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EDITORIAL

First Things First.

"Social justice comes first," said President Wilson in his message of a year ago. It is still entitled to priority. That is one reason why Congress can not properly waste time on the worse than frivolous propositions of army leagues and navy leagues. There are many other reasons, besides. But the one mentioned is sufficient.

S. D.



Have Troubles of Their Own.

It would be highly amusing, if it were not so pathetic, to see the plight of those European nations that were so clamorous a short time ago over their property rights in Mexico, and are now confronting such industrial chaos at home. The slaughter of men there does not seem to have added anything in point of efficiency to their diplomacy over what we have practiced here.

S. C.



What Consistency Requires.

If exportation of war supplies while a war is in progress is giving aid to a belligerent, so also must be exportation before a war has started. There could be no exportation were the supplies not manufactured, and the only object of manufacture at any time must be to help some one somewhere to engage in the war game. So if Congress is going to consider legislation to shut off war supplies from Europe, why not do the job completely while about it? Why not legislate against exportation not only for use in this war, but for use in any war at any time? And why not, to be thoroughly consistent, refuse to pass any more appropriations for purchase of war materials by our own government? If we are hypocritical in praying for cessation of an existing war, while sending arms to belligerents, then we are just as hypocritical when we send arms to a possible fu-

ture belligerent or when we buy arms ourselves with the idea of some time becoming a belligerent.

S. D.



The Freight Rate Decision and Public Ownership.

For the benefit of the railroad corporations the Interstate Commerce Commission has consented to the levy of a special tax on the already overburdened industry of the United States. That is what the five per cent increase in freight rates means. The action taken is not surprising, in view of the heavy pressure brought to bear upon the Commission for many months. Resistance to such pressure was difficult and this fact should be borne in mind in passing judgement on its action. But clearer than ever, through this decision, is it shown to be a fallacy that in public regulation is the solution of the public utility question. For a while it seemed as though the Interstate Commerce Commission had furnished an example of a regulative body that actually regulated. But the very restraint it put on the predatory tendencies of the railroads must have stirred these corporations to stronger efforts to subdue the Commission. These efforts seem finally to have met with success. The two latest appointments evidently strengthened corporation influence. Even in the case of so efficient a body as the Commission it is now shown possible for the regulators to fail to regulate. How can anything better be expected, then, of the many public service commissions, created to evade application of the real remedy for franchise monopoly—public ownership? The Commission's decision, however, is a severe blow to the cause of private monopoly of public highways. It makes clear that nothing but public ownership of railways can prevent railroad domination of government.

S. D.



The Same Old Bait.

Promises of prosperity are always made by predatory interests when asking for some new predatory privilege. The railroads only followed the conventional method in making such promises in order to get the freight rate increase. Possibly they will still follow convention, now that the increase has been obtained, by raising the shout that prosperity is here. But prosperity is not to be obtained through taxation of industry. Those who have been gullible enough to believe these assurances will soon have occasion to admit that they have been buncoed again.

S. D.

The Railroads' Unearned Increment.

In increasing by \$30,000,000 the taxing power of railroad monopolies the Interstate Commerce Commission has added considerably to the water in their stock. When the time comes for public ownership the cry of confiscation will be raised against the suggestion that not one cent be paid for these watered values. Let the fact be noted now, that publicly created values belong to the people, and whenever the people see fit to take what belongs to them they are under no obligation to compensate those whom they have foolishly allowed for a while to profit through such holdings.

S. D.



Vindication of Senator La Follette.

More evident than ever is the appreciation due Senator La Follette for the energetic, though futile, fight he made against confirmation as Interstate Commerce Commissioners of Henry Clay Hall and Winthrop M. Daniels. Two commissioners, in their place, of the caliber of Franklin K. Lane or John H. Marble, could have turned the decision in the rate case the other way. Yet the fact that even a President with so creditable a record as Wilson can make the mistake of such appointments, and the further fact that such a fight as La Follette made proved in vain, add force to the arguments which show regulation of monopolies to be no remedy for their abuses.

S. D.



Mummified Statesmanship.

What some statesmen mean by "prosperity" is shown in a recent address by Senator-elect Warren G. Harding of Ohio, quoted in the Cleveland Press. Speaking before the Railway Business Association in behalf of increasing freight rates, Mr. Harding said:

Joseph proclaimed the warning to lay by an abundant store during the seven fat years in order to be prepared against the seven lean years. Egypt prospered wonderfully thereby!

According to the Bible Pharaoh did prosper wonderfully as no doubt did also the rest of the "upper classes." But as to the great mass of the people they were so impoverished that they had to sell themselves into slavery. In the eyes of statesmen of the Harding brand, these people did not count. They were producers of wealth, not appropriators. They were the lower classes. Since human nature has probably not changed much since Joseph's day, it may well be assumed that there were Egyptian statesmen who cogitated