

HERE IS A CALAMITY HOWL

Professor Charles J. Bushnell of Washington, D. C., who recently made the statement that the American public was on the verge of bankruptcy because it expended \$6,000,000,000 a year on the criminal, pauper and vicious classes, while the annual increase of wealth aggregated only \$5,000,000,000, is ready to back his assertion with an elaborate array of statistics.

In discussing the subject with the Washington correspondent for the Chicago Record-Herald, Professor Bushnell said:

"Ten millions of our people, one-eighth of the population, are now constantly in such poverty that they are unable to maintain themselves in physical efficiency, and 4,000,000 of them are public paupers. In 1899, one of our prosperous years, eighteen per cent, or nearly one-fifth of all the people of New York state, had to apply for charitable relief; in 1903 fourteen per cent of all the families of Manhattan were evicted, and every year about ten per cent of all who die there have pauper burials.

"The average wage of unskilled workmen throughout the country is less than the scientific minimum necessary for maintaining the average workingman's family in physical efficiency. And yet nearly 1,000,000 immigrants from the most backward sections of Europe, and with less than \$20 each, are being annually dumped into our congested urban centers, where employment already is greatest, and where the immigrants have the very least opportunity to live in decency and make themselves useful to the country. The transportation agencies are doing this. These agencies are the self-constituted nation-makers for private gain. If we are thus developing in this country a white race problem we have to thank the same methods and agencies that in the past produced our now serious black race problem.

"The last three United States censuses also show that the insane in this country have increased faster than the population. We now have in the United States in continuous charitable care probably 5,000,000 abnormal dependents, including paupers, insane, blind, deaf and dumb, indigent and discouraged—representing a dead loss to the nation every year equal to the total wealth we have invested in all the colleges, universities and technological schools of the whole country. If we could abolish this one item of abnormal expense we could double the facilities of all our institutions of higher education every year and do it with no extra effort at all.

"One large source of this abnormal dependence is our vast aggregate of unnecessary industrial accidents. Few people begin to realize our annual national loss from this source. At

a conservative figure 1,000,000 workers in the United States every year are killed or injured in industry by accidents, of which fully three-quarters are proved by European experience to be wholly unnecessary and which cost the nation annually in lost earning capacity and damage suits at the lowest estimate an amount equal to the whole wage income of the mine-workers or all the farm laborers of the entire country.

"With the growing industrial disorder is associated a startling recent increase in crime and vice. Suicides have increased in the nineteen years from 1885 to 1903 more than five times as fast as the population. Murders and homicides in the twenty years between 1885 and 1905 have increased more than three times as fast as the population. Even making allowance for the greater fullness of recent records, nearly 9,000 suicides and 900 murders occurring in 1904 and 10,000 in 1906, is not a good record. Their growth has been almost steady, showing it is not the resultant of accidental causes, but of some sinister evil in the nation which is steadily working increasing wrong.

"Of professional criminals such as burglars, footpads, gamblers and other crooks, there are now known and estimated to be some 300,000 in the country, getting an average income each of perhaps \$1,500 a year, and causing an additional national expense for police protection, to say nothing of extra expense for locks, safes, alarms, etc., of \$2,000,000,000 more, making a total annual loss to the nation from this source more than counterbalancing the value of all our annual exports of manufactures, or nearly equal to the annual running expenses of all our churches, benevolent institutions, public schools, institutions of higher education and home missions of every kind.

"Of unprofessional crime in business and politics in the form of graft it is impossible to make an accurate estimate, but the annual national loss from that source must be at least twice that from professional crime. This class consists of an oligarchy composed of three classes—saloon-keepers, gamblers and others who engage in business that degrades; contractors, capitalists, bankers and others who can make money by getting franchises and other property of the community cheaper by bribery than by paying the community; politicians who are willing to seek and accept office with the aid and indorsement of the classes already mentioned. These three classes combine and get control of the party machine, nominate and elect men who will agree to help them rob the city and state for the benefit of themselves, and who will agree also not to enforce the laws in regard to the various businesses that degrade a community."

SO DEMOCRATS CHARGED

In his speech at Columbus Mr. Taft admitted what democrats have all along asserted, namely, that the Elkins law was favored by the railroads because it repealed the imprisonment clause of the interstate commerce law.

On this point Mr. Taft said: "Under the 1889 amendment, however, the individuals convicted could have been sent to the penitentiary whereas under the Elkins act, the punishment by imprisonment was taken away while the fine was increased. The chief effect the Elkins law had on these particular prosecutions, which have been given so much prominence, was to make it easier to convict the corporation and to increase its fine, but to save the guilty individual perpetrators from imprisonment. It is well understood that the Elkins bill was passed without opposition by, and with the full consent of, the railroads, and that the chief reason for this was the elimination of the penitentiary penalty for unjust discriminations."

Democrats will do well to keep this extract from Mr. Taft's address conveniently at hand for the information of their republican friends.

TAFT ON GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP

Secretary Taft gives three reasons for opposing government ownership, namely:

"First—Because existing government railroads are not managed with either the efficiency or economy of privately managed roads and the rates charged are not as low and therefore not as beneficial to the public.

"Second—Because it would involve an expenditure of certainly \$12,000,000,000 to ac-

quire the interstate railways and the creation of an enormous national debt.

"Third—Because it would place in the hands of a reckless executive a power of control over business and politics that the imagination can hardly conceive, and would expose our popular institutions to danger."

The first proposition is not sound. In the countries which have both systems the government roads are preferred by the people, as shown by the fact that government roads are being extended. It is not fair to compare government roads ABROAD with private roads HERE because conditions are different. If he will compare municipal water and lighting plants in this country with plants owned by private corporations he will find that plants owned by the municipalities are managed with more efficiency and economy and charge lower rates.

Mr. Taft's second objection is that government ownership would involve an enormous debt. It is sufficient to say that a government debt bears a lower rate of interest than railroad bonds and that, as the people now pay interest on the railroad bonds (through railroad rates) their burdens would be actually decreased by government ownership. The saving would be even more than the lower interest would indicate because the people are now paying on an inflated capitalization. The secretary conveniently overlooks the fact that the adoption of the system would be gradual and that the people would be guided by experience as they proceeded.

As for the third objection it is only necessary to compare the mail service in the hands of the government with the railway service in private hands. In 1896 there was a great deal

more coercion practiced on the railway employees than on the railway mail clerks, and even this might be lessened by improvements in the civil service. Then, too, under a dual ownership it would be impossible for a national administration to make a political use of the roads owned by the several states.

But Secretary Taft's discussion of government ownership was immaterial, first, because it is not a present issue, and second because he admits that if the remedy for present evils is not radical "THEN WE MAY CERTAINLY EXPECT THAT THE MOVEMENT TOWARD GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP WILL BECOME A FORMIDABLE ONE THAT CAN NOT BE STAYED." In other words, the evils of government ownership, even as he magnifies them, will be preferable to present abuses. The railroads, he declares, "have been weighed in the balance and found wanting."

The secretary's remarks on this subject, while displaying considerable ignorance, will serve at least one useful purpose, namely, they will impress republicans with the necessity of favoring even more radical regulation than Mr. Taft suggests.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

While sadly discommoded by the strike of telegraph operators, the general public should not forget that the striking operators are asking for only that which seems reasonable and just. They have asked for a reasonable wage, a reasonable work day and equal pay for equal work. The last contention is, perhaps, the main one. The operators demand it because it would put a stop to discrimination and they would base remuneration on ability and experience and not upon sex or favoritism. One of the best arguments in favor of trades unions is that they are bringing about equal pay for equal work, without regard to the sex of the worker.

SPIGOT AND BUNGHOLE

Just now the government is engaged in the task of "preserving and restoring American forests," spending for that purpose several millions of dollars a year. At the same time it puts a premium on the destruction of American forests in the shape of a protective tariff duty of \$2 per thousand feet on lumber. The consumers pay the extra \$2 per thousand feet, which hastens the total destruction of American forests, and at the same time they foot the bills for the forest reserve department. As a case of saving at the spigot and wasting at the bung-hole this situation is deserving of the premium for utter foolishness.

PROGRESSION

In 1884 Theodore Roosevelt was a radical free trader and one of the leading members of the Free Trade League. In 1904 he had "progressed" until he dubbed as "closet philosophers" those who denounced the iniquities of the protective tariff. A little later he cut out of his message all reference to the tariff because the "standpatters" so advised, and for three years last past he has utterly ignored the tariff in all of his public and official utterances.

At this rate of "progression" towards tariff reform how long will it be ere the tariff schedules are revised in the interests of the people who foot the bills?

WHAT DID THEY EXPECT?

The Chicago papers which helped to defeat Mayor Dunne are complaining that Busse is running the city on the wide open plan and that the traction question is still unsettled. What did they look for? They have only themselves to blame. The Busse administration is just what might have been expected.

IS IT A STRAW?

The recommendation of "national incorporation" by which the great corporations expect to escape from the "hardship" of state regulation is the first indication that the president might be persuaded to run again.

THEY WOULD FORGIVE HIM

If Wall Street can get "national incorporation" of railroads and business corporations it can forgive the president for all the reforms he has advocated.