

Inconsistent.

In certain quarters there is loud derision of President Wilson's reference to the business depression as "merely psychological." Yet from these same quarters solemn assurances were issued during previous administrations that confidence would bring prosperity, or lack of confidence destroy it.

S. D.

Too Much Regulation.

Whether due to the strides in mechanics toward making "fool proof" machinery, or to a reversion to paternalistic government, there is a strong current setting in toward government control of business. Fortunately, however, for the cause of freedom, the antidote seems to be coming with the disease. At the very moment when attempts are being made to add more duties to overburdened administration, the failure to discharge those already imposed must cause paternalists to pause. If the production and distribution of wealth can be accomplished only by constant and detailed supervision of government, municipal, state and national, then is democracy a mistake, and socialism the inevitable; but by this self-same token, the failure of present government supervision indicates that socialism is impracticable. The history of civilization is marked by the shifting of authority from the autocrat to the individual, from the state to the citizen; and the present attempts to relieve the people by regulating the pressure, instead of removing it, are decidedly reactionary.

Few things in this country have had more regulation and closer supervision than our banks. The most minute provisions are made for their conduct, and they are subject to the constant espionage of the state. Yet a large bank in Chicago, is found, after its failure, to have disregarded pretty much all the regulations laid down for it to follow. Laws were enacted, officers were named to see to their execution, and the people elected a man to carry their will into execution; yet in spite of this supervision the laws were evaded, the officials failed in their duty, and the people have been defrauded. If banks, so few in number in comparison with other mercantile enterprises, cannot be controlled effectively, what reason is there for supposing government can superintend and control the vast commercial life of the country? Certain things there are that government—and by government is meant the people acting in their collective capacity—must do, such as preserve the

peace, maintain highways, and regulate land tenure; but ventures beyond these natural functions should be made with great circumspection, and with the fullest consideration for the rights of the individual, and the capacity of government. Since government by its very nature must be in the hands of men of average talent, while striving to control men of extraordinary ability, its field of activities should be confined to the least practical area. The restraining influence of public opinion should not be expected to cover too wide a range.

The new anti-trust legislation is laying down an impossible program. It is a vain endeavor to keep erect a building set upon a wrong foundation. The income tax law has proven a disappointment because of the evasions; and all the power of the government is to be invoked to find the delinquents. The Colorado State government breaks down, and the Federal Government steps in to protect the people from themselves. And now Montana is confronted with the same disorder that has swept from West Virginia through Michigan to the West. All of this confusion, as well as all of the trust trouble, comes through the initial act of government in clothing certain citizens with special privileges; and no amount of regulation or supervision of citizens so advantaged will prevent their encroachment upon the rights of others. It is not regulation but abolition that we want; and the thousand and one proposals for government relief would be rendered unnecessary by a return to first principles. It is toward liberty we should strive, not restriction. With our governments, local, state and national, discharging their immediate and proper functions, they will be doing all that our present capacity for self-government warrants them in undertaking.

S. C.

The Proper Measure.

Some, if not all, of the appointments to the new Federal Reserve Board, are being severely criticized. Perhaps they deserve criticism, but if so some more satisfactory reason should be advanced than the private business connections of the criticized ones. There seems no question at all but that Mr. Jones is a director of the Harvester Trust and of the Zinc Trust. Mr. Walburg is a member of the Wall Street firm of Kuhn, Loeb and Co. Such business connections do not very often stimulate loyalty to democratic principles. For this reason one, unacquainted with these men, may be justified in suspecting their