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Commandant Kritzinger, the captured Boer officer whom the British have been trying for his life before one of their court-martials, as a few weeks before they tried Scheepers, was fortunate in having been tried after the Boers had captured and released Gen. Methuen. For the charges against Kritzinger have now been dropped. To have shot him in cold blood, after the Methuen episode, as Scheepers was shot before it, would have left a pretty bad taste in the mouth. It was Scheeper's misfortune to have been "tried" before his executioners had been taught a wholesome moral lesson by Gen. Delarey the Boer.

Several months have elapsed since President Roosevelt's attention was directly called to the British army supply-station at New Orleans, which has been there for nearly three years in flagrant breach of American neutrality. But he refused even to investigate the matter until the governor of Louisiana put a question to him last week which foreclosed all possibility of evasion. Declaring that a British army supply-station had in fact been established in his state, the Governor asked whether the state could expel it without impinging upon Federal prerogatives. Mr. Roosevelt was in no hurry even then—certainly not in a strenuous hurry. He first deliberately called for a legal opinion from the attorney general. This opinion, when it came, was to the effect that the law in the matter depends upon the facts. So Mr. Roosevelt set about ascertaining the facts which he ought to have ascertained fully five months before. Nor

does he appear to be extraordinarily strenuous even now; for the military officer sent down to investigate arrived ahead of his instructions. Meanwhile, a week after the governor of Louisiana compelled the Federal authorities to "get a move on" in the matter, a British transport clears for Cape Town with a cargo of munitions of war in the shape of mules and horses for military use on the veldts of South Africa. That "understanding between statesmen" appears to be as potent at the White House now as it was before Mr. Roosevelt's accession.

Much ado is made about the complexity of the neutrality question. But what is there complex about it? The treaty of Washington, between the United States and Great Britain, expressly declares that—

a neutral government is bound . . . not to permit or suffer either belligerent to make use of its ports or waters . . . for the purpose of the renewal or augmentation of military supplies.

There is nothing complex about that part of the question. The law is clear enough. This government is bound to prevent the use by Great Britain of American ports or waters for the renewal or augmentation of military supplies. The other part of the question is nothing but a question of fact. Is Great Britain so using our ports or waters? That question is so simple that President Roosevelt's long delay in investigating it, and his manifest indifference and dilatoriness now that the governor of Louisiana has left him no loophole for further evasion, would seem to be less significant of a complex problem in international law than of British influence with a complacent state department at Washington.

In the enactment of the oleomargarine bill, now almost assured, Fed-

eral legislation enters boldly, and with no more pretense than is supposed to be necessary to guard against interference by the Supreme Court, upon the centralizing policy of regulating local trade. Foreign boundaries and state lines are to be no longer considered. In the form of tax laws, yet with an unconcealed purpose in no sense fiscal, private businesses are to be promoted or suppressed as the central authority may dictate. It is true that heretofore Congress has stamped out private businesses by a fraudulent exercise of its taxing power. A 10 per cent. tax on state bank notes, for instance, has created and fostered the national banking system and destroyed the currency-making function of local banks. In that instance, however, unjustifiable as it was and vicious as the precedent has been, there was the excuse of a supposed necessity for bringing the whole money-issuing function within the control of the general government. Not even that excuse pleads for the oleomargarine bill. This bill is a measure designed for no public purpose whatever. It has no other object than to drive a certain food product of American manufacture out of the American market in the interest of the American producers of a competing product.

Oleomargarine is a substitute for butter which on the one hand is pronounced wholesome and on the other deleterious. But that dispute makes no difference with reference to this congressional bill, for Congress has no authority to legislate generally with reference to the wholesomeness of foods. Such legislation is a police function of the individual states. On the one hand, also, it is claimed that in coloring oleomargarine yellow the manufacturers are no more guilty of fraud than are butter makers when