

however, was not made applicable to public service corporations. So, while it will have a tendency to check official corruption, it will not disclose the secret bookkeeping of monopolies which water their stock in order to create an appearance of small pro rata earnings. Another of the hopeful measures is a resolution amending the Ohio constitution, which is to be voted upon at the coming election. It would abolish that snare and delusion, the "uniform rule" of taxation, under which all property in Ohio is now required to be taxed equally but never is. It would also authorize classifications of taxable objects, so that the legislature might impose varying rates as between different classes, though required to treat all the objects of the same class alike. For instance, if building lots were put in one class and buildings in another, all building lots would have to be taxed at the same rate *ad valorem*; but buildings, though they also would have to be taxed at the same rate as compared with one another, might be taxed at a very different rate from the lots. Again: the franchises of railroads might be put in one class and taxed at one rate, while the rolling stock was put in another class and taxed at a different rate. Only a few objects could be wholly exempted from taxation, they being the same as are now exempt.

As we surmised last week, President Roosevelt has decided that it is not a breach of neutrality for Great Britain to buy munitions of war and load British war vessels with them for transportation directly by those war vessels to the seat of war in South Africa. It was not probable that an officer of the state department would publish his opinion to that effect in a magazine unless the decision had already been reached even if not announced. And the President skips the same hard place, in reaching his decision, that the state department expert did. He holds, and correctly, that our people have the right to sell munitions of war to either belligerent in regular course of commerce.

But he does not explain why he considers it regular course of commerce to establish on our soil a British army depot, in charge of British army officers, for storing munitions of war, and to ship them, not upon commercial vessels, but upon British war vessels which lie for days in our ports loading with these munitions, and which carry them directly to the seat of war. That seems much less like commercial enterprise than like military operations.

Great Britain so regarded similar transactions during our war with Spain. On the 3d of April, 1898, the governor general of Newfoundland promulgated a British proclamation (see *The Public*, Vol. i., No. 5, p. 10) forbidding the delivery of coal to any belligerent ship except for the express purpose of enabling them to proceed directly to their own country, or to some specified neutral destination, and advising against supplying coal to belligerents for any purpose if there were reasonable grounds for suspecting bad faith. Now there is no doubt that the people of Newfoundland had at that time a right to sell coal to the American government, or to the Spanish government, or both, in the ordinary course of commerce; but Great Britain decided that its delivery to American or Spanish war vessels for war purposes would not be in regular course of commerce and therefore would be in violation of neutrality. If there is any difference between the delivery of British coal in British ports to American war vessels for American war purposes, and the delivery of American coals in American ports to British war vessels for British war purposes, it would be interesting to see the difference defined. Mr. Roosevelt's decision implies that there is a difference.

In his speech on the 20th before the Presbyterian General Assembly at New York, President Roosevelt did a little patriotic boasting which will not bear very close examination. Re-

ferring to the recognition of Cuba, he said:

We have the right to feel proud that we have kept every pledge to the letter and established a new national precedent. I don't remember another such case—and I have looked for one with care—a case where, as the result of such a war, the victorious nation has contented itself by starting a new nation, free on the difficult path of self-government.

Is national fidelity to national pledges so rare a thing that the head of a great nation may boast of being true? Even if we had kept our pledge with Cuba to the letter, boasting of so obvious a duty would be in poor taste. But when in fact we have halted, and hesitated, and in the end assumed to reserve to ourselves a power at variance with the pledge, such boasting violates other standards besides those of taste. And is it true that there is no other case "where, as the result of such a war, the victorious nation has contented itself" with—what? With doing that for which it made the war. Did we not go to war with Spain for the purpose of liberating Cuba and making her an independent republic? Was not that the only purpose of the war? Certainly it was the only professed purpose. How then can we boast of our virtue in liberating Cuba and making her an independent republic? Does our wretched Philippine policy, which stultifies our national ideals and contravenes the spirit of our war pledge, weigh so heavily upon Mr. Roosevelt's conscience that he finds relief in pointing, though mistakenly, to the fulfillment of the letter of that pledge? When we boast of keeping the letter of the pledge in dealing with Cuba, do we not disclose a consciousness of having violated its spirit in dealing with the Philippines? Remorse sometimes seeks shelter in brag. Is this such a case?

Why didn't the flag "stay put" in Cuba? If it came down because in good faith and good morals it ought to have come down, then why should it "stay put" in any other place when in good faith and good morals it ought to come down? To be perfect-