

of finding the points wherein municipal ownership had failed, and he has blindfolded himself to the instances wherein it has been successful. If we are to believe Mr. Burdett, who went there thus handicapped, we are equally under obligation to believe the men who return from there having seen only the success, and been blind to the failures. But there is one great difference. Mr. Burdett admits that he went "in our own interest" while others who have gone there have gone in the interest of the people, and with unselfish enthusiasm for a great cause. This one great difference alone should be enough to incline the fair-minded to put greater faith in the reports of those who have proclaimed success, than in him who reports failure.

ERIK OBERG.

## NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Wednesday, June 6.

### Official Exposure of the Chicago Packing Houses.

President Roosevelt has sent to Congress the first part of the report on conditions in the Chicago packing houses (p. 202), made under his direction. In his letter of transmittal, dated the 4th, Mr. Roosevelt describes the report as "of a preliminary nature," submitted at this time "because it shows the urgent need of immediate action by the Congress in the direction of providing a drastic and thoroughgoing inspection by the Federal government of all stockyards and packinghouses and of their products, so far as the latter enter into inter-state or foreign commerce." He adds that "the conditions shown by even this short inspection to exist in the Chicago stockyards are revolting," and that "it is imperative necessary in the interest of health and of decency that they should be radically changed." He therefore recommends "the immediate enactment into law of provisions which will enable the Department of Agriculture adequately to inspect the meat and meat-food products entering into inter-state commerce and to supervise the methods of preparing the same, and to prescribe the sanitary conditions under which the work shall be performed."

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Eliminating the details, which are numerous and for the most part revolting, the report thus transmitted to Congress is as follows:

We investigated the conditions in the principal establishments in Chicago engaged in the slaughter of cattle, sheep and hogs, and in the preparation of dressed meat and meat-food products. Two and a half weeks

were spent in the investigation in Chicago, and during this time we went through the principal packing houses in the stockyards district, together with a few of the smaller ones. . . . We have made no statement as a fact in the report here presented that was not verified by our personal examination. Certain matters, which we were unable to verify while in Chicago, are still under investigation. The following is therefore submitted as a partial report touching upon those practices and conditions which we found most common and not confined to a single house or class of houses. A more detailed report would contain many specific instances of defects found in particular houses. . . . Abominable as the above-named conditions are, the one that affects most directly and seriously the cleanliness of the food products is . . . . An absence of cleanliness was also found everywhere in the handling of meat being prepared for the various meat-food products. . . . The radical defect in the present system of inspection is that it does not go far enough. It is confined at present by law to passing on the healthfulness of animals at the time of killing; but the meat that is used in sausage and in the various forms of canned products and other prepared meat foods goes through many processes, in all of which there is possibility of contamination through insanitary handling, and further danger through the use of chemicals. During all these processes of preparation there is no government inspection and no assurance whatever that these meat-food products are wholesome and fit for food—despite the fact that all these products, when sent out, bear a label stating they have been passed upon by government inspectors. As to the investigation of the alleged use of dyes, preservatives, or chemicals in the preparation of cured meats, sausages and canned goods, we are not yet prepared to report. We did look into the matter of sanitary handling of the meats being prepared for the various food products. The results of our observations have already been partly given. Other instances of how products may be made up and still secure the stamp of government inspection are here given. . . . The lack of consideration for the health and comfort of the laborers in the Chicago stockyards seems to be a direct consequence of the system of administration that prevails. The various departments are under the direct control of superintendents, who claim to use full authority in dealing with the employes and who seem to ignore all considerations except those of the account book. Under this system proper care of the products and of the health and comfort of the employes is impossible, and the consumer suffers in consequence. The insanitary conditions in which the laborers work and the feverish pace which they are forced to maintain inevitably affect their health. Physicians state that tuberculosis is disproportionately prevalent in the stockyards, and the victims of this disease expectorate on the spongy wooden floors of the dark workrooms, from which falling scraps of meat are later shoveled up to be converted into food products. Even the ordinary decencies of life are completely ignored. . . . The neglect on the part of their employers to recognize or provide for the requirements of cleanliness and decency of the employes must have an influence that cannot be exaggerated in lowering the morals and discouraging cleanliness on the part of the workers employed in the packing houses. The whole situation as we saw it in these huge establishments tends necessarily and inevitably to the moral degradation of thousands of workers, who are forced to spend their working hours under conditions that are entirely unnecessary and unpardonable, and which are a constant menace, not only to their own health, but to the health of those who use the food products prepared by them. . . .

The report concludes with extended recommendations for Federal inspection and labeling of products for interstate and foreign commerce.

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### The Packers' Defense.

Replying to the President's message and the Neill-Reynolds report, Mr. J. Ogen Armour called from Paris on the 4th an interview to the Chicago Tribune in which he said:

It is preposterous to believe for a moment that the great Chicago firms with hundreds of millions of dollars

invested in their business are or could be guilty of the sensational charges brought against them. It is obvious it is to their interest to conduct their business in the cleanest and most scientific manner possible, with the best quality of material and the most modern appliances. I know nothing of the conditions prevailing in some small packing houses. No sane man ever would believe the newspaper stories that have appeared upon the subject. The whole of these so-called revelations have been engineered directly by Mr. Roosevelt himself. The truth is that Roosevelt has a strong personal animus against the packers of Chicago and is doing and will do everything in his power to discredit them and their business. The reason is too obvious to require explanation to anybody knowing anything of American politics and American public life. I consider that the system of inspection in the American packing industry is fully adequate, but even supposing that some changes were necessary, do you suppose the best way to go about the matter is to boom it as a newspaper sensation? If what Mr. Roosevelt wanted was only a change and improvement in the inspection system, surely the most straightforward way would have been to tell us so, to have required us to make whatever alterations he thought necessary.

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All the heads of the big packing houses who were in Chicago held an afternoon conference on the 4th. President Roosevelt's report was spread out before them. At the close of the conference a formal statement was given out signed by Armour & Co., Swift & Co., Morris & Co., G. H. Hammond company, Omaha Packing company, Anglo-American Provision company, Libby, McNeill & Libby, and Schwarzschild & Sulzberger, in which the charges of the Neill-Reynolds report were denied. This denial was supplemented by a report made at the instance of the packers by Prof. T. J. Burrill, vice-president of the University of Illinois and chief of the department of bacteriology, and by Prof. H. S. Grindley of the chair of chemistry of the University of Illinois. These gentlemen had made their investigation on the 24th and 25th of May. In the report they say that they have nothing at stake for themselves or for friends or enemies. "No claim is made that this was an exhaustive investigation." Wherever they went they had a competent guide and they went wherever they chose. The report notes that "this is a butcher's, not a milliner's or jeweler's work," and must be judged from its own standpoint. After a description of the conditions, this report concludes:

Briefly, our visit was a very satisfactory one to ourselves, except that the time for such an inspection was much too short. We were previously acquainted with only one man whom we met, a chemist in the employ of one of the companies. He endeavored to aid us to see anything and everything which we chose to inspect, and introduced us to the men who could give us such aid. We spent two days of very active inquiry and observation, visiting selected parts of the plants of four companies. Much difference was found in regard to adaptation for such work in the older buildings, compared with those of more recent construction, and especially in the newer substitutes for wood in the floors. We believe that very desirable improvements could be made in regard to the cleanliness of the persons and clothing of operatives by providing further lavatory facilities and by adopting a suitable working uniform with regulations for laundry work. We saw the value of the present inspection procedure, and hope that these may be extended and improved. The packers themselves seem to favor this, but for this we had only the ideas of managers or superintendents and the experience of the government inspectors. We did not find anything seriously repugnant to cleanliness or wholesomeness in the operations or procedures, neither did we find anything which indicated corrupt business practices or deceit, unless we call

artificial coloring of some products, or the manufacturing of certain compounds without showing the constituents on the labels, by these names. We feel certain that the descriptions published of late, showing horribly uncleanly and unsanitary conditions and practices in these packing houses must be themselves open to wide criticism, though we make no claim to anything like an exhaustive examination of the premises. We are under no kind of obligations to any one in this matter, except for the personal courtesies received during our visit.

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#### Exposure of New York Central.

The examination of railroad officials before the Interstate Commerce Commission at Philadelphia (p. 202) developed facts on the 5th which reflect upon the New York Central Railroad in much the same manner as those developed last week reflect upon the Pennsylvania system. The facts were drawn out by Edward B. Whitney, the New York lawyer, from E. W. Rossiter, vice-president of the New York Central. Mr. Rossiter admitted that the Beech Creek Coal and Coke company had presented the railroad with 5,000 shares of stock, par value \$100, and that later when the Beech Creek company was merged into the Pennsylvania Coal and Coke company this stock was exchanged for \$1,500,000 worth of stock in the latter company. When asked how the railroad acquired the original stock and whether it paid cash for it, Mr. Rossiter replied that it was given to the railroad in 1901 when the coal company was organized, and that the railroad paid no cash for it, but that it was given for traffic reasons. A contract had been signed by the railroad and the coal company and the stock was given in consideration of the contract. This contract was produced. By its provisions the coal company agreed to mine at least 1,000,000 tons of coal every year, and the railroad agreed to furnish cars equal to that amount of coal annually, exclusive of fuel cars. The railroad further agreed to interest itself in no other coal company excepting the Clearfield bituminous coal corporation. The railroad also agreed to purchase 500,000 tons of fuel coal every year. The Clearfield corporation was a merger of a number of smaller companies owned by the New York Central. These companies supplied only fuel coal to the railroad. The witness stated that the railroad also owned the entire stock of the Gallitzen Coal company, but had an agreement with the Webster Coal and Coke company and the Pennsylvania Coal and Coke company by which the latter operated the mines. The inference drawn at the hearing from this and other testimony was that the New York Central discriminates in transportation facilities in favor of coal companies in which it is secretly interested. In this respect its operations were connected by a "gentleman's agreement" with the Pennsylvania road for controlling the development of coal lands along their lines.

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#### Labor Riot in Mexico.

Sensational reports were published on the 2d of an outbreak of Mexican workmen against Americans at the Cananea Consolidated Copper mines, in the State of Sonora, Mexico, on the 1st. These mines are controlled by Col. W. C. Greene, one of the objects of Lawson's exposures. There are about