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J. Pierpont Morgan's words are hardly uttered, his words of reassurance regarding the certainty of a continuance of our marvelous "prosperity," when Wall street receives another of those shocks that are premonitory of a general crash.

This slump in stock values, with its consequent panic, is a sharp reminder of the gaseous character of our much boasted prosperity. It depends not upon wealth production and a normally increasing volume of the values of wealth produced, but upon an inflation of the values of special privileges of one kind and another. It is the prosperity of the gambling hell, and not of the goods market. Like air in a bladder, all these inflated values may be let out with a pin puncture.

The puncture which brought on the Wall street panic was made by those Federal judges who have decided that the Northern Securities company—the holding corporation for the consolidation of the northwestern railroads—is an illegal conspiracy. Under this decision all corporations for strangling competition in inter-State commerce are within the shadow of the Sherman law; and as our "fake" prosperity is bound up in the manipulation of such organizations the decision gives it a rude shock.

It is confidently believed, however, that the Northern Securities decision, if sustained by the Supreme Court, will put an end to the evils of trusts. Nothing could well be

wider of the mark. The trust evil is not due to the consolidation of industries. It is due to the monopoly factor in industries. In railroading, for instance, there is no harm in the consolidation of interests in rolling stock and rails. Should all rolling stock and all rails be monopolized, new rolling stock and rails could be quickly produced. That fact alone would prevent such monopolization. But there is harm in the consolidation of monopoly privileges in rights of way and terminals. It is this and only this that makes railroad combinations a formidable public enemy.

Even here it is not the consolidation of these privileges but their existence, whether consolidated or not, that constitutes the root of the evil. If railway privileges did not exist they could not be consolidated. But so long as they do exist they will be consolidated, courts and judges to the contrary notwithstanding. The Northern Securities decision, though affirmed by the Supreme Court, will effect nothing permanent. When it is certain that railway privileges can no longer be consolidated by means of holding companies, they will be consolidated by other methods. The only remedy for railway consolidations is the abolition of monopoly privileges in railway rights of way and terminals. Let railways be public highways, and no longer legitimized plunder-privileges, and thereafter there will be no oppressive railway consolidations. But until then, restrictive laws and restraining decisions will no more hold them in check than a pack thread would hold a locomotive.

The San Francisco Labor Council has found it necessary to issue an appeal to workingmen throughout the United States to stay away from the

Pacific coast. For some time past the organized employers of the coast, aided by the transcontinental railroads, have been creating an abnormal tide of immigration into California, with a view to swamping labor interests there by a surplus of hungry laborers. "In some sections of California," reads the "Warning" of the San Francisco workingmen, "the extraordinary number of workingmen arriving daily is fast becoming a condition which not only menaces the welfare of the organized workers, but promises to soon become a great public danger." The "Warning" adds: "Fairly reliable figures are at hand showing that 1000 workingmen per week have landed in San Francisco for several weeks past; lodging houses are filled up and fewer residences are for rent than ever before in the history of San Francisco; traveling cards are being deposited in the local unions at an unusual rate." And here is the conclusion of this dismal "Warning":

To minimize the deceptions referred to, to protect the working people designed to be misled by such deceptions, and to save from injury the labor's cause in the West, we warn all people that there are now on the Pacific coast far more workmen than can possibly find employment, and we request all labor organizations and all newspapers to assist in making known the truth in these regards.

Yet we of the East and middle West are constantly assured that President Roosevelt has been especially generous to workingmen in general and the Pacific Coast in particular in dispensing his marvelous prosperity. What a queer thing Republican prosperity is.

Its queerness has received a new demonstration in the report of the Inter-State Commerce Commission, an extract from which was snugly stowed away in the obscure depart-