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 INDEPENDENT**

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A New Call to Business Patriotism

IF THE United States can conjure a little patriotism in the big and little business corporations, the country can be saved several billions of dollars, business values can be increased that much, and taxes can be reduced an equal amount.

As a result of our war preparations which proceeded on a magnificent and conquering scale, great quantities of left-overs are in the hands of the government. We have ships, lands, works, manufactured commodities in enormous numbers which are as good as American ingenuity can make them and as useful as such things will ever be.

These supplies should be a source of revenue to our government, and would be, if there did not exist what very much resembles a vulture-like and conspiratorial "watchful waiting" on the part of business interests to prevent the United States getting its money out of the stuff.

The story of the ships is at once the most brilliant and the most shameful in the annals of American endeavor, brilliant for the speed and skill with which the ships were produced, shameful for the gross mismanagement which has presided over attempts at their disposal. The story of the ships in its last chapter is that of the mercantile interests of the United States deliberately acting like a union in restraint of trade, deliberately refusing to do business with the government on an equitable basis, deliberately agreeing not to buy for any price, but to wait until mounting costs and depreciating values compel the United States to dump whole fleets of ships as junk. Then the interests will magnanimously take them off the government's hands!

This attitude has been adopted with reference to other useful left-overs of the war period. The United States Government is so surprised when it receives one bid based on honest business dealing that it doesn't know what to do with it. It is so unusual! And such a bid is opposed by the organized non-bidders who hoped to get the same saleable object by merely waiting for it to drop to them as a gift.

Is this patriotism on the part of the business interests? Nay, is it honesty? Is it any more than a scheme to rob the people in peace even as they were robbed in war?

The taxes will not be reduced, business will not become normal, our capacities for the New Era will not be apparent, until there arrives a revival of honesty with reference to the hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of material which the government has for sale.

It is well enough known who are the interests that could bid and will not. It is well enough known who are the interests that are managing affairs with such shrewdness as to make honest competitive bidding impossible. They are very familiar to us, and the necessity may arrive to identify them in plain print and expose their machinations.

It would not be beneath the presidential dignity if Mr. Harding should address the people on this point. Certainly there ought to be men in Congress who are brave enough to sound a trumpet calling the people's attention to what is going on.

The High-Class Toper

A GREAT deal is said about the effect of prohibition in making drinkers out of formerly sober people. The charge is undoubtedly true, though not in the sense it is usually made. Whereas the saloon degraded the masses of the people, the bootlegger and the blind pig are now degrading what formerly were called "the upper classes." That is to say, the fact

that the law says "No," combined with the fact that the high price of liquor has placed it in the luxury class, has had the effect of thrusting it upon the attention of a section of society who formerly did not succumb to the lure of the open bar.

The general public, on reading or hearing the term "blind pig," pictures an outhouse or a barn where liquor is dispensed illegally. What would the general public say if it were shown that a best vault in the biggest bank down-town is also a "blind pig" for the convenience of some customers, and that the most immaculate club is a place where you can go in with your money and come out with your neatly wrapped parcel?

At a banquet of very high-grade business men recently, a speaker of national reputation turned on his heel and left the banquet room immediately after being introduced as the orator of the evening. In quiet words that fairly bit in like teeth of steel he said he would not remain longer in a room with men whose chief source of amusement had been to sneer at the Constitution of the United States. He left a dumb-founded crowd behind him. Most were properly rebuked. They had simply followed along the line of what was "going," and liquor jokes, and contemptuous reference to the constitutional amendment were all that was "going."

It is mighty low-grade stuff. It is as "red" as any political "Red" can be. Moreover, this niff-naffing is purely paid press-agenting for the lowest, loosest kind of business that ever disgraced any country.

We used to fear for the alcoholized workingmen. Now it is the business man whose mind is being given to alcoholized humor and who is becoming acquainted with surreptitious alcoholic drinks.

You man down-town behind that desk—brace up! You are slipping! You're becoming boozey! They're using you for their own ends. And it does not look well for an American business man to boost the bootleggers' game.

Work and "Society"

THE news that Professor Henry Bergson has resigned his chair at the Sorbonne in Paris to free himself for work is full of suggestion of much more than personal significance. He has been a professor in the College of France for 30 years and it seems that his university lectures during the last year or so have taken on more and more the nature of "society functions." The real students were often crowded out by smartly dressed Parisian women for whom philosophy had become a fad and who liked to detain Bergson after a lecture with their own drawing-room jargon.

Politely, of course, Professor Bergson explains for the benefit of the public that although he is sorry to part from his flattering admirers, he must have more time for his research and writing, and being 60 years old he feels unable to carry on both teaching and writing.

The incident is an illustration of how incompatible any serious work is with the inane frittering away of time which characterizes the favorite and consuming indoor and outdoor sports of the snobs and idlers, male and female, who so largely make up what is called "fashionable society" in all our great cities. The wonder to the mind of people having genuine reasons for existence is that normal human beings should be content to devote their time and money to the vapid pretense of these social functions, even making entrance into the miscalled "charmed circle" the height of their ambition and giving to its vacuity thought, time and energies that might much better be devoted to some honest work.

That these dressed-up dolls should waste their own time is bad enough; but when they go further and seek to waste the time of other people having serious work to do in the world they pass the limits of forbearance.

Tax Exemptions

IN AN editorial on tax exemptions last week, employes of the Federal Government were mentioned with state, county and municipal officials and employes as enjoying what seems like an unfair exemption from income taxes. A Philadelphia reader calls our attention to the slip and protests against the injustice of "the discrimination against Federal Government employes." He instances a Register of Wills in his city who enjoys an average income of \$100,000 yearly from fees and who does not pay a cent of income taxes, while the anything but overpaid United States Government employes in highly important technical services have to pay on the same basis as other citizens.

The whole thing is inequitable and calls for prompt correction. All salaries—or none—should be called upon to bear equal shares of the common burden.

Why Not Examine the Doctors?

CONTRARY to the haphazard logic of "one would think so," the country is not so high in the health records as is the city. City living has forced people to learn certain laws which have not yet been learned in many country districts. As Dean Vaughan used to say: "There is plenty of fresh air in the country, because the country people keep all the bad air shut up in their houses." That observation, however, probably no longer describes the condition.

And yet one of the drawbacks of country and village life which is being brought to light by the influx of city people into country districts, is the great lack of medical skill to be found in many villages and small towns. We all know the country doctor of the old school and his invincible skill joined with common sense and enriched by wide practice under unfavorable conditions; we all know the occasional surgeon who achieves in farmhouse kitchens what the hospital surgeon achieves in the comfort and safety of the modern hospital operating room. But the "Country Doctor" of other times, with all his dependability, is passing. He was something of a philosopher and a student. Some of us came in time to know him for a while before he passed into the sunset; we know he is not a figure of fiction nor a figment of romance; he was real. And we know just as certainly that his successors are not numerous.

The country offers a rich field for the well-equipped doctor. This fact is apparently overlooked by young men beginning practice. A good doctor, acquainted with modern medical methods, is an asset to a town and assists its growth. Prospective settlers in small towns sometimes hold back because of the quality of its medical men.

Like every other professional man, the doctor grows with his science, or he goes backward. Not all the backward doctors are in the small towns, of course; and not all small town doctors are backward by any means; but the lack of competition in smaller places has a tendency to allow the backward ones to go on.

If some means could be devised whereby at stated periods, say once in five years, practicing physicians could be required to take an examination, the result might be a spurring up or a weeding out of the backward ones. Such examinations, however, would have to be safeguarded against abuses by any "medical trust." Railroad engineers are examined at stated periods as to eyesight and knowledge of the rules. Other professions and businesses take pains to see that their representatives maintain a certain standard of efficiency. It would seem that somehow doctors ought to be similarly amenable to periodical examination.

The Reds in the Far East

THE more or less masked offensive of Trotsky's "Red" armies in the Far East seems to be proceeding regardless of the heart-rending appeals of the Soviet Government to the Allied nations for aid to save the Russian population from perishing by famine.

Recent news agency dispatches from Riga and from Berlin report interviews with Charles R. Crane, former United States Minister to China, telling of his journey across Siberia and incidentally of an important Bolshevik victory in Central Asia concealed from the world by Soviet censorship.

Soldiers wounded in fighting against the forces commanded by General Baron Ungern-Sternburg were interviewed by Mr. Crane in a hospital car attached to his train. They declared that the anti-Bolshevik army had suffered a crushing defeat. Corroborating this news is a dispatch from Peking announcing that the Bolsheviks now have 40,000 troops in Urga in Mongolia, the city which Ungern-Sternburg has captured by a sudden stroke after taking over and reorganizing, with Japanese aid, the remnants of the army that had been led by General Semenov when the latter fled to Japan after his defeat last year. This means that the Reds are again in possession of Urga which commands the great caravan route across the Gobi Desert, the last opening between Moscow and Peking. The Peking dispatch also tells us that the government of the Far Eastern Soviet Republic at Chita is using Mongolia as a lever to obtain cessions from China.

Possession of the great caravan route obviously puts the Bolsheviks in a strong position to trade extensively with China, to put pressure on her for cessions and to spread their propaganda in the Orient. Moreover, Urga's capture was a heavy blow to the Japanese, who relied on the presence of Ungern-Sternburg's strong "White" army in Mongolia as a check on any "Red" plan for an advance eastward.

That both China and Japan are fully alive to the menace of the Bolsheviks in Mongolia is shown by the fact that General Tsao Lin, who is pro-Japanese and who will doubtless have Japanese aid in the matter of supplies, has now been ordered to lead his army to Urga to oust the "Red" invaders.