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## EDITORIAL

### The Man with the Muck Rake.

Mr. Roosevelt's heralded speech on "the man with the muck rake," depends for its interest upon the fact that he is President of the United States, and derives its significance from the fact that it is timed to divert attention from recent exposures of crime in high places, and energy from social reform. In itself it is but a string of platitudes to which every one assents. Who would deny, for instance, that there should be relentless exposures, but they must be true? Who would deny that it is wrong to steal from poor men, but also from rich men? Who would deny that bribery should

be denounced, but also blackmail? Who would deny that practical reform work needs pulling forward, but also some holding back? Yet the whole speech, apart from certain economic recommendations, is composed of just such platitudinous observations expanded until they are of almost gaseous consistency. Why all this careful balancing of moral antitheses at just this time? The organs of plutocracy refer to it not unnaturally as an attack upon Lincoln Steffens; yet Steffens's exposures are without a flaw in their veracity. If he has attacked with severity, his attacks have been absolutely truthful. But whether or not the President was slanting at Mr. Steffens is of little moment. The only important thing in this connection, and that is not very important, is the fact that the speech was made at a time and with an emphasis which warrant the assumption of the beneficiaries of great graft that it was made in their behalf.

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What interests us most in Mr. Roosevelt's speech is his economic suggestions. With his objection to establishing a line of cleavage dividing those who are well off from those who are less well off, we are in hearty sympathy. But his notion that the line should divide good men from bad is exceedingly superficial. And what could possibly be more encouraging to "the man with the muck rake" than such a division? The nominally good would be forever at work raking out the nominally bad. There would be nothing else for them to do, except to admire their own goodness. The true line of cleavage for society to draw is not between rich and poor, nor good and bad; nor is it between persons at all. It is between natural freedom of economic opportunity on the one hand and legalized privilege on the other.

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At one point Mr. Roosevelt seems to recognize dimly the essential propriety of this line of cleavage, for he remarks that "materially we must strive to secure a broader economic opportunity for all men." But whatever encouragement might be drawn from this remark is dampened by Mr. Roosevelt's advocacy of a progressive tax intended to prevent the transfer of large fortunes beyond a certain amount to any one individual. Curiously enough Mr. Roosevelt proposes this confiscatory measure for "all fortunes," utterly regardless of how they are won, in almost the same breath in which he insists upon discriminating between "fortunes well won and fortunes ill won"! This absurd contrast suggests the fundamental criticism of Mr. Roosevelt's speech. The speech

assumes that fortunes not ill-won are well won. But many a fortune of which no one can say that it is ill-won is an unearned fortune. Yet if it is unearned by its owner who has it, it must have been earned by others who have it not. Such fortunes are due to legal privilege, and they are as burdensome to the despoiled when the despoiler is not as when he is a conscious grafter. They are worse in their effects upon society. Even Mr. Roosevelt defends these fortunes against what he calls "the greed of the have-nots," who contribute to them though they themselves go hungry. It is fortunes so acquired, albeit they are moderate in amount, rather than great fortunes though ill-won or ill-used, that produce the evil social conditions Mr. Roosevelt deplures.

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### Bryan and Other Democrats.

Some fears have been expressed by friends of Mr. Bryan that recent demonstrations on the part of plutocratic Democrats may excite distrust of him by democratic Democrats. It is at times even suggested that Mr. Bryan ought to confirm the confidence of the latter by openly discouraging the advances of the former. To this suggestion the rational reply, it seems to us, is that of the Omaha World-Herald. In its issue of the 14th this able exponent of democratic Democracy observed that the Democrats of the West will neither give way to an undue feeling of pride over the rush of Eastern conservatives "for the Bryan bandwagon," nor "feel the slightest tremor of disquietude over the veiled hints of some of the conservative chieftains that the Bryan they are now so eager to embrace is not the uncompromising, fighting, radical Democrat of the historic campaigns of 1896 and 1900." What the western Democracy will do, as the World-Herald believes, and what all thoughtful democratic Democrats will do, as we believe, is as the World-Herald says, to—

distinguish into two classes, those Eastern Democrats who are now returning to the fold. They will recognize, in one class, the "leaders" who have fought genuine Democracy knowing full well that it was genuine. They know those "leaders" acted from selfish and unpatriotic motives then, and will suspect some of them, at least, of like motives at this time. In the second class will be recognized those honest and true Democrats of the East whom those "leaders" misled; who voted against Bryan because they did not know him and were deceived as to his creed. The Democrats, who were honestly mistaken then, and who are coming home now because they have learned the truth, will be welcomed with frank rejoicing.

But the World-Herald candidly sounds a plain, and perhaps with some Eastern Democrats a needed, warning when it says—

Let the Democrats of the East come home. They will be welcomed to a place beneath the Democratic roof. But they may as well know that they are coming to take the Democratic party as it is—a party that cannot be turned aside in its devotion to the

cause of the embattled millions of common people. They are not coming to taint it again with the odor of Belmont and Ryan subterfuge, insincerity and deception. The Democratic party, under the leadership of Mr. Bryan, invites the support of those, and those only, who desire to act with it because it is the foe of special privilege and the champion of equal rights. It has no tolerance for those who would steal its livery the more effectually to serve plutocracy.

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### The Government Obligees.

The Secretary of the Treasury has discovered a new way of relieving stringencies in the Wall street money market. It is so very simple that the gossips of Wall street are amazed that no one ever thought of it before. This very simple device consists, if the dispatches describe it correctly, in lending to favorite bankers government gold, pending the arrival here of gold purchased by them in London. To secure these loans of honest money the favored bankers deposit United States bonds with the treasury. Presumably the treasury charges interest for the gold it lends, but on this point the dispatches are silent. The device is indeed a simple one, and if fair interest is exacted it would appear to be quite legitimate for the government to help out the bankers on such gilt-edge collateral for the loans, when gold refuses to flow over here though rates of exchange reach the gold importing point.

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But the curious thing about it all is the fact that gold should refuse to flow this way. Why doesn't it flow? Since last June we have exported \$400,000,000 more in all of merchandise, gold and silver than we have imported; and prior to that we had similarly run up a credit account aggregating hundreds upon thousands of millions. We have the most gloriously "favorable balance of trade" that ever was known. And every dollar of it is payable "in pure gold." So, at least, said Mr. McKinley when running for the Presidency. Yet the bankers of New York, when they want only a few paltry millions of this "pure gold" that is due us, have to go into the London market and buy it just as if the London market didn't owe us many times that amount! What can the matter be with our "favorable" balance of trade? Why does it work for us only in treasury statistics and never in foreign exchanges?

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### The Federal Tax on Alcohol.

The lower house of Congress has now done what both houses ought to have done long ago—passed a bill repealing the tax on alcohol used in the arts. The Federal taxes on this product have operated as all taxes on production do operate, to enhance its cost and limit its use, and consequently to obstruct employment both in making the article itself and in utilizing it for making and operating other products. The farmers' organizations have realized this with reference to the possibilities of

known in Ohio as "the Dana law." It prohibited the printing of the name of any candidate in more than one column. Consequently, if two parties fused, both were compelled to present an incomplete ticket on the official ballot unless one would abandon its identity and, disappearing from the ticket altogether, allow the names of its candidates to appear in the party column of the party with which it had fused. This law is now repealed in Ohio. The whole ballot system ought to be changed by abolishing party columns and grouping the names of all candidates for the same office in alphabetical order as is done in Massachusetts; but the repeal of the anti-fusion law is a vast improvement even without the other.

In the wreckage wrought by the corporations at this session of the Ohio legislature, was the Metzger bill, a measure advocated by Mayor Johnson to curb the monopoly power of street car companies. Another was the bill of Senator Frederic C. Howe, which provided a simple but effective method for equitably taxing monopoly corporations. It proposed to abolish State taxes on the real and personal property assessed in the counties and raise more than this amount for State purposes by a tax on franchises which now pay no taxes. Both bills were killed by corporation interests, and some Democrats in the legislature lined up with Republican members behind the corporation lobby in order to do it.

It is probable that the democratic Democrats of Ohio will make the next campaign an occasion for educating the people of the State with reference to the corporation tools who have misrepresented them, as well as with reference to democratic principles. The corporations worked for the most part through local bosses. The head center boss was absent, but county bosses were in evidence, and every one of them was interested in some public utility franchise or other.

It will be generally interesting to know that a constitutional amendment for the initiative and referendum actually passed the Senate by the requisite three-fifths majority, but was not put to vote in the House because, while it would have received a majority its friends did not believe it could get three-fifths. The discussions of this measure revealed very clearly the fact that it is not the referendum but the initiative that the plutocratic elements have come to fear. They feel that public opinion can be restrained if the people are not allowed to vote upon any law until some manageable legislature has submitted it to referendum; but they are desperately afraid of public opinion coupled with the legal right of petitioning for a law and then directly voting it into operation.

While the legislature has adjourned, it has left an investigating committee at work in Cincinnati with what President Roosevelt might call "a muck rake," and not a little plutocratic muck is it raking up.

Mayor Johnson's street car policy, though still obstructed is constantly gaining ground. The Chamber of Commerce came to the aid of the companies with a proposal for renewing their franchises, but this proposal has fallen flat. Public opinion here gives no indication of any disposition to tolerate further gifts of valuable public rights to these companies, and most of the important support they have heretofore received is drifting away from them to the

"holding company" plan—like the "contract plan" of Chicago—with which Mayor Johnson is endeavoring to settle the question.

L. F. P.

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## NEWS NARRATIVE

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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 Thursday, April 19.

### Destructive Earthquake at San Francisco.

Almost immediately after the volcanic eruption at Mount Vesuvius (p. 29) had subsided, San Francisco was visited with a destructive earthquake. It was by far the most disastrous the city has ever experienced. The first shock, which occurred at 5:13 on the morning of the 18th, was quickly followed by another, and in the evening there came still another. Between these there were four minor shocks. The water works plant being destroyed, the city was exposed for lack of water to spreading fires and is at this moment in danger of total destruction. Lack of water for drinking purposes, also, is causing untold suffering, and the only relief respecting the need of both food and water must come by sea, all railroad communication having been cut off. Fears of a pestilence make a terrifying climax to the succession of horrors. Some estimates place the loss of life at 10,000 and the personal injuries at 20,000; but the actual loss of life will never be known, for the bodies of many who were killed by the earthquake were consumed in the fires that followed. The burned area, eight square miles in extent, comprises the business section, in which were the finest and largest business buildings of the city. Nearly all are in ruins. Chinatown is totally destroyed, the Japanese quarter is burned out, and the retail district is swept clean.

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The same disturbance that wrecked San Francisco extended to Palo Alto, where it destroyed Leland Stanford, Jr., University; to Berkeley, where it badly damaged the State University; to Agnew, where it wrecked the insane asylum and killed 275 inmates; to Salinas, where the Spreckels sugar factory was destroyed; to San Jose, where 65 persons were killed; to Napa, Stockton, Vallejo, Redwood City, and even to Sacramento, where it was sharply felt. By scientific instruments the shock was noted all over the globe.

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### President Roosevelt's Sensational Speech.

Social conditions, with especial reference to business and political corruption, was the subject of a speech on the 14th by President Roosevelt. He had recently spoken at the Gridiron Club, Washington, under circumstances making reports of the speech

improper, but its purport leaked out and was gossiped about. According to the gossip the theme of this speech was Bunyan's "man with the muck rake." It consisted in an attack upon the writers and magazines that have been chiefly instrumental in bringing to light the life insurance scandals and directing attention to other corporation and political grafting. Soon afterward announcements were made, apparently with authority, that Mr. Roosevelt would deal publicly with the same subject in a Decoration Day speech, and later that he would do so at the laying of the corner stone of the new Congressional office building on the 14th. The latter announcement has been verified.

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In his speech on this occasion Mr. Roosevelt recalled the description in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" of the man with the muck rake as "the example of him whose vision is fixed on carnal instead of on spiritual things," but who "also typifies the man who in this life consistently refuses to see aught that is lofty and fixes his eyes with solemn intentness only on that which is vile and debasing." From this he proceeded to draw the lesson that while "there should be relentless exposure of and attack upon every evil man, whether politician or business man; every evil practice, whether in politics, in business or in social life," these exposures and attacks are of use only if "absolutely truthful." He protested that in denouncing "mud slinging" he did not mean to indorse "white washing"—that his plea was "not for immunity to but for the most unsparring exposure of the politician who betrays his trust and the big business man who makes or spends his fortune in illegitimate and corrupt ways." He added: "It is because I feel that there should be no rest in the endless war against the forces of evil that I ask that the war be conducted with sanity as well as with resolution." Continuing he said:

To assail the great and admitted evils of our political and industrial life with such crude and sweeping generalizations as to include decent men in the general condemnation means the searing of the public conscience. There results a general attitude either of cynical belief in and indifference to public corruption or else of a distrustful inability to discriminate between the good and the bad. Either attitude is fraught with untold damage to the country as a whole. . . . Hysterical sensationalism is the very poorest weapon wherewith to fight for lasting righteousness. These men who with stern sobriety and truth assail the many evils of our time, whether in the public press or in magazines or in books, are the leaders and allies of all engaged in the work for social and political betterment. But if they give good reason for distrust of what they say, if they chill the ardor of those who demand truth as a primary virtue, they thereby betray the good cause and play into the hands of the very men against whom they are nominally at war. . . . At this moment we are passing through a period of great unrest—social, political and industrial unrest. It is of the utmost importance for our future that this should prove to be not the unrest of mere rebelliousness against life, of mere dissatisfaction with the inevitable inequality of conditions, but the unrest of a resolute and eager ambition to secure the betterment of the individual and the nation. So far as this movement of agitation throughout the country takes the form of a fierce discontent with evil, of a determination to punish the authors of evil, whether in industry or politics, the feeling is to be heartily welcomed as a sign of healthy life. If, on the other hand, it turns into a mere crusade of appetite against appetite, of a contest between the brutal greed of the "have-nots" and the brutal greed of the "haves," then it has no significance for good, but

only for evil. If it seeks to establish a line of cleavage, not along the line which divides good men from bad, but along that other line, running at right angles thereto, which divides those who are well off from those who are less well off, then it will be fraught with immeasurable harm to the body politic. . . . It is important to this people to grapple with the problems connected with the amassing of enormous fortunes and the use of those fortunes, both corporate and individual, in business. We should discriminate in the sharpest way between fortunes well won and fortunes ill won, between those gained as an incident to performing great services to the community as a whole and those gained in evil fashion by keeping just within the limits of mere law honesty. Of course, no amount of charity in spending such fortunes can in any way compensate for misconduct in making them. . . . The men of wealth who to-day are trying to prevent the regulation and control of their business in the interest of the public by the proper government authorities will not succeed, in my judgment, in checking the progress of the movement. But if they did succeed they would find that they had sown the wind and would surely reap the whirlwind, for they would ultimately provoke the violent excesses which accompany a reform coming by convulsion instead of by steady and natural growth. On the other hand, the wild preachers of unrest and discontent, the wild agitators against the entire existing order, the men who act crookedly, whether because of sinister design or from mere puzzleheadedness; the men who preach destruction without proposing any substitute for what they intend to destroy or who propose a substitute which would be far worse than the existing evils—all these men are the most dangerous opponents of real reform. . . . More important than aught else is the development of the broadest sympathy of man for man. The welfare of the wageworker, the welfare of the tiller of the soil, upon these depend the welfare of the entire country; their good is not to be sought in pulling down others, but their good must be the prime object of all our statesmanship. Materially we must strive to secure a broader economic opportunity for all men, so that each shall have a better chance to show the stuff of which he is made. Spiritually and ethically we must strive to bring about clean living and right thinking.

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Much less interest appears to have been excited and discussion evoked by the "muck-rake" and general features of Mr. Roosevelt's speech than by the specific remedies which he proposed for the evils he acknowledged. Merely as a matter of personal conviction, and, he explained,—

without pretending to discuss the details or formulate the system, I feel that we shall ultimately have to consider the adoption of some such scheme as that of a progressive tax on all fortunes beyond a certain amount either given in life or devised or bequeathed upon death to any individual—a tax so framed as to put it out of the power of the owner of one of these enormous fortunes to hand on more than a certain amount to any one individual; the tax, of course, to be imposed by the national and not the State government. Such taxation should, of course, be aimed merely at the inheritance or transmission in their entirety of those fortunes swollen beyond all healthy limits. . . . Again, the national government must in some form exercise control over corporations engaged in inter-State business—and all large corporations are engaged in inter-State business—whether by license or otherwise, so as to permit us to deal with the far-reaching evils of overcapitalization. . . . The first requisite in the public servants who are to deal in this shape with corporations, whether as legislators or as executives, is honesty. This honesty can be no respecter of persons. There can be no such thing as unilateral honesty. The danger is not really from corrupt corporations, it springs from the corruption itself whether exercised for or against corporations. The eighth commandment reads, "Thou shalt not steal." It does not read, "Thou shalt not steal from the rich man." It does not read, "Thou shalt not steal from the poor man." It reads simply and plainly, "Thou shalt not steal." No good whatever will come from that warped and mock morality which denounces the misdeeds

of men of wealth and forgets the misdeeds practiced at their expense; which denounces bribery, but blinds itself to blackmail; which foams with rage if a corporation secures favors by improper methods and merely leers with hideous mirth if the corporation is itself wronged.

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### Jefferson's Birthday.

Almost as if in anticipation of President Roosevelt's "muck-rake" speech, Gov. Folk's address on the 13th at Kansas City, Mo., in celebration of Jefferson's birthday, struck a different key. Describing Jeffersonian democracy as meaning the rule of the people regardless of class, clique and special interest, Gov. Folk said:

Whenever the people cease to rule anywhere and gangs and bosses govern instead, then special privilege, and corruption which springs from special privilege, as a necessary consequence follow. Jefferson announced the cardinal doctrine of true Democracy when he declared for "equal rights to all; special privileges to none." This maxim expresses every essential element of true democracy. It embraces every essential element of good government. The phrase sounds simple, but it has taken generations for men to attain a practical understanding of its wisdom and justice. It comes to us to-day as a message from the past, for it applies to the conditions to-day with even greater force than when it was first announced by the father of Democracy. That was one of the first declarations against what is known in modern times as graft. Graft in its last analysis is a special privilege, either exercised contrary to law or one the law itself may give. Some special privilege is at the bottom of every graft. No one ever heard of an official being corrupted in order to give equal rights to all. It is always for the purpose of obtaining some special privilege for a few. An unprecedented political revival is going on in the United States to-day on this subject. The spirit of reform comes from reflection, and reflection comes from knowledge of evils and desire to correct them. There is no secret remedy known for corruption. It cannot be cured by hiding it. When it is known, the people can be trusted to apply the remedy swiftly and surely. The people are awake now, and as long as they keep awake there will be only white lights ahead for popular government. The developments of the last few years should inspire optimism not pessimism as to the future. The punishment of rascals is not going to cause the overthrow of the Republic. The old-fashioned ideas of honesty are being applied to the new-fashioned business. The command: "Thou shalt not steal," has again become binding. This does not mean socialism, which says to another: "What is thine is mine," but it means equal opportunity to all to have, to hold and to enjoy the fruits of honest labor, and no special privileges to a class to prey upon the rest of the people.

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On the same occasion Congressman Towne, another of the speakers, urged that the Democratic party, instead of following blindly the specific propositions of Jefferson, should find in the broad principles of his philosophy the means whereby it may "offer a shelter at the present crisis in our industrial history from the tyranny of privilege on the one hand and the unsounded perils of socialism on the other."

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At New York Jefferson's birthday was celebrated on the 16th by the Democratic Club. The speakers were Woodrow Wilson, of Princeton; Judson Harmon, of Cincinnati; Senator Gearing, of Oregon, and Mayor McClellan, of New York. Mayor McClellan's reference to the radical tendencies in the Democratic party were as follows:

There is a spirit of disorder and lawlessness, of unrest and hopelessness sweeping around the world, a spirit which masks under the names of socialism, collectivism, communism, but which has for its object the subversion

of existing law and order, and ultimately manifests itself by the flaming torch and the red flag of anarchy. That spirit is with us in the United States to-day. The people have been plundered until a field has been plowed and harrowed ready for the sowing with the seed of diseased thought. And the sowers who sow the seed, without conscience or thought of consequences, are men armed with the most powerful weapons for the deliberate perversion of humanity. With the single ambition of personal elevation to feed their monstrous vanity, they would not only wreck the party to which they claim allegiance, but would without scruple place upon this country the curse with which every civilized nation in Europe has been struggling for a decade. And these men—God save the mark—call themselves Democrats.

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### Federal Insurance Legislation.

Apropos of the insurance scandals to which his own "muck-rake" speech, as well as Gov. Folk's Jefferson day address alluded, President Roosevelt transmitted to Congress on the 17th the report and recommendations of the insurance convention which met recently in Chicago (vol. viii, p. 749) at the suggestion of Gov. Johnson, of Minnesota. This convention, says the President in his message—

seeking to accomplish uniformity of insurance legislation throughout the States and Territories, and as a prime step toward this purpose decided to endeavor to secure the enactment by the Congress of the United States of a proper insurance code for the District of Columbia, which might serve as a model for the several States. Before adjourning the convention appointed a committee of three attorneys general and twelve commissioners of insurance of the various States to prepare and have presented to the Congress a bill, which should embody the features suggested in the convention. The committee recently met in Chicago, and in thorough and painstaking fashion sought to prepare a bill which should be at once protective to policy-holders and fair and just to insurance companies, and which should prevent the graver evils and abuses of the business, and at the same time forestall any wild or drastic legislation which would be more harmful than beneficial. . . . I very earnestly hope that the Congress at the earliest opportunity will enact the bill into law, with such changes as its wisdom may dictate.

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### Aftermath of the Beef Trust Trial.

Another important message was sent to Congress by the President on the 18th. It related to the decision of Judge Humphrey in the beef trust case (vol. viii, p. 410,724), and transmitted the Attorney General's report of the trial. The President calls that trial a "miscarriage of justice" and asks for legislation. Mr. Garfield is completely exonerated. As a basis for asking further legislation, the President says that the

interpretation by Judge Humphrey of the will of the Congress, as expressed in legislation, is such as to make that will absolutely abortive. Unfortunately there is grave doubt whether the government has the right of appeal from this decision of the district judge. The case well illustrates the desirability of conferring upon the government the same right of appeal in criminal cases on questions of law which the defendant now has, in all cases where the defendant has not been put in jeopardy by a trial upon the merits of the charge made against him. . . . Furthermore, it is desirable to enact a law declaring the true construction of the existing legislation so far as it affects immunity. I can hardly believe that the ruling of Judge Humphrey will be followed by other judges; but if it should be followed, the result would be either completely to nullify much and possibly the major part of the good to be obtained from the interstate commerce law and from the law creating the Bureau of Corporations in the Department of Commerce and Labor; or else frequently to obstruct an appeal to the criminal laws by the Department of Justice. . . . Such interpretation of the law comes measurably near making the law a farce; and I, therefore, recommend