened famine. As though it has not been demonstrated often enough that it is useless to pass one law to discourage what other laws remaining undisturbed, encourage. The threat of jail or worse, has not wiped out predatory crimes which yield but a very poor living. What reason is there to believe it would abolish practices which provided great fortunes?

Porto Rico's Food Problem.

The Governor of each State, Territory and Dependency has been asked by the *New York Evening Post* what is contemplated or is being done within his jurisdiction concerning the food situation. Among other answers received is one from Governor Yager of Porto Rico, who says in part:

Porto Rico must produce more of her own food, and must begin right now. . . . Porto Rico can produce a large percentage of the total food supply of her people. We have the land and labor in

abundance, the Food Commission will aid in supplying seeds, and our island is our market.

Not so very long ago Governor Yager declared the island to be overpopulated, and emigration to be the only way to better conditions. Overpopulation implies use to the full extent of all natural resources, and consequent impossibility of further increase in wealth production. If that were the case with Porto Rico, it would be useless to urge greater food production. Did the Governor overlook that fact in offering his latest suggestion, or has he modified his views concerning overpopulation?

His statement that land and labor are both at hand may indicate that he sees now—what had been called to his attention before—that the worker's own wants furnish demand for all the labor there is on the island, and natural resources furnish the opportunities. All that is needed is to make the land accessible to labor. Possibly he has in view some practicable method of bringing that about.

Overzealous Officials.

Local guardians of the law who have presumed to break up public meetings and arrest speakers in various parts of the country for what seemed to them a too-frank discussion of the war situation should reflect upon the after effect of their zeal. They should not forget the fascination of the forbidden. All radical movements are burdened by extremists whom the more rational members try to hold in check. And when this restraint comes from within the movement it meets with a measure of success; but when imposed from without it produces the reverse effect. The doctrinaires have small support for their utopian dreams, as compared with the sane proposals of practical minded leaders under the reign of reason; but apply force, and the extremist at once proclaims his vindication, and increases his following.

There is grave danger that public officials may by their short-sighted policy of suppression, which soon takes on the form of persecution, play into the hands of the reactionaries, and handicap the progressives. The extremists who look to revolution rather than to evolution as an agent of economic regeneration court the present opportunity to appeal to the spirit of violence. By their unmeasured denunciations they enlist the support of their fellow extremists, and with them many whose natural inclination is toward

evolution. Could anything be better calculated to fortify the position of the believers in physical force as a regenerative agent than this policy of raiding meetings and arresting speakers?

What if a man does publicly denounce this as a government of capitalism, bent upon repressing free speech as a step toward destroying all our liberties. As long as he harbors that thought he had better say it openly than secretly; for rest assured he will say it. It is no answer to clap him in jail. Reason and experience dictate that he should be encouraged to speak freely whatever he has in mind. The very fact that he is unmolested is the best refutation. To arrest him is to admit his contention and lend undeserved weight to his words. Ill informed persons, and those incapable of clear thinking, invest the persecuted with the halo of martyrdom, and lend support to actions far afield from their natural bent. For, as was so well said by that philosopher-politician, Mayor Gaynor: "It is the worst policy in the world to drive people to secret meetings and plottings." The charge that our government is undemocratic is true or it is not true. If true, we should mend it; if untrue the charge will only bring ridicule upon the one who makes it. To say that the mass of the people are incapable of judging, and that they may be led astray by demagogues is to question the very foundations of popular government.

Liberty is not such a puny thing that it may be destroyed by the breath of calumny. On the contrary it is the one human force that resists all assaults. It will survive even the ill-considered defense of over-zealous officials charged with its preservation. Might not these timorous ones better resort to the methods of political campaigns. When the Outs charge the Ins with corruption, the latter do not clap their opponents in jail. To do so would be a fatal political error. They send instead their ablest men before the same audiences to refute the charge. Might it not be conducive to a better understanding and greater harmony if these local executives, instead of packing meetings with policemen should send those same spell-binders who carried the election. Or, better still, might it not be well for the officials themselves—who not infrequently grace the board at state dinners—to go before audiences of discontented and misinformed people for a heart to heart talk. No candidate disdains to appear before

the humblest audience before election. A similar disposition on the part of officials after election would do more toward promoting the spirit of political goodfellowship, than any number of policemen.

The Approach of Irish Home Rule.

Regardless of immediate results the calling in Ireland of a National Constitutional Convention is to be welcomed. Although the delegates are not to be chosen by popular election and the convention will fall short of democratic ideals in other ways, still it makes possible further advance. If the convention should be truly representative of different elements in proportion to popular strength the manner of selection may be overlooked.

There should be no doubt as to ratification by Parliament of the convention's proposals. Parliament may or may not consider its decisions wise, but the right of the governed to choose their own government, does not depend on wisdom of the choice.

It is not impossible to overcome in an equitable manner the difficulty presented by Ulster opposition, without barring that section from home rule. So far as this opposition finds open expression it is due to distrust by one Christian sect of the good intentions of another. At bottom this distrust may be subtly fostered by tory interests less concerned about religious matters than the possibility of disregard by an Irish Parliament of ancient vested wrongs. Such suspicion is voiced by a periodical which cannot be fairly accused of leaning too strongly toward radicalism. The *New Republic* says in its issue of May 12:

The political craftsman in England are at present somewhat disposed to wash their hands of Ireland and to assert that but for Irish differences the problem could readily be solved. Ireland would do well to act as if this conclusion were as magnanimous as it seems. Were Ireland a mid-Atlantic island no one pretends that the junkers could have their way, but also no one believes that there would be invincible difficulty of agreement between industrial Ulster and the agricultural south. The agricultural preponderance in numbers and wealth and necessity for development would certainly excite a competitive uneasiness in the industrial section, but the all-round prospects of a sound national government would eventually sway any commonwealth. It is largely the knowledge of a neighboring English parliament educated to the special needs of industry that makes the industrial corner of Ulster insist on remaining in the union. The considerations, as this Ulster sees them, are commercial and practical, and

home rule in Dublin offers a poor exchange. Such a feeling is unfortunately reinforced by a consciousness of racial and religious differences, stimulated by every religious and aristocratic junker in Great Britain.

However, since opponents emphasize no objections save those based on theological differences, there is little need to consider others. A constitution might be framed that would ensure complete separation of Church and State. All constitutions ought to do that anyway. No government may properly regard a church organization differently than it does a secular body lawfully conducted. There should be equal treatment to all, none being allowed any privileges denied to others. Such provision, together with the usual guarantees of freedom of opinion and of expression, should remove all distrust. If nothing more underlies the opposition than fear lest opportunity be given for clerical oppression, such guarantees would make its continuance absurd.

But even if a minority should persist in opposition to self-government that is no reason why it should be withheld. Settlement of differences between parties in Ireland is Ireland's concern alone. To withhold home rule until all agree is to encourage a minority to hold out in order to coerce the majority. Every government ought to preserve the full freedom of each citizen bounded only by the equal freedom of every other. So long as it does that it can do nothing that the most suspicious will find oppressive. Should it fail to do that it must meet opposition from fair-minded persons, regardless of church affiliations.

The convention should be given the opportunity to frame a popular government to perform the functions which properly belong to all governments, and to keep hands off of matters which properly concern individuals only. Internal differences under such a government cannot be of a serious nature, and their settlement is not the affair of outsiders. So should the convention's work receive the approval of a majority of the Irish people; no further delay would be justified.

Economic Groping.

The Senate appears to be in doubt. In attempting to correct the glaring errors of the House revenue bill it has taken one step forward and one step back. It proceeded wisely when it removed the five per cent. sales tax

from business. But, as if regretting this small concession to reason, it also repealed the special sur-taxes on incomes of over \$40,000, that had been added during the debate in the House. These sur-taxes were already too small, and should be increased rather than diminished. But this can be done in December when Congress will have to supplement the present legislation. The chief thing at the present time is to remove every possible tax from business. A tax on sales is the same to business as an advance in the cost of materials. It is added to price, and limits consumption. Whereas, a tax on surplus incomes is not added to price, and does not limit consumption.

The whole matter may be summed up in the statement of J. H. McGill of Valparaiso, Indiana, who appeared before the Ways and Means Committee. "Tax my income," he said, "take all but just enough for me to live on, if you must; but don't touch my business." That is the basis upon which the whole revenue law should be framed. Tax incomes, the surplus incomes that exceed the immediate needs of their owners, all that is necessary; conscript all but enough for them to live on; but do not interrupt business.

Three objections are urged against such a policy. It is said that it will work a special hardship upon persons living in States that tax incomes. But the Federal law can deduct the amounts paid to the States. It is said also that it will throw out of employment persons engaged in the making of luxuries, and those employed in catering to the rich. But this involves no greater derangement of labor conditions than the conversion of mechanics into munition makers. Every dollar taken from the manufacture of luxuries, and devoted to the making of war materials will create as much employment as it supersedes. Besides, the withdrawal of fighting men will of itself stimulate the demand for labor. The third objection is that such large income taxes are confiscatory. This was answered by conscription for service. Never so long as the Nation conscripts men can objection be raised to the conscription of wealth.

The taking of great incomes, save only enough for the immediate needs of the owners, is a startling innovation to some persons, and they need a little time to adjust themselves to the thought. The same is true of heavy taxes on inheritances and excess prof-

its. But this readjustment is rapidly taking place. The income tax law of last year levied 15 per cent. on incomes of over two million dollars. The pending bill lays a tax of 33 per cent. on incomes of \$500,000; whereas, the British have already reached 38 per cent. on incomes of \$100,000. Excess profits are taxed by the House bill only 16 per cent., while the corresponding British tax is 60 per cent. Public opinion is likely to undergo a pronounced change during the next few months, and taxes on excess profits, inheritances, and surplus incomes that would be impracticable now, will be possible in December. Meanwhile Congress should adopt the slogan: "Don't touch business."

Oregon's Pending Tax Amendment.

Oregon is to vote in June on an amendment allowing classification of property for taxation. Classification is to be general, not restricted as was proposed last year in Illinois. Its adoption would be a good thing for the State. A similar provision in the Constitution of North Dakota made possible the passage of a bill by a progressive legislature to tax land values at a higher rate than labor products. It would be a great help to the cause of tax reform if Oregon should get an opportunity to enact similar legislation.

It is furthermore encouraging to note that this measure is supported by at least part of the element which fought so bitterly against Singletax legislation during 1912 and since. It was in 1912 that a pamphlet was widely circulated by the Anti-Singletax organization, which strongly insisted on equal taxation of all property. That those who took this view should now admit its error marks a distinct step in advance. It is natural and pardonable that such a turn-about should be accompanied by apologetic explanations and needless disclaimers. So it is not surprising that the *Oregon Voter* of May 19 should say: "This proposed amendment is in no wise a Singletax amendment; in fact, it is not directly or indirectly related to the Singletax idea." The *Oregon Voter* should be careful. Some readers may suspect that it protests too much.

The amendment may not be correctly called a Singletax amendment, but it is related to the Singletax idea, inasmuch as it makes Singletax legislation easier. This was recognized by Anti-Singletaxers in the Ohio

Constitutional Convention who put into that instrument a clause forbidding use of the Initiative for submission of a proposed statute providing for such a change as is contemplated in Oregon. It was also so recognized by the Anti-Singletaxers in the legislature of Missouri, who, to block Singletax, submitted in 1913 a constitutional amendment, later rejected by the people, inhibiting submission of classification of property for taxation through the Initiative. The *Oregon Voter's* present stand is a repudiation of Anti-Singletax authority. It should beware lest it be charged with trying to put over a "Singletax amendment in disguise."

The Problem of Authority.

The astonishing action of General Goethals in publicly addressing the heads of the American steel industry on the policy of the Shipping Board provides a nice problem in methods of government. He did not need to characterize boards as "long, narrow and wooden" and proclaim his belief in absolutism to show that he was making a throw for all or nothing in the way of authority. It remains to be seen whether the Shipping Board thus torpedoed can keep afloat. The great prestige of General Goethals will probably insure his success; aiding him is the talismanic hold of the great business executive on the American imagination.

Bernard Shaw once said that Nietzscheism was unpopular in England because it was the practical code of the City of London business man. Theory is a sort of compensation for practice, not its interpretation. Foreigners have long been amused by American protestation of high democratic ideals. They believe that we act practically on quite different principles. Without agreeing with this assumption, may we not inquire if autocracy is not an essential part of our political psychology.

An emergency arises. We hasten to thrust the reins of government into the hands of a number of little absolutist functionaries. Our unquestioning assumption that the thing cannot be done in any other way, is the best evidence of our obsession. Modern government has passed through distinct stages. First it is ruled by generals, then by lawyers, then by business men, then by journalists. France and England are ruled by journalists, a stage with defects of its own, but at any

rate they are no longer under the sway of that dull efficiency which sits gainfully on labor and the arts of production.

It is refreshing to know that Britain, with an infinitely more trying emergency than our own, never doctrinaire, always empirical, has found that the business man is a useful tool but not to be clothed with ultimate authority. The responsible and co-ordinating heads in the British national scheme of things are thinkers rather than doers. America could do worse than learn the lesson and establish a Thinking Department. The relative merits of wooden and steel ships, for example, is not a matter to be decided by the ability to bully labors and producers of materials, but by a moderately high grade of cerebral activity. With a multitude of little czars in Washington, we shall have a multitude of little civil wars.

The problem of authority is a fundamental one in our national life. We have found, if we do not practice, the democratic way in most departments, except finance and industry, and even in finance we were gradually coming within sight of democratic control. But the factory stands apart, a monumental example in our civilization of the lowest type of social organization. Because industry is so important to us, we turn naturally in emergency to our industrially great; but let us not forget that their attitude toward the world is an anachronism derived from barbarism. Even in an army which is supposed to involve absolute subordination, there is a more enlightened conception. Discipline is of two kinds which may in effect have an external similarity but whose energy differs, so to speak, in polarity. Discipline may be an *imposition of authority* or it may be a *mode of co-operation*. Officers may be commanders or they may be leaders. From the point of view of military operation, an officer is only an instrument of co-ordination. But the efficiency of the Military Machine! A vicious Teutonism. Nobody has ever suggested that the Boer army was inefficient.

* * *

Justice consists in doing men no injury; decency, in giving them no offense.—*Latin Proverb*.

* * *

If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.—*John Stuart Mill*.

Shall the Government Mobilize Transportation

By Frederic C. Howe.

One of the first acts of the British Government on the outbreak of the war was to mobilize the railroads under government control. France did the same thing. Today every great nation in the world excepting the United States is operating its railroads.

When the United States entered the war a committee of railway executives was appointed by the President to integrate the railway service into the general mobilization program. Under this committee the railroads are to work in harmony and to subordinate individual interests to unity of administration. The pooling of cars and motive stock has been suggested, as well as the reduction of passenger trains. The purpose is to subordinate the competitive struggle of private interests to the public service.

The emergencies of the war have created the following conditions:

1. An unprecedented shortage of cars, amounting to 140,000 in April, 1917, which the railroads say is the worst in history. They announce that even graver congestion is in prospect.

2. The discrimination of the railroads against fuel, wheat and other bulk commodities which yield a low revenue, in favor of high-class commodities and luxuries which yield a more profitable revenue.

3. Wholly inadequate terminals, and with it unprecedented congestion of freight cars which cannot be unloaded or released for use.

As a result there has been something like a famine in fuel all over the country for nearly a year. It has closed down factories. The cost of coal has been doubled and trebled in many cities. One automobile factory in Michigan sent 6,809 cars, or 23% of its total production, away from the factory on their own power in three months. And this was fairly representative of the automobile factories in that city. The farmer has suffered as well as the manufacturer. The cost of food has been greatly increased. The loss from the breakdown of transportation during the last eighteen months is conservatively estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars. Industry has been checked; in some instances suspended. The industrial life of the country is in a state of semi-strangulation because of the car shortage, motive power shortage,

and phenomenal congestion at terminals.

The Interstate Commerce Commission reviewed this situation in January last. The Commission said:

The present conditions of car distribution throughout the United States have no parallel in our history. In some territories the railroads have furnished but a small part of the cars necessary for the transportation of staple articles of commerce, such as coal, grain, lumber, fruits and vegetables. In consequence, mills have shut down, prices have advanced, perishable articles of great value have been destroyed, and hundreds of carloads of food products have been delayed in reaching their natural markets,

Here is an embargo second only to that of the submarine. Our circulatory system is clogged. If it is not freed all our sacrifices may go for naught and the success of the allied arms may be imperiled.

This is only one phase of the situation. Each one of the hundreds of railroads is seeking the most profitable traffic and the long haul traffic. On the other hand the industrial life of the nation depends upon preference being given to freight which yields relatively low returns, such as fuel and food stuffs. A recent hearing before the Federal Trade Commission brought out the fact that coal cars were diverted to the carrying of automobiles, and that luxuries were being favored at the expense of necessities. One witness stated that the railroads refused to supply cars in order to coerce the mine owners to sell them coal on the railroad's terms. A coal operator on the Chesapeake and Ohio said that one-half of the 40,000 coal cars owned by that road were being used to transport other commodities at higher rates. Another operator said that the mines could supply forty per cent. more coal if they could ship it. What is true of coal is true of structural material, food, etc. And the efforts of the Interstate Commerce Commission to correct this evil have thus far been unavailing.

Formerly the railroads discriminated against communities and industries. Now they discriminate against one class of commodities in favor of those that yield higher rates. The power of the nation to produce

may be strangled by discrimination against fuel. The people may hunger and the farmers may lose the value of their crops because there is more money in transporting luxuries than in transporting fuel or food.

Car shortage, terminal shortage, and discrimination are inherent in the private operation of the railroads. Every railroad operator must of necessity think of his particular property; he must protect it from bankruptcy; he must maintain earnings, and the situation can hardly be corrected by the measures taken for the centralization of administration. Even the safety of the nation cannot overcome the training of thousands of traffic men in the struggle of each railroad for its share of the traffic.

While the nation is suffering from car shortage and congestion, empty trains are passing back and forth across the continent. Needless passenger trains are run to maintain competition. Today one railroad has its terminal filled with empty cars, while a nearby terminal is congested with outgoing freight that cannot be carried. Out from New York, Chicago, St. Louis, hundreds of passenger trains are running daily on different lines to the same destination at exactly the same hour. The average freight car makes less than thirty miles a day; its potential mileage should be at least sixty miles.

These are but indicative of the transportation and industrial problem. It offers an explanation of the famine prices of fuel, and a partial explanation of the famine prices of food. Six months from now the food of the nation will have to be moved. It will have to be moved quickly. The feeding of America, even the success of the war, may depend upon it. Yet how can this be done with a present car shortage of 140,000 cars and the far greater shortage that is imminent. The blockade which now exists from one coast to the other will be far worse as the summer wears on. By fall there may be a complete breakdown in transportation, and with it a failure to supply ourselves and our allies as well.

In addition there has been hardly any new money expended by the railroads in two years' time. The amount required for current needs is estimated at a billion and a quarter a year; and with the demands on the capital of the country by the war loans and taxation, this colossal sum cannot be se-

cured by the railroads for years to come, if at all. And this does not include the improvement and development of terminals or the extension of lines into new territory. Only the Government is in a position adequately to finance the railroads, and surely the consumers of the nation ought not to be asked to contribute billions in freight and passenger charges for railway improvements in addition to the cost of transportation. And only through Government ownership and operation can the waste and confusion resulting from the conflict of hundreds of competing railroads be ended. The condition is critical, far more critical than we know. And it is bound to be much worse before the summer is over.

There is an alternative proposal that avoids complete Government ownership of the railroads, but secures many of its advantages; and that is, the acquisition by the Government of the fast freight lines, refrigerator and private car companies, and their operation under a single experienced director or the Interstate Commerce Commission. These fast freight lines own no motive power, but they do carry on a business similar to that of the railroads. They maintain offices and are well known to shippers. They could be quickly merged under a single operating agency like the Shipping Board, and operated in the same way and for the same reason that ships are to be operated. Reports could be centralized at Washington as to the transportation needs of the country. The "flying squadron" could be sent where needed. Cars could be passed from one railroad to another. The Government itself would decide whether food, fuel, munitions or luxuries should be hauled. It would carry the freight most needed to meet war emergencies and to keep industry alive. Perishable commodities could be saved; fuel could be transported where needed; transportation could be speeded up. Quite as important, the Government could abandon millions of arbitrary classifications and simplify rates. It need only pay the railroad companies for haulage, at so much a car on ton mile, and establish its own rates according to a simple schedule, as is done abroad. Thousands of officials could be dispensed with, and thousands of offices closed. As a matter of fact the entire administration could be added to the parcel post service and operated as it is in many

countries of Europe, where a ton of coal can be carried by parcel post if the shipper desires.

From such an operating agency an immense amount of valuable information could be secured. The Interstate Commerce Commission would be equipped with full and exact knowledge of the railroad business which it now secures only through ex parte statements. We would know whether an increase of \$500,000,000 is needed by the railroads, or whether their needs could be met by greater economies or by pooling their rolling stock. But one of the great gains from such a publicly owned and operated freight line would be the relief of the producer from fear. It would stimulate production. It would also speed up the railroads and compel them to develop initiative. And this would be a great gain all around.

This has been the effect of the parcel post. Despite the occasional complaints about it, it carries over 400,000,000 parcels a year, although it is only four years old. And these services were practically created by the par-

cel post. For the business of the express companies has been diminished but little. The parcel post has created its own business. It has increased the wealth produced as well as been of great service to consumers all over the country. And such a fast freight service would make it possible for the truckmen, poultrymen, business men, co-operative societies and individual farmers to market their produce directly without the intervention of middle-men. This is the practice in Europe where the parcel post is a great marketing agency. This is indicative of the many services that would be rendered by an agency as free and as public as is the parcel post. The wealth of America would be increased materially if shippers knew that they had at their service an impartial, prompt and adequate means of transportation. It is also true that the cost of living could probably be greatly reduced if such a "flying squadron" were available for use where needed. Such a Government agency, too, which would cost but a relatively small sum, might save the food situation for ourselves and our allies as well.

The Challenge to American Democracy.

By George P. West.

When a federal commission reported to Congress less than two years ago that economic democracy did not exist in this country, that democratic political forms alone could not make a nation free, it was met with the oppressive silence that falls on a respectable dinner table at the utterance of an indecency. Mr. Walsh had committed a break so outrageous that it was not even to be discussed. Sociological societies and associations of economists ignored the report. Congress held its nose and voted to print 100,000 additional copies, its members privately amazed and suspicious of the deluge of letters and resolutions that urged this action. Mr. Walsh took his place with the soap-boxer as a discredited spokesman, always excepting the four or five millions, shall we say, who hailed his report as an official confirmation of the things they knew!

To-day our democracy is challenged from another direction. Americans who ignored the Walsh report now read in their favorite daily journals of rioting in Petrograd because a labor agitator is being unjustly pros-

ecuted in San Francisco, while cabled interviews with influential European Socialists carry the assertion that America is not a democracy, but a nation "dominated by capitalism and plutocracy, where industrial corporations hire bands of armed ruffians to shoot down striking workmen."

It is the emergence of the despised immigrant soap-boxer as a factor in European politics, and with him a new conception in Europe of America with relation to the cause of human freedom. Who can guess how many of the men destined to lead the peoples of Europe in the generation to come have passed through Ellis Island and spent part of their youth studying American institutions from the vantage point of an immigrant workman in the steel mills of Pennsylvania or the packing plants of Chicago? Those who have mingled with foreign-born strikers as reporters can testify to the qualities of leadership possessed by many a young Russian, Lithuanian, or Austrian. And we know that many have gone back to the home land disillusioned as to America

and fortified in their conviction that something more than kings must go if we are to recreate a world of justice and freedom.

No: the America of the immigrant wage worker is not a democracy. The report he took back with him and that now returns to us so strangely in the cabled words of revolutionary leaders is only too true. Ignore the fact, shut our eyes to it as our press and our vanity has conspired that we should, we cannot ignore it now when we see it translated into popular distrust of us abroad, into a denial of our most cherished professions, by men who more and more are making their influence felt in the counsels of nations to whose opinion we can no longer show indifference.

Not the blackest pessimist among us will admit these charges. That they should be made and believed is the price we pay for the worst of our failures in democracy,—our treatment of the immigrant whose voice is now echoing back to us. Admitting all our failures, we have three things of priceless worth—things to die for. We have allegiance to the democratic ideal. We have the political machinery with which to realize it. And we have a peculiarly American trait called the love of fair play.

To meet the challenge is to face the facts. And this, with the realization it will bring, is all America needs in order to make good on every profession and every boast. Our ideals are still those of the French Revolution, written into our charter at the birth of the Republic. They are living ideals, but we have never applied them. We have lived in a paradise of free land or cheap land, of boundless opportunity for every individual. We are just learning that freedom is a matter of land and economic opportunity, a thing not to be had in a settled community under laws that foster and protect special privileges for those canny, fortunate or ruthless enough to seize them. We have been playing under rules that worked well enough for pioneer settlements. To-day the free land is gone. At a time when our national existence depends on full use of our natural resources, we find our food-producing and distributing machinery everywhere crippled by the workings of a legal arrangement that has exalted the speculator and the exploiter while it has depressed the producer. Our social scale on the farm begins with several millions of

homeless migratory vagabonds who harvest the crops, and ascends through discontented, thriftless farm tenants, in some States numbering more than half of all farmers, to the proprietary farmer, himself by no means happy in the scanty reward permitted him by those who manipulate the transportation and marketing of his products. The counterpart of a farm situation that involves speculative land values far beyond the reach of the farmer's boy is an industrial field where the glut of labor is only temporarily absorbed, and where a harsh feudalism with none of feudalism's advantages has been built up during the years when immigrants mingled with farm boys to create an over-supply and defeat efforts at democratic organization. Before the war in Europe these immigrants had begun the backward movement and the inflowing tide had slackened except from the most backward or oppressed of European populations.

It was a generation ago when a great American could already truthfully say: "Political liberty, when the equal right to land is denied, becomes, as population increases and invention goes on, merely the liberty to compete for employment at starvation wages. And so there come beggars in our streets and tramps on our roads; and poverty enslaves men who we boast are political sovereigns; and want breeds ignorance that our schools cannot enlighten; and citizens vote as their masters dictate; and the demagogue usurps the place of the statesman; and gold weighs in the scales of justice; and in high places sit those who do not pay to civic virtue even the compliment of hypocrisy; and the pillars of the republic that we thought so strong already bend under an increasing strain. . . . It is not enough that men should vote; it is not enough that they should be theoretically equal before the law. They must have liberty to avail themselves of the opportunities of life; they must stand on equal terms with reference to the bounty of nature."

We can be vindicated in this war for democracy only if we justify our slogan by a self-searching that faces realities and then set to work fearlessly to make good every shortcoming. The war need not so obsess us as to prevent or postpone this self-examination. It need not stand in the way of such programmes of domestic reform as will make first our own land "safe for democracy."

NEWS OF THE WEEK

Week Ending May 29.

Nor have we any assurance for the future until this is done—any reason to hope that our ruthless industrial and financial autocrats will not plunge us into new wars by applying abroad in the larger field to which we as a nation are called, the same ruthlessness and contempt for democracy that they have shown at home.

To realize these things and to act in that realization will be a proof of real statesmanship in Washington. Nor can our leaders say the impulse is not yet abroad in the land. It is an impulse that has gathered strength through many years. It is not better organized for action, because we have had neither a free press nor the right to organize. But the time is ripe when a leader could carry the nation with him in great strides toward the economic freedom without which true democracy cannot be.

A CHAIN OF REASONING.

By H. Heath Bawden.

- 1—The Universe from our point of view=
nature plus human nature
- 2—Human nature has needs only *nature*
can supply
- 3—Civilized man has *wants* in addition to
biological needs
- 4—That which will satisfy these wants is
wealth
- 5—All wealth is derived from the *land*
- 6—For the most part only, however, as pro-
duced by *labor*
- 7—The accumulation of such labor-produced
wealth is *capital*
- 8—The land belongs to nobody; or *equally*
to all
- 9—The use-value of land=*rent*; of capital=
interest; of labor=*wages*
- 10—Rent and interest are *created by and be-
long to labor*
- 11—*Laborers constitute the majority in a
democracy*
- 12—If this majority appropriates rent for
the community, nature will once more
be accessible, and labor will get its full
product in wages. And this will be done
through the present machinery of gov-
ernment, without violent revolution, by
merely abolishing taxes as we now know
them, and enacting that the community
appropriate to its own ends hereafter
the wealth that the community creates
which never should have been allowed
to be diverted into private hands.

Congressional Doings.

The House passed on May 23, by a vote of 329 to 76, the revenue bill recommended by the Ways and Means Committee. It was referred in the Senate to the Finance Committee. So far the committee has decided to substitute for the 16 per cent. tax on excess profits for one year a tax on average profits for five years preceding the war, the rate to be fixed later; for the zone postal rate system for periodical publications it decided to substitute a ten per cent. tax on advertising of all kinds; it has agreed to substitute stamp taxes for the direct tax on jewelry, motion picture films, chewing gum and musical instruments, and a tax on automobile owners for the proposed five per cent. tax at the factory. It further decided to eliminate the amendments adopted in the House on May 17 increasing by 25 per cent. the surtax on incomes over the amount originally proposed by the Ways and Means Committee. [See current volume, page 506.]

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As a result of a letter insisting on a press censorship sent to Chairman Webb of the House Judiciary Committee by President Wilson on May 22, the Conference Committee of the two Houses having the Espionage bill in charge framed a substitute for the Censorship clause rejected by the Senate. It forbids publication of any matter which may be useful to the enemy, and authorizes the President to announce what knowledge is not useful and what may be published. In cases of prosecution for violation of the act, a jury is to decide as to whether the matter published was useful. Strong opposition has been expressed in both branches to this substitute. In the Senate, Johnson of California will lead the opposition.

* *

The Senate passed on May 22 the bill to increase the Interstate Commerce Commission from nine to eleven members.

* *

The House passed on May 28 the food survey bill. It appropriates \$14,770,000 for investigation by the Department of Agriculture of the country's food resources and of measures to stimulate production.

The Land Value Taxation Movement.

In a letter to Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane, referring to his recent warning to idle land holders on government projects, C. B. Kegley, master of the Washington State Grange, says:

Good, Mr. Secretary. But why not just now confiscate for use the millions of acres held by speculators all over our broad land? In Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Montana, there is idle land enough held out of use by speculators to feed an empire. Every loyal farmer will gladly join in the campaign to "Feed the Nations"; but it rather grinds on him to farm his quarter section industriously, and see three-quarters of speculators' land lie idle alongside of him. Not only does it lie idle, but it is a breeding ground for all man-

ner of pests to destroy the crops of the industrious farmer.

The day of speculation in food supplies must come to an end, and at the same time let us bring to an end all private ownership of unused land, so that not only our nation, but the nations of the earth may be fed as becomes a toiling people. No greater menace to the rights and liberties of any nation can be dreamed of, than that one man or set of men may be permitted to hold out of use productive land purely for speculative purposes, while millions of men, women, and children go to bed hungry every night, that these land hogs may profit off the industry of those who till the soil.

It is a relic of the old feudal days, and has no place in our modern economic ideas of justice.

This campaign for greater production is all right. But why not seize the idle lands and put them to use?

Secretary Lane has since been reported by the People's News Service as having openly declared for taxation of land values as a means of raising war revenue and at the same time forcing idle land into use. Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Carl Vrooman is similarly quoted. The New York *Tribune* of May 28 reports that "The Administration will compel the cultivation or utilization of unused lands throughout the country through a scheme of heavy taxation for idle lands."

* *

The Texas State Federation of Labor has urged, in view of prospective new Federal taxes on industry, that all State taxes on labor and its products be abolished, and all State and local revenue be raised by land value taxation only.

Self Sacrifice Urged on Rockefeller.

On May 23 Charles H. Ingersoll, the match manufacturer, sent the following open letter to John D. Rockefeller, Jr.:

The press reports you as having stated at the conference with Mr. Samuel Gompers recently:

"I sometimes regret that the opportunity did not come to me to make my way in this world with my hands as my father did. But circumstances made it necessary for me to go a certain way, and I have done what I felt best. I honor and respect men who have made their way with their hands, and I covet that opportunity for my sons."

We feel that your position is thoroughly democratic and we are glad that we are able to suggest to you how you may secure the opportunity which you covet for your sons to make their way with their hands, and how you may make yourself four square with the world, by giving up the privilege which you now enjoy of monopolization of a natural resource.

Messrs. Carl H. Pforzheimer & Co., in their little book entitled "Standard Oil Issues," the present month, state, regarding the companies included in the Standard Oil Co., the following:

"We find, therefore, that since the dissolution of April 1, 1917, there have been distributed by these companies \$407,401,626 in cash, \$207,200,000 in stock at par value and the subscription rights at par to the extent of \$40,900,000. If the market value of the stock distributed were taken into consideration, the value of the cash and stock dividends alone would aggregate upwards of a billion dollars."

On April 15, 1912, the capitalization of the companies in the Standard Oil combination was \$276,916,754, the market value of the stock, \$906,233,-

084. On April 15, 1917, the capitalization was \$503,108,382 and the market value of the stock \$2,154,482,627.

You, of course, know, as every purchaser of gasoline and petroleum knows, that you did not give the value to the natural product crude petroleum, of the supply of which the Standard Oil Co. owns such a large part.

One of the best ways in which you can prove the sincerity of your statement, quoted above, which we do not for a moment question, is for you to turn over to the Federal government the plant of the Standard Oil Companies, and to ask them to pay you only for the present value of the improvements which you have made, without requesting any pay for the natural resource, which God gave for the use of all. If you cannot do this yourself, will you at once call a meeting of the directors of the various companies in the Standard Oil combination and urge such action as a measure of justice to the people of this country? We believe that this will be the most successful and permanent contribution you could make to the establishment of democracy in this country, and such action would unquestionably be heard of in Germany and add to the growing conviction that the United States believes in democracy, i. e., special privilege for none and equal opportunity for all, in America, as well as in Germany.

Transportation Conference.

At the conference of the Emergency League to Consider National Transportation and Rate Problems, organized by F. F. Ingram, which met in Detroit, May 22 and 23, resolutions were adopted protesting against any increased rates except on the following conditions:

First, It is made certain that under present rates, with the service efficiently managed and proper economies employed, the present revenue would be insufficient. Second, and then only on condition that the recommendations of the General Railway Board of the Council of National Defense be adopted and enforced. Third, that the total increase of revenue shall go to improvement of service and that no greater percentage of the present revenue be diverted from the service expenditures.

Protest Against Endorsement of Mitchel.

The Fusion Committee of New York City, composed of representatives of the elements which supported Mayor Mitchel four years ago, decided on May 24 to work for his renomination and re-election in November. A protest against this action was received from the Society to Lower Rents, through its president, Frederic C. Leubuscher. He said in part:

Four years ago, the Fusion Committee, of which you are the successors, selected Mr. Mitchel as your candidate for the Mayoralty. While he was a candidate for this selection, Mr. Mitchel stated that, if elected, he would not do anything to oppose a referendum in the fall of 1914 transferring taxes from buildings to land values in New York City. Six weeks after he took office as Mayor, Mr. Mitchel voted for a resolution of the Comptroller in the Board of Estimate for a committee to investigate and shelve the whole question of taxation, and thus ignored his pre-election pledge.

Every informed person in New York knows that the method of raising revenue is fundamental, and

vastly more important in its relation to rents, franchises, etc., than any other issue.

We call your attention to the fact that during the four years' administration of the gentleman whom you selected for the chief executive and administrative offices in this city, the total expenditures for the city and county purposes and the city's share of the direct state tax have aggregated \$816,055,652.50. Of this sum only \$357,974,253.26 has been raised by taxing the land values of the city; while \$458,081,399.24 has been secured by taxing the workers and all other producers of the city, through taxes on buildings and indirect taxes, which come chiefly, like the taxes on buildings, from the ultimate consumers and users.

During these four years the people of New York have contributed, calculating the net ground rent at only 5 per cent., the enormous sum of \$917,990,266 to the land owners of the city. As you are aware, a few thousand families own the major part of the value of land in New York City.

We respectfully ask whether your committee out of a due and decent self-respect can renominate one who so openly repudiated his pledge to the people of New York on the most vital question before them? We earnestly ask that you will nominate a man whose performance is consistent with his promise; and we confidently believe that you will endorse submitting the question of securing revenue for local purposes to a referendum, because to decline to do so is to serve notice to the voters that you do not trust them.

In addition to the Mayor's shift on the question of the referendum referred to, it is worthy of comment that his campaign manager in 1913, Sen. Ogden L. Mills, has introduced and had passed a bill to levy a three mills tax on corporations, in order to relieve land speculators and further oppress tenants. No public opposition was voiced to that proposition by the Mayor. We have no brief for corporations securing privilege or monopolistic profits. Most members of this Society worked hard for a rapidly progressive tax on large incomes, up to 75 per cent. on incomes in excess of a million dollars, but the Mayor has never advocated this democratic method of financing the war. Is it possible that your committee—organized to oppose the alleged graft and incompetence of Tammany Hall—will support one who has been a strong upholder of the exploitation of the working people and legitimate business interests of this city by the land speculators?

Former Socialist Leaders Expelled.

A. M. Simons and Winfield R. Gaylord were expelled from the Milwaukee local of the Socialist party on May 25 by a vote of 68 to 2. They were charged with

First, publicly slandering the Socialist party and the Socialist national convention.

Second, slandering members of the Socialist party into disrepute and danger by accusing it of sending out treasonable material and of treasonable conduct.

Both had signed a letter to Senator Hasting of Wisconsin urging that the resolutions approved by a majority of the Socialist convention at St. Louis in April be barred from the mails.

European War.

Heavy fighting has taken place at intervals on the western front during the week, but without materially affecting the positions of the contending forces.

The Germans have massed enormous numbers of men and guns on this front in an effort to loosen the grip of the French and British on their new positions, but without effect. Russian officials continue to urge military action, but no movements of troops are reported. Italy continues to hold the attention of the world by its spirited drive toward Trieste. By repeated and almost continuous assaults the Italian troops have carried the Austrian positions on a front of six miles, extending from Castagnavizza to the sea, which puts them in possession of the village of San Giovanni. San Giovanni is 1,500 yards northwest of Duino, the fortified town on the coast that is spoken of as the key to Trieste. More than 23,000 Austrian prisoners have been taken during the advance. The movement has assumed such proportions as to require the withdrawal of large forces from other points to re-enforce the Isonzo front. [See current volume, page 507.]

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The submarine situation appears to be assuming a decidedly encouraging appearance for the Allies. Whether the continued decrease in the toll of ships is due to greater efficiency in patrolling the seas, with the addition of the American ships, or to improved methods of destroying the submarines is not announced. Confident predictions are made by men in authority both in this country and in Great Britain that the menace is now under control, and will soon be removed. The losses by mine or submarine for the week announced by the British Admiralty on the 23d were 18 under 1,600 tons, and 9 over 1,600 tons. This is slightly in excess of the preceding week, but maintains the low average. The losses by mines are said to exceed those by submarines. The British transport *Transylvania* was torpedoed in the Mediterranean on May 4 with a loss of 143 persons. A French Deputy announced in the Chamber of Deputies on the 25th that the merchant shipping sunk since the beginning of 1915 amounted to 5,400,000 tons. Rear Admiral Lacaze, French Minister of Marine, stated that with the shipping now building the net loss for 1917 at the present rate would be 4,500,000 tons out of 40,000,000 tons. All ships, he said, would be armed with two guns by October 1.

* *

Brazil is considering a declaration of war against Germany. The Chamber of Deputies passed the first reading of the Government measure by a vote of 136 to 3. There appears to be very little opposition to the pro-American course laid down by President Braz. Chili, it is reported, is strongly inclined to follow Brazil.

* *

The approaching peace conference of Socialists at Stockholm in June awakened added interest in this country because of a ruling of Secretary of State Lansing denying passports to the American delegates. This action was taken by the Secretary under the Logan act of 1799, which forbids unauthorized persons to treat directly or indirectly with foreign agents regarding controversies of the United States, under imprisonment of three years and a fine of \$5,000. The three delegates from this country were Victor L. Berger of Milwaukee, and Morris Hillquit and Algernon Lee of New York.

America's part in the war is still that of furnishing supplies to the Allies, and making preparations for military action at a later time. Much praise from the British naval officials has been evoked by the advance fleet of submarine chasers. General Goethals, acting for the Shipping Board, has accepted proposals by the United States Corporation and the Lackawanna Steel and Iron Company to turn out by fabrication processes 3,000,000 tons of steel shipping in eighteen months. Contracts in addition will be let for as much wooden shipping as can be placed.

Russia.

Many disquieting rumors come from Petrograd and from other parts of Russia, but there appears to be nothing to warrant a prediction regarding any given course or action. Labor troubles are acute. The men and the employers cannot agree upon a basis of wages, and the Government has in many instances been compelled to take arbitrary action. The spirit for prosecuting the war to a conclusion appears to be growing stronger. One evidence of this is the German admission that the negotiations for a separate peace with Russia have failed. Negotiations between the Allied Ambassadors and the Russian Foreign Minister on the question of the Allies' war policy and revision of treaties have been marked by a spirit of good will and a desire by both sides to understand the others' point of view. Some modifications of the Allies' policy are predicted to accord with Russia's desires, but they are not thought to materially interfere with the purpose of the war. The next four weeks are looked forward to as determining the stability of the new government. The Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates has issued a bulletin urging that Russia take action to prevent the "destruction of the allied armies." The latest dispatches announce that virtually all the divergent political organizations are now supporting the appeal of the Minister of War, Kerensky, to the troops to "Advance." The necessity for relieving the pressure on the western front by attacking in the east is recognized, and every effort is being made by generals and statesmen to arouse the soldiers to a sense of duty. [See current volume, page 507.]

NOTES

—New York traction lines on May 23 asked permission of the State Public Service Commission to make an extra charge of two cents for transfers.

—Eighty-eight corporations and individuals were indicted in Boston on May 24 by the Federal Grand Jury for conspiracy to monopolize commerce in onions.

—The Italian commission to the United States headed by Prince Undine, cousin of the King of Italy, arrived in Washington on the 28d, where it has begun work similar to that effected by the British and the French commissions.

—A system of three shifts of eight hours each has been found by the British Government to produce better results in output and conservation of health than two shifts of twelve hours, or one shift of thirteen or fourteen hours.

—For questioning the expediency of the war and refusing to pray for success of American arms, Reverend William M. Finke of Greenwich Presbyterian Church in New York City was ousted by his congregation on May 23, by a vote of 210 to 124.

—A tornado which swept on May 26, from parts of Tennessee, Kentucky and Southern Indiana to Kansas caused 174 deaths, injured 1,019 and destroyed much property. Mattoon, Illinois, Charleston, Illinois and Andale, Kansas are the places which suffered most.

—A mob at Memphis, Tennessee, burned to death Eli Person, a Negro charged with murder and assault. The plea that such occurrences would be prevented had induced the Tennessee legislature, early in the year, to repeal the law abolishing capital punishment passed by its predecessor.

—The Candian League for the Taxation of Land Values is distributing 700,000 copies of a pamphlet calling for the removal of the tariff on foodstuffs, agricultural implements, and raw material, and substituting therefor a tax of one per cent on Canadian land values, which it declares will lower the cost of living, cheapen the farmer's equipment, and force idle land into use.

—It is estimated that since the war began and down to October, 1916, 988,500 women in Great Britain or 30.6 per cent of the number employed in July, 1914, had been drawn into the various governmental, industrial and commercial activities, and that in October, 1916, 933,000 women had directly replaced men in industry. Many of these women are performing operations never before considered possible for them to do.

—A new form of lease adopted by apartment house owners of New York City provides that failure on the part of the landlord to supply heat and hot water, through no fault of his own, shall not release the tenant. Should failure to supply heat extend over a period of 48 hours the tenant may deduct ten per cent from the rent. At the same time increases in rent from ten to fifteen per cent are being asked, the high price of coal being the reason usually given.

—A bill has been introduced in the English Parliament, with the assent of the Government, providing for the re-districting of many of the urban areas of the kingdom and the election of members of Parliament from these districts by proportional representation. The number of seats to which the provisions would apply appears to be towards two hundred. As these provisions received the unanimous approval of the official Conference on Electoral Reform, appointed by the Asquith Government last fall, it is to be expected that they will be enacted into law.

PRESS OPINIONS

Eliminating Hypocrisy from War.

Chicago Tribune.—There is an accepted euphemism to the effect that it is beautiful to die for one's country. The death of an able-bodied man might, in circumstances, be beautiful and it might be necessary, but it is more important that the able-bodied man, in war, kill an enemy of his country than that

he die himself. We are not going out to die, but to kill. Dying for the country may be a beautiful thing, but a more practical thing is to kill. Let the other fellow do the dying. He may have the beauty of it for whatever it is. *Pro patria*, kill some one else. It is a dead loss to die for your country. It is a clear gain to make the enemy die.

The State Department's Petty Action.

New York *Evening Post*, May 24.—The action of the State Department in refusing passports to the American delegates to the Socialist conference at Stockholm is one of those cases which may be supported by specific reasons of prudence, propriety, and even legality, but which a higher reason nevertheless rejects. The first impression created is the painful one that democratic America will not grant to its citizens the freedom of thought and action which the German Government is allowing its Socialist delegates. The dilemma is there, whether we suppose that our conduct proceeds from mere disapproval of the possibilities at Stockholm or from fear. It does not add to our prestige that a difference of opinion can be made the excuse for repressive governmental action. . . . What the State Department should have done was to say to the Stockholm delegates: "You are engaged on a futile and annoying enterprise, but if you must go and talk, here are your passports." The pertinence of the Logan Act of 1799 from which Secretary Lansing derives his authority brings up a problem of subtle interpretation. The Act prohibits intercourse between an American citizen and a foreign government "or any agent or officer thereof." The gathering at Stockholm is to be made up of private citizens holding certain political and economic views. . . . The plain fact is that events during the last fortnight have taken the wind out of the sails at Stockholm. Had the conference met early in May, there might have been reason to fear that it would bend its energies to a separate peace between Russia and the Central Powers. The idea of a separate peace is now dead. . . . But if there is no particular use in a Socialist conference which professes to aim only at what the Governments of Russia and the United States are striving for, there is also no danger in it; and this is the reason why we should prefer to see our own Government willing to overlook a certain amount of possible petty annoyance for the sake of individual liberty.

Time to Abolish All Monarchs.

The *Star* (San Francisco) June.—The *Detroit Free Press* calls attention to the inconsistency of the British in decrying Kaiser rule while retaining monarchy as the form of their own government. Says the *Free Press*:

If the people of the British empire really believe, as their spokesmen frequently say, that they are fighting Kaiserism and not the people of the central kingdoms, they could do a great deal toward bringing the war to an end by conveying a hint to their own king that his resignation is in order.

England's king is a mere figurehead, it is true; the real head of the government is the premier, who is answerable directly to the people. But a king is a

very expensive luxury, costing, with all his dependent relatives and satellites, many millions of pounds sterling annually to the toilers of the empire.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL FIGHT.

Again are the people stunned by the Chicago public school muddle. This time it is an amazing outburst of personalities, charges and recriminations—by the president of the Board of Education and the Mayor of the second city in the country, which calls nation-wide attention to this unseemly and, to many, most puzzling squabble.

The fact that Mayor Thompson had so recently nominated Mr. Loeb to a five-year membership on a Board of Education of eleven members provided by a new law, signed by Governor Lowden last month, and, what is still more significant, exerted every ounce of City Hall and Thompson-Lundin political machine influences to induce aldermen to vote for his confirmation, seems to justify the hope that honest men may get something of their just dues in the premises.

The most disquieting thing about the situation is the danger that on account of the general disfavor of Mayor Thompson, the cause of a long series of coarse blunders culminating in the recent rudeness to the distinguished European visitors, it may result in a hysterical popular judgment which would tend to make a hero of Jacob M. Loeb, who is a much greater menace to the welfare of the school children of Chicago than the whole city hall outfit.

Addressing himself to Fred Lundin, the Mayor's political manager, Mr. Loeb says, "You will charge me with the betraying political confidences. That is not true. The truth is you mistook me for a confederate and an accomplice whom you could use for your nefarious purposes. But you misjudged your man." In view of the cordial co-operation to accomplish a number of nefarious purposes during the past two years it was a pardonable mistake on the part of the political boss.

First he had played a shameful part in the conspiracy between influential persons on and off the Board of Education to badger and harrass the distinguished superintendent of schools, Ella Flagg Young, until self-respect compelled her to resign, to the irreparable loss of the children of Chicago. That such a thing should have been possible shows how sodden we are. For about four years this "Master mind," to use the happy phrase of former Health Commissioner Dr. Wm. A. Evans, gave to the public schools something of peace and harmony and freedom necessary to effective work. Why then was she forced out? What could have been the real reason for the secret plotting to overthrow the successful administration of that remarkable woman whose vision, tact and professional mastery had brought harmony and efficiency out of strife and distrust?

Again, Mr. Loeb was the prime mover in the arbitrary, not to say brutal, dropping of sixty-eight successful teachers, whose re-election had been recommended by Superintendent Shoop, without warning, trial, specific charges or opportunity to be heard.

Why were those efficient teachers turned out in this outrageous fashion?

Finally Loeb and Lundin and the whole city hall influence had worked together most harmoniously and by methods indefensible to remove from the city council Professor Charles E. Merriam, whose powerful and upright leadership interfered with the plans of the big business and petty-politician grafters. With Merriam in the council not only were monopoly franchise grants endangered but assaults upon the public schools might be checked.

Fundamentally these apparently unending school board squabbles are due to the inevitable, irrepressible conflict between Privilege and Progress, and, for the present, monopoly interests are in control in Chicago and Illinois. It is probable that this present rupture—this recent falling out—is due to this very sense of security on the part of the powerful interests in control.

None but the most unsophisticated can believe that Mr. Loeb gave out his statement quoted above without the approval of some of the big ones whom he represents on the Board of Education. It was a bold, almost unheard of play, and let us hope that it may prove a costly one for the interests. Though Privilege never seemed more strongly entrenched and though the Loebites seem to have the best of it, let the Lundinites but pass the word that the mayor would veto all franchise ordinances, and the mayor's school board nominations would probably be confirmed with surprising alacrity.

In conclusion, let me add that during the past four years the immediate purpose of the Powers in their school board moves has been to crush organized labor. To do that they must "get" the Chicago Teachers' Federation; to "get" the federation they had to get rid of Mrs. Young, for she would not make war upon the teachers. Another important consideration, and at times in the past the controlling one, is that of the sale of school lands and the alteration of existing school land leases. Though the Chicago *Herald* asks editorially whether this isn't the "larger thing in the background," unless this ruction shall result in revelations which will really arouse the people, there is danger that this heritage will pass into private hands no matter which crowd controls the Board of Education.

Side issues and personal consideration enter in, of course, as they do in all such struggles where the real, controlling reasons are never given. Both Thompson and Loeb profess to have only the good of the children at heart. If we judge them by their fruits, as we have a right to do, neither cares a straw for the children. The Interests are supreme. Time and again the leaders of the Teachers' Federation have been approached by accredited representatives of special privilege and assured that they will have, without a struggle, more than they were asking in the way of higher salaries if they would withdraw their support from organized labor in its efforts to secure the Initiative and Referendum, restrict child labor and limit the hours and improve the conditions of women workers and of labor generally. Similar assurances have been given if they would cease opposition to certain pending vicious legisla-

Chicago.

WILEY WRIGHT MILLS.

THE ROAD TO INDIVIDUALISM.*

In our opinion, the best thing to be said in behalf of Individualism, from a general viewpoint, is that it is the conception which allows of the smallest amount of lies and humbugs; with it, everything takes place in the open, or at least, when necessity arises, can easily be brought into the light. On the contrary, all that flavors of Communism is from its origin tainted with secrecy and falsehood; Privilege under all its forms steals and murders at will behind the stalking-horse of "general interests" or of the "imperious needs of the community," masks are everywhere, faces nowhere. Anonymous and irresponsible Bureaucracy governs; the State, as an enormous octopus, pumps and poisons the blood of the nation. If the terrible period which we are going through can teach us a lesson, it must be that of the thoroughly malevolent character of the State and of its accomplice, Communism.

The road to true Individualism (not to the hideous sham which has for so long masqueraded under its fair name), is through the abolition of the central government, through the complete suppression of privilege, and through the recognition of the fact that, outside Agriculture, no occupation can be useful or even honest which cannot give a satisfactory proof of its utility and of its honesty. Our civilization is infected with parasitism, the cause of which, materially, is the existence of Monopoly, on all hands; but the cause of which, morally (and here is the crux of the matter), is our miserable admission, in the teeth of all evidence, of this atrocious lie: that all the occupations of man, whatever they may be, are equally fruitful (at least potentially), and possess the power of returning a revenue.

It is not from yesterday—for instance, from the introduction of machinery, steam, electricity, etc.—that misery under all its aspects reigns on our planet. The evil has existed from the remote day when Agriculture was pushed back to the last rank, other pursuits, such as Industry, Bureaucracy, Trade, Militarism, Law-botching, etc., following in gradation above its despised scone. Of course, the evil increased both in magnitude and in turpitude in proportion as invention, discoveries, etc., were shedding a new splendor over the barren or parasitic occupations and as Agriculture, accordingly, was falling into the most shameful disrepute. Our generations, that lived and grew up in the era of great cities and of ceaseless improvements (generally useless), in all directions, were little thinking of the danger which mankind was running by crushing Agriculture under the weight of parasitic Industry and Officialism, by trying to make the social pyramid stand on its apex. To awaken them to the sense of the realities, will the unspeakable abominations of this war be sufficient? Will the men of tomorrow, escaped from the slaughter-pens, understand the hard lesson that the facts are impressing upon them? . . .

GEORGES DARIEN.

Paris.

* From a private letter received by Mrs. Joseph Fels from Georges Darien, a brilliant French writer living in Paris. It is printed as a stimulating and thought-provoking presentation of the land question from a general and radical viewpoint.]

A CORRECTION.

Your issue of May 11 does the Billings Montana *Gazette* a gross injustice, and I would ask that you run a correction. You state:

Imposing special taxes on lands is not going to increase production. If farmers, etc.

As a matter of fact, this paper never gave utterance to those words, and consequently does not care to stand sponsor therefor. This paper simply reproduced an article—editorial—from Butte *Post* containing those words. Due credit was given the *Post* at the end of the item.

The second quotation is O. K. As a member of the defense council, I feel that it is little short of criminal that only one-tenth of this state's farm lands is being cropped, and I wrote the editorial deploring that fact. By soliciting private subscriptions, we collected quite a sum of money in this city—about \$25,000—and secured the planting of 5,400 additional acres that would never have been planted otherwise. We tried in vain to get governmental "credit," as distinguished from an appropriation, realizing as the President said, that the food issue was paramount. The persons we aided were chiefly homesteaders, who had not established bank credits and could not borrow because possessing no title to their lands. If you would use your good offices and endeavor to induce the interior department to hurry up patents so that they do not have to wait a year or two after they prove up, that is, complete their residence, you would do a great service to this State, which is being transformed from a range country into a rich agricultural district. A vast majority of this idle land belongs to the government, and is not held by private individuals as you seem to think.

Personally, I believe Quick is one of the live wires of official Washington, but he proved powerless to aid us in securing the planting of additional acres this spring.

I hope you will give this letter the same prominence you did in the article criticising us, which as you will realize was wholly unjustified by the facts.

LEON SHAW,

Billings, Montana.

Editor, *The Gazette*.

LIFE IN PORVENIR.

I was hugely interested in the little paragraph reprinted in THE PUBLIC of May 11 from the *Christian Science Monitor*, in which a correspondent says that in Porvenir, on the Straits of Magellen, "there are three governments, one of Chile, another of Argentina, and a third of the Labor Federation, that of the Labor Federation being the only one which anybody seriously acknowledges." Fifteen years or so ago I was in Porvenir, which is on the island of Tierra del Fuego. Porvenir was then a true anarchist settlement, for there was no judge, law, court, policeman, soldier or church. There was even very little money, and exchange was conducted largely by the weighing out of gold-dust. But no one had a monopoly on the land, and none of us were hungry nor poor, and there being no poverty, there was little or no crime, wherefore, judge, law, court or policeman were none of them necessary. Tierra

del Fuego, while apportioned out between Chili and Argentine, had no international disagreements within its borders, so the soldier was not needed then. As for the church, frankness was so extant that every one had certainly put away lying, as Eph. iv:25 has it, and each spoke truth with his neighbor, being members one of another. . . . I had a good time there.

CHARLES J. FINGER.

Ripley, Ohio.

BOOKS

A VALUABLE WAR DOCUMENT

A German Deserter's War Experiences. Anonymous. Published by B. W. Huebach, New York. Price \$1.

This is one of the war books of personal experience, the simple direct realism of which bears the indubitable stamp of truth. The writer's attitude throughout is entirely neutral and probably represents the feelings of most of the rank and file of the opposing armies. The book gives an extraordinary impression of a small group of soldiers, mere tools, apparently isolated, starting to an unknown destination, joining and becoming part of a vast overwhelming flood which bursts through and overflows a dazed and terrified country. This sensation of aggressive driving force carries through the book, and also the feeling of impotence which paralyzed any individual desire in the ranks to resist the overbearing behavior of officers. One is appalled by the drive, the machine-like inevitableness, the endlessness of it all. Human material cracked, broke, was swept aside—the monster moved always onward. Convincing are the descriptions of the civil population caught unawares and helpless, and the frank statements of the brutalizing effect wrought on the writer and his comrades by the sight of death and suffering. A similar effect is produced on the reader who after the first shock from these realistic accounts of ghastly sights, is conscious of a certain hardening in himself, which grows rapidly into anger at the makers of war, and into a fighting desire to kill this monstrous power of militarism which enforces the lowest slavery even on a victorious army. Very different is the effect of such war books as Well's *Mr. Britling* or Walpole's *Dark Forest* that analyze the emotions produced by the war on noncombatants. These books tend rather to leave their readers with strained nerves and an overpowering hopelessness. It is the concrete reality of a document like this of the German deserter that calls to a vehement hatred of war, and pledges help to stamp out the abominable thing.

JOHN WILLIS SLAUGHTER.

COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENCE

The Public Defender. A Necessary Factor in the Administration of Justice. By Mayer C. Goldman. Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. Price \$1.00, net.

Why is it that society organized to act in a legal capacity is always accuser and prosecutor? Why is defense left to whatever provisions the accused is able to make? Should not the state as dispenser of justice provide a public defender as well as a public prosecutor?

This book brings home to the reader two startling facts, which we are loth to admit, but which it is

useless to deny: First, that despite the theoretical presumption of innocence, society, as a whole, really presumes the accused guilty of the crime charged, and Second, that criminal law is inequitably administered, and that society does and must suffer from the sense of wrong due to partial administration. Here more than anywhere else the curse of the poor is their poverty, and the rich have many friends. Not alone does poverty cause most of the crimes committed, but punishment of accused poor is more certain, speedy and severe.

It is to be expected that society's hounding instinct will diminish with the growth of the use of the psychopathic laboratory in the administration of the criminal law. Likewise, if civilization is to endure, voluntary poverty, which is the chief cause of crime, must be eliminated. But in the meantime much wrong and injustice can be prevented, and much public expense avoided by a general use of the public defender.

The suggestion on pp. 6-7, that the public defender should "in certain cases and under certain conditions" be permitted to go before the grand jury, might have been made with more confidence. So far as grand juries and their investigations are concerned, public prosecutors and public defenders should be on a par. Grand juries should be free to seek and disregard the advice of both equally. Much expense and humiliation both public and private could be avoided if the two public officials agreed that certain persons previously held to the grand jury by coroners' juries and examining magistrates should not be indicted. Grand juries should be free to disregard such stipulations but would no doubt give them consideration with corresponding public benefit.

WILEY W. MILLS.

* * *

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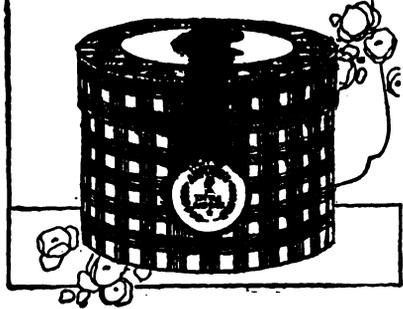


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