

declaring that criminals lacked moral courage or a proper education, the Judge told, to illustrate another point, about a university professor who came to him to see about his son who was in trouble. The Judge seems to have got rid of one fallacy only to fall into another. Probably the principal cause of crime is the fact that too many people cannot refrain from it without either becoming paupers or corpses. If the opportunity were open to all to earn an honest living crime would certainly be considerably reduced, even if it should not be entirely abolished.



Even if a large proportion of criminals should be feeble-minded or ignorant, that does not relieve economic conditions of responsibility for crime. Ignorance and vicious environment are equally the result of economic conditions, as also, to a large extent at least, may be feeble-mindedness. That in the struggle for jobs the feeble-minded should fail is only natural, and, having failed, should be pushed into crime, is also natural. Until all who desire opportunities for work shall be assured of them, crime will continue in spite of all superficial tinkering.

S. D.



A Big Country.

Statistics given out by the Department of Commerce in its pamphlet "Statistical Record of Progress of the United States, 1800-1914," convey some idea of the material stupendousness of this country. It shows that the best workers in Europe transplanted to the richest country in natural resources, have produced inevitable results. Our population exceeds 100,000,000, and our wealth \$140,000,000,000. In 1850 the population was less than 25,000,000, and the national wealth \$7,000,000,000, which makes an increase in sixty-four years of fourfold in population and twentyfold in wealth. Commerce has grown from \$318,000,000 to \$4,259,000,000. The money in circulation has increased from \$279,000,000 to \$3,419,000,000. Children to the number of 19,000,000 are enrolled in the public schools, with 200,000 students in the colleges, and a total annual expenditure for education of \$500,000,000. Other interesting statistics are given, such as the increase of farms and farm property from \$4,000,000,000 to \$41,000,000,000, and the growth of manufactures from \$1,000,000,000 to \$20,000,000,000. The number of miles of railroad in operation in 1850 was 9,021, as against 258,033 in 1912.



As totals these figures make a splendid showing.

It may be doubted if the world has ever before seen their equal. The general average, too, is good. No other country as large as this can show a per capita wealth of \$1,400. So far as the production of wealth in this country is concerned, we have made a good showing, an exceptionally good showing. But unfortunately we have not the same cause for congratulation in the individual acquirement of wealth. A few have gone so very far above the average of \$1,400 that others are a long way below that amount. The recent report of the Chicago superintendent of the department of social survey, gives some startling data regarding those who fall below the average. Upon a single block were found 1,596 persons living in 137 delapidated houses, three rooms to a family, three to eight persons sleeping in one bedroom. It is scarcely likely that the eight persons sleeping in one small, poorly ventilated room were possessed of \$11,200. Yet, while it is not in the nature of things that each should have his \$1,400, it does lie within the realm of possibilities for any working man or woman to earn enough to obtain better accommodations than appears in the report of the department of social survey.



It is not the part of forward-looking minds to carp at what has been done; but rather to see that future action has a firm foundation in the present. The men and women of the past did according to their light; we must do according to our light. They were no more to blame for the unequal distribution of wealth than they were for not flying; the means was not known. But the law governing the distribution of wealth is now known, and the responsibility rests upon every one who understands it to make it known to his fellows. When society has mastered this law it will be held responsible for its application. This is not optional. Natural economic law, as well as natural physical law, works its will whether or not its victims understand it. And just as gunpowder will destroy the child or fool who applies fire, so does the economic law, when disregarded, oppress the innocent and wreck society. It is good to know the country has accumulated so much wealth, for it proves that we have solved the problem of the production of wealth. We can now give our attention to its distribution.

S. C.



Automobile Franchises.

When the automobile first came into general use there were some enthusiasts who thought that they could see in the new invention the means of put-

ting an end to franchise monopoly. They thought that, once improved sufficiently to make carrying of many passengers in one vehicle possible, automobiles having free use of the streets, would enter into competition with street railways and render worthless the exclusive franchises which should never have been granted. But it seems that these enthusiasts reckoned without their host. They seem to have underestimated the effrontery of franchise monopolists, and imperviousness to new ideas of many public officials. This probably explains why in Chicago a business concern actually had to apply for permission to the State Public Utilities Commission for a franchise to operate an auto-bus line, when, according to all considerations of equity and common sense, no such special permission should have been required. It probably explains also why in Los Angeles, where the competition of auto-buses is being severely felt by the local street railway corporation, an ordinance has actually been introduced into the city council to put these auto-buses under the same regulations as apply to street railways and to make them pay the same special taxes. Presumably they are already subject to the same regulations as other unmonopolized vehicles. That is as far as regulation can properly go.



There is a fundamental difference between street railways and auto-buses. The street railway operates on a franchise which gives its holders a privilege denied to all others to operate cars along certain highways. Such franchises are given because the prevailing idea has been that no other method is practicable for securing public transportation facilities. Having secured such special permission the street railway corporation is properly subject to special regulation and special taxation. But the auto-bus owner enjoys no privilege. The route on which he operates is open to all others who may see fit to enter into competition with him. There is not the same excuse, as in the case of the street railway, for special licenses and special taxes. The fact that the auto-bus can, if left alone, compete successfully with the street railway, shows that any need of a monopoly in transportation, if it ever existed, has ceased to exist. The street railway company should be told in answer to its complaints concerning competition, that it must either accommodate itself to changed conditions or surrender its franchise.

S. D.



Edmonton's Delinquent Taxes.

The fact that in Edmonton, Alberta, \$1,000,000 of local taxes is delinquent, is reported by United

States Consul Reat at Calgary, who considers that this puts to a crucial test the system of local Singletax prevailing there. In this Consul Reat is mistaken. It may put to a test the competency of the city officials, but not the system of taxation. The trouble may be due to a faulty assessment, in which case the remedy is to make a proper one and collect taxes on that basis. But the assessment has presumably been properly made, for Consul Reat says nothing to the contrary. That being the case, the land against which these delinquent taxes are assessed, can be made to produce the amount, and much more if put to its best use. By properly proceeding against these delinquent tax payers, Edmonton officials can either force them to put this land to use or to dispose of it to others who will. In either case the city will not only get its delinquent taxes, but will cause an increased demand for labor, which will tend to some extent to relieve the industrial depression. All that is necessary is that the public officials do their work properly.

S. D.



An Unenforcible Law.

State's Attorney Hoyne of Chicago is threatening to bring all personal property tax dodgers in the city into the Criminal Court. There are no less than 16,000 of them, he says. It is safe to say that after Mr. Hoyne's crusade shall have been completed—if he ever begins it—the personal property tax law will be as far from enforcement as ever. Mr. Hoyne could not enforce it, if he had at his command all the power of the Czar of Russia, and was prepared to use against suspected tax dodgers all the tortures of the Spanish Inquisition. It is furthermore a good thing that the law can not be enforced. The comparatively slight extent to which it is now enforced is a heavy enough load on industry and enterprise. To strictly enforce it would paralyze business. This is one case, where the saying is untrue, that the way to secure repeal of a bad law is to strictly enforce it. In spite of all the evil results that would follow strict enforcement of the personal property tax law in Chicago, its repeal would not be materially hastened thereby, for the legislature lacks constitutional power to exempt personal property. Under the most favorable circumstances amendment of the Illinois Constitution is a long and difficult process, and existing circumstances are certainly not favorable. Besides, to enforce the law in Chicago will have little effect on public sentiment down the State, where help must be secured to amend the Constitution. Pending a far-off con-