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EDITORIAL

President Roosevelt and the Beef Trust.

Now that President Roosevelt has published the preliminary part of the Neill-Reynolds report on the Chicago packing houses, it is impossible not to sympathize with him in his disinclination to do so. It was his official duty to make the report public, but it was human nature to shrink from the performance of that duty. For this report, which is more convincing than the unofficial exposures, shows a condition quite as revolting.

The Neill-Reynolds report cannot be too highly praised. It bears evidence upon its face of impartial and intelligent investigation, and in manner of statement it is direct, clear, restrained and circumstantial. Every conclusion is supported by an abundance of facts observed by the investigators themselves. These facts are not casual happenings which might be denied or explained or of which the proprietors might plead excusable ignorance; they are descriptive of permanent conditions due to criminal conduct at the top in the management of the business. Even such casual happenings as are reported, are of a kind that would naturally occur in the revolting environment which is described.

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The report is too circumstantial to be met by the general denials which the leading packers are urging, or by the amiable report of the two college professors who upon a superficial investigation overlooked what Neill and Reynolds have disclosed. To overcome the damaging effects of the Neill-Reynolds report, its descriptions of permanent conditions must be refuted as specifically as they are made. Unless promptly refuted in that specific manner and by such evidence as to brand the investigators as willful liars, this report will stand as a demonstration of the unfitness for human food of the products of these establishments. There can be no confidence in the wholesomeness of anything produced in surroundings so filthy.

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Responsibility for Filthy Packinghouse Products.

The Neill-Reynolds report recommends stricter Federal inspection of the processes of the packing house industry. This tendency to place the Federal government in larger and wider control of private vocations, is not a welcome thing; but the interstate and international character of the business necessitates Federal inspection if any governmental inspection at all is required. Such recommendations as that of the New York World are worse than useless. The World wants Mayor Dunne to turn his attention from his municipal ownership policy to the institution of a local investigation of the packing houses. Other critics of national supervision are urging the county prosecutor to indict the packers and send them to prison.

All this would be futile. As grand jurors are now drawn in Chicago—strictly from the business classes—there would be little possibility of indicting the packers for managing their business in the filthy manner in which they do manage it. The nasty condition described in the Neill-Reynolds report has been well known for at least two years in the city of Chicago, but the greatest pains have been taken to hide all knowledge of it—lest Chicago business interests might suffer. The local newspapers have been fully apprised of the facts, but have suppressed them. During the strike at the packing houses the conditions were even worse than now. They were heightened economically by the use of lower grades of labor, morally by the introduction of brothels for the accommodation of the strike breakers, and in sanitary respects by this degrading combination. The conditions were so exceptionally bad at that time that the strike was hastily settled to avoid the imminent risk of an outside exposure such as has now come. The packing house interests have not feared local prosecution or exposure. They are buttressed by all the interlaced financial interests of Chicago, including the newspaper counting rooms. Against this aggregation of business influence and financial power, which has almost successfully defied the Federal government itself, the police power of the city and the criminal machinery of the county would be weak indeed. Both as a matter of the Constitutional relation of the States to the Federal government, and as a matter of possible effectiveness, the regulation of the packing house industry, if there is to be any regulation at all, must be Federal.

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Economic Responsibility for Packinghouse Methods.

There is, of course, one way in which the disgusting management of the Chicago packing houses might be reformed without governmental interference. If the working classes were fairly paid for their work, every one who worked would receive a much larger income than now; and, as a result, every worker would be much more scrupulous about his working environment. Such conditions as are described in the Neill-Reynolds report would be impossible if the employed class were in a position to bargain upon an equality with the employing class. But when workers are plentiful and opportunities for work few, a one-sided competition for opportunities to work sets in which forces the workers to accept almost any

conditions of work, for their alternative is starvation. The natural effect is degrading to the workers; the inevitable result is brutish conditions both in living and in working environments. Governmental inspection may serve some use in improving working conditions. As a dam may hold back the running waters for a time and to a degree, so inspection may slightly check the degrading tendency. But the tendency can be reversed only by removing all possible obstacles to employment. Of this method, however, it is hardly worth speaking; for valuable vested interests, enormous vested interests, profit by such obstructions. And must not vested interests be maintained at all costs and hazards?

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The Bryan Wave.

That a Bryan wave, spontaneous and not manufactured, has set in is unmistakable to unprejudiced observers wherever they look. It is quite as obvious to Republicans as it is to Democrats. The New York Press, for instance, a Republican daily, concedes that "those who are watching the trend of public sentiment are convinced that Mr. Bryan is stronger with the American people to-day than he was at either time he ran for the Presidency, and that his strength increases with extraordinary force." And the Press finds good reasons "for the better opinion which Americans now hold of him than when they twice had the opportunity to vote for him." One of these reasons involves an error not unnatural to a Republican paper of the East. It is Bryan's supposed abandonment of "his free silver fallacy." Mr. Bryan has not abandoned what the Press calls "his free silver fallacy," which consisted in the quantitative theory of money—the theory that the value of money is determined by supply and demand. He was for silver coinage in order to increase the supply of money when gold was scarce; he has not concerned himself about silver recently because the increase in the supply of gold has augmented the quantity of money more than he had hoped for from the free coinage of silver. In other words, nature has supplied the quantity of money in gold which Bryan demanded of the government in silver. To say then, that he has changed his position is a misrepresentation. Aside from this, however, the Press very correctly accounts for Bryan's popularity. "The events of the last ten years," it says, "have proved that most of the charges which he made concerning the special privileges and defiant crimes of the great corporations are true. By bit-