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EDITORIAL

Clark Reveals His Caliber.

Speaker Clark's Panama toll speech reveals him as a politician in the worst sense of that term. It is needless to say that he has, himself, too much intelligence to believe that there is any reason or logic in spread eagle boasting or in the dragging of the Revolutionary war into the discussion. The only reasonable explanation of his speech is that he has so poor an opinion of the American people as to believe that they can be stampeded by irrelevant appeals to ignorance and prejudice. There were some genuine Democrats in 1912 who considered Clark a more desirable candidate than Wilson. These must now realize how much they over-rated him, and how discredited the party now would be had their wish been gratified. S. D.



Railroads Must Not Intimidate the Commission.

Less than ever can the Interstate Commerce Commission now afford to grant to the railroads an increase in freight rates. The sudden move of these corporations toward retrenchments has an object too plain to be overlooked by the general public any more than by the Commission. If a five per cent increase can be obtained by such means this year, then a ten per cent increase can be secured by the same means next year. The Commission will thus be made subject to railroad control. The logical answer to return to all complaints of inability to give proper service at present rates is advice to quit business and thus open the way to public ownership. S. D.



Teeming Tenements and Idle Acres.

Those good hearted persons who have taken it upon themselves to "look after" the poor, instead of removing the barriers that prevent the poor from looking after themselves are sorely perplexed because the city slums are crowded, while vast

areas of land lie fallow. Shipload upon shipload of immigrants is brought to our shores, many of whom were farmers in their native land; yet a great part of them remain in the cities where they first land and add to the congestion that has already reduced living to the point of bare subsistence. Farmers coming to a land in need of farmers, yet living in the slums of cities! Such a condition may well arouse the benevolent-minded to increased activity. It is a paradoxical condition that bodes no good to the country.

Better means for distributing the immigrants is one of the proposals for relieving city congestion. The Federal and State governments are urged to co-operate with private societies and religious organizations in making known to the newcomers the advantages and opportunities to be found in various parts of the country, and to offer such assistance as is necessary to give them a start. There is reason to believe that many of the people now eking out a pittance for work they are ill-adapted for in the city, would, if they knew how, live a free and independent life in the country. Incidentally, it is held that the removal of some of the bread-eaters from the city, to become bread-producers on the farm, would have at least some effect in checking the ever-mounting cost of living.

This is good work; and it is to be hoped that the effort expended will meet with greater success than the methods employed seem to warrant. It is undeniably true that there are still lands in rural districts that would meet the wants of incoming farmers, if means were at hand to put them on the farms. But is it not patent at a glance that this settling of immigrants on the idle lands will affect other prices than living expenses? In a word, will it not send up land values? Farm lands are now bought and sold at certain prices. An increased demand is certain to stiffen prices. Hence, every effort made by the States, the Federal government, and the immigration societies, to get the people out of the cities, and on to the farms, will be followed by an advance in the value of farm lands. Might it not be the part of wisdom for these well-intentioned people to first take steps to head off the rise in price consequent upon their own efforts to serve humanity? Since every family put upon the land under present conditions, would make it harder to put the next family on the land, might it not be well to first obtain legislation that will not only prevent this rise in the price of land, but reduce it? If men now buy land, for farming

purposes, a reduction in the price would induce still more buying. If a few can take up farms at twenty dollars an acre; more could take up those farms at five dollars an acre. The back to the farm movement is another instance where Benevolence needs the assistance of Reason. s. c.



"Good Work" by The Interests.

A New York dispatch in the Philadelphia Ledger of March 24 speaks of "good work" done by the Allied Real Estate Interests in defeating the Herick-Schaap bill. This bill would have given New Yorkers a chance to say whether tuberculosis and infant mortality should continue as before, through overcrowding in the tenement districts, or whether by increasing land value taxes, land owners should be forced to permit increase of housing accommodation, and tuberculosis and infant mortality be checked. Defeat of such a measure is called "good work." Why? Because, first of all, New Yorkers would have overwhelmingly voted in favor of taxing improvements less and land values more. Second, this would not only have increased the taxes of vacant land owners, but would have stimulated building, increased competition among house owners for tenants and reduced rents. It consequently seemed desirable to the Allied Real Estate Interests to defeat the bill. If the bill has been defeated, then several thousand infants in New York City's congested districts will prematurely die, and thousands of new cases of tuberculosis will be bred—all a result of the Interests' "good work." What sort of testimonial does New York City intend to present to these "benefactors?" s. d.



Fractional Living.

"Trained investigators," says an exchange, "employed by the University of Chicago Settlement, under the direction of J. C. Kennedy, have just finished a survey of living conditions in the Stock Yards district. The survey shows that the average cost of living per family is \$15.40 a week, or \$802.80 a year. The report also shows that the average income of families in the district is \$854.13 a year." But farther on in this interesting report (Wages and Family Budgets in the Chicago Stock Yards District, University of Chicago Press) it appears that the incomes range from \$236 to \$2,261 a year. This gives us pause. An expenditure of \$802.80 a year for a family, if intelligently laid out, need not imply unendurable hardship, though it may compel a certain degree of frugality. And the surplus of \$51.33 a year may be sufficient