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Big Business

Can It Be Too Big? Not If It Is Honest. Without Big Packers—Who Would Feed the Army?

A Federal commission recommends that the Government take over the packing business of the United States, which is the business of supplying the people of this country, the people of other countries, and the armies of the United States with meat.

It is a most important business. For the army it is as important, at least, as furnishing weapons and ammunition, for without the food, REGULARLY AND PROMPTLY SUPPLIED, the army could not exist.

It is not necessary to point out what would be the danger and folly of risking any serious interference, WHILE THE WAR LASTS, with the meat industry of the United States.

What the people and Government want is EFFICIENCY, the ability to produce.

We have had our samples of national failure, in the lack of coal, in the flying machine fiasco, and the absolute railroad incompetency which compelled the Government to add railroading to its other tasks.

The meat industry, the work of gigantic packing concerns, has been, whatever its other defects, ONE HUNDRED PER CENT EFFICIENT.

When the Government wanted sixty million pounds of beef delivered on board ship, properly refrigerated, within sixty days, five men gathered in a room in Chicago were able to say, "You shall have it." The beef was delivered.

Food for the people here at home, food for the nations that we are helping, and food always prompt for the soldiers in France—this has been forthcoming without a hitch.

It is unnecessary to assert that so long as this war lasts there should be no destructive interference with the machine that works in this way.

The achievement of the packers of the United States is important because it illustrates this truth:

THE BIGGER THE BUSINESS THE BETTER, when it is properly supervised by the Government, and when the economies of great organization are divided upon a fair basis between the people and the organizers.

If instead of five or six gigantic packing concerns in the United States there had been ten thousand or more little individual butchering concerns, THIS COUNTRY COULD NOT HAVE FED ITS ARMY.

The Government can deal with five or six men, give its orders, get what it wants.

It could not deal with ten thousand separate operators, and they could not do the work.

A great business, such as the packing industry or the steel industry, is, compared to a little business, what Niagara Falls is, compared to a tiny stream.

From Niagara you can get power worth while, and at a nominal cost. A little stream is not worth harnessing. The power to be got from it isn't worth what the machinery would cost to use it.

Fortunately for this country, and for the American army, there was actually existing a gigantic organization that could deal with the Government on the basis of tens of millions of pounds at a time.

Most fortunately, the meat packers of the United States, selfishly, of course, but intelligently and efficiently, had organized under American control the beef and mutton supplies of South America, the Argentine, Brazil, and other countries.

In South America, by United States methods, United States organizers and United States money, cattle are slaughtered, the meat frozen and shipped to our army by the tens of millions of pounds, and by UNITED STATES CITIZENS.

In South America, as here, the by-products are saved, more than sufficient to pay all the profits the packers take.

In the South, where the animals are slaughtered, the meats are canned, shipped directly to Europe to the army, together with the fresh frozen meat.

If the Government of the United States wants for its army in France, or for its friends, the allies, ten or fifty or a hundred million pounds of South American beef, it doesn't telegraph southward from Washington, but northward TO CHICAGO.

Chicago sends, with the power of organization, huge capital and thorough industrial efficiency, to the soldiers and workers in Europe, beef direct from the South American fields.

Only the biggest kind of BIG BUSINESS could have accomplished this. Lucky for this country that big business, looking ahead, using the power of millions, organized and developed the beef industry of South America as well as that of this country.

Big business alone could have done it. You must have a great deal of water in one place to produce the power of Niagara. You must have a great deal of money and a great deal of intelligence in one place to produce the efficiency of the packing industry.

One good soul will ask, "What becomes of your theories of Government ownership?" The answer is, Government ownership will have enough to do for the present developing this country, irrigating deserts, draining swamps, developing roads, canals, railroads, telegraphs, telephones, the express business—all natural monopolies that the people NOW can and should control and own.

Natural monopolies, their value based exclusively upon the increasing birth rate, should be in the hands of the Government.

And they will be, for the war has taught the nation that much.

Enterprises with minute industrial detail, the making of a hundred different kinds of steel, the slaughtering of

(Continued in Last Column.)

Don't Forget Your Card

By T. E. Powers



Beatrice Fairfax Writes of the Problems and Pitfalls of the War Workers Especially for Washington Women

I HAVE a letter from a woman who says: "Why can I never get decent service in a lunch room where there are woman waitresses? I make it a rule to tip, even if my lunch costs no more than 40 cents yet there I sit, 'like patience on a monument,' while any man can get prompt and excellent service." "Sometimes while I am waiting three male creatures next me, are successively fed, and go their way rejoicing, while I must wait for a sulky: 'what's yours?'" "These men do not tip, as a rule, beyond saying something like this: 'What's your first name, anyhow? Peach or Pippin?' and the waitress goes on her way rejoicing.

"And there I sit 'till I lose my patience and leave the place, or apply to the head waiter for a little attention. Perhaps you can explain this, which is beyond my comprehension. I am a business woman, myself, and I try to have patience with my sex."

Began With the Apple. The explanation for this, goes back a good many years—to the Garden of Eden, to be exact. Where Adam ate the apple not because he cared for apples, particularly, but because a lady tempted him and it is only human to succumb to temptation, at the hands of a lady.

And they have been keeping it up ever since—these children of Adam and Eve—doing something outside the line of regular duty, for a smile, a compliment, or just because some one of the opposite sex expects it.

Is this the question: "What's your first name, Peach or Pippin?" that does the trick with the waitress whose name may be Mary Jane, and look it, too. For a second she flashes into something that may very properly warrant either name. And through a rose-colored haze she floats to the kitchen and battles with the cook for the best thing on the carving table.

What's in a Tip? What's a tip compared to the deliciously heady feeling a compli-

TODAY'S TOPIC
DON'T BLAME THE WAITRESS.

ment can give? Perhaps it isn't true. Even Mary Jane, alias Pippin, battling with the cook over the question of white meat may realize its pinchbeck quality, but for the moment it enables her to hold up her head like a beauty. And the business woman sits flashing her dime, meantime, and not getting even a nibble for it. Waitresses come and waitresses go, but the woman patron sits on forever, to once more take liberties with Tennyson's Brook. A Pippin is not especially interested in a detached dime, she does not get enough of them to change the map for her. A few represent something she has heard vaguely described as "unearned increment," and Hetty Green has never appealed to her as a patron saint. She is more interested in Mary Pickford, Elsie Ferguson and Billie Burke. And so finally, with an air of resignation, the waitress inquires: "What's yours?"

AFTER THE WAR SALVAGE

September 13, 1918. To the Editor of THE TIMES: It has been a matter of regret to me that I have not been so situated as to join the ranks of the "dollar-a-year men," and give to my country what I have to impart from a store of experience accumulated in the course of forty years in one department of the building material line. I have been very much impressed with Henry Ford's idea of supplying farms to our crippled soldiers, and with the attitude of The Times in Mr. Brisbane's column of yesterday. With the result that it has borne in upon me that we have one great factor, constituting fully one-half the investment required for improvements, bought and paid for. All over the country, in the building of different sections of the army and navy, as well as temporary office buildings so numerous in Washington, we have accumulated a vast amount of building material, consisting of lumber, tile, wall board, plaster board, doors and windows and the frames surrounding them, hardware, plumbing, etc. Not only does this material exist at the present time, but the temporary use to which it is being put should make it as available as new,

we find the fatal quality of attraction as the great motive force. Ever since Eve pointed out the apple that took her fancy, and Adam picked it—against his better judgment—that mysterious force called attraction has been doing things, not according to Hoyle, but by strange and devious ways that are past understanding. No one in THAT office would, of course, inquire if the Expert's first name was Pippin? But the president of the concern, a terribly important old gentleman, intimates that he doesn't know how he could accomplish everything he has to do in one day, if Providence had not sent him so expert a stenographer. And the Expert, who is somewhat past the age of foolishness, doesn't mind the extra hour or so she spends after closing time, to get things "cleaned up." It's that kind of compliment that does the trick with her.

Also the Cook. The cook may seldom see the master of the house, but it is the way he likes his toast, his coffee, his steak that is the unwritten law of the prestidigitator of the kitchen. Unless the cook happens to be a chef, and then—what Madame likes will be remembered. It is for this reason, though they fail to grasp it, that the most ardent feminist will balk at engaging a woman doctor, dentist, or lawyer. As one of them once said to me in explanation, "It's so hard to obey a fellow woman; there's nothing primitive about it—and I'm so advanced I've got to the point where I enjoy being primitive again."

Give Watchmen More Than Tea

But At Present Wages and Prices That's About All There Is For a Watchman to Buy.

By EARL GODWIN. On Saturday a watchman employed by the Department of Agriculture called at my office to present the text of a petition to Congress that the pay of the watch force be increased.

It is now two dollars a day. On Sunday this newspaper published a statement from a responsible officer of the army showing that food prices had increased in Washington as much as 356 per cent.

Can there be any further argument as to the need of more than two dollars a day for a Government watchman or any other kind of watchman?

The statement from Major J. O. Skinner, the officer mentioned, contains the bitter consolation that tea alone has remained at its ante-bellum level, the average price of forty cents having remained stable during these years of soaring prices.

Perhaps the Congress of the United States believes that men hired to guard the valuable papers and treasures of a Government office can live on tea all day long and year in and year out.

Tea is a great drink, but what the Government watchman wants is a little bulk to his nourishment and a few dollars left over for a rainy day. There is every reason on earth for the immediate passage of legislation raising these pitiful salaries, and NO reason why the NOLAN THREE DOLLAR-A-DAY bill should not be enacted.

The watchman at the Department of Agriculture would do well to study the aims and accomplishments of the Federation of Federal Employees. That association, with more than 12,000 members in Washington alone, has already accomplished many fine things in the way of bettering conditions and getting better wages.

Meantime, let me plead with Congress to put itself in the place of mature men called upon to stand guard over Government property.

Is there any man in Congress who thinks two dollars a day is enough for a Government employe now, or any other time?

HEARD AND SEEN

There is a mean person who runs a cigar stand. An army sergeant went up to the newstand and asked if the New York papers had arrived, and upon being answered in the affirmative, requested permission to look at the New York Sun. The man replied, "What the hell do you think I am running? A reading room for dirty soldiers? If you want a paper, you'll buy it." The sergeant paid his nickel and then told the dealer what he thought of him. The incident is so unusual, because of the almost uniform courteous treatment of the boys in khaki by Washingtonians, that I am printing it with the hope that even a person of the cigar man's caliber may profit by the telling, though certainly he has gained nothing pecuniarily by his gratuitous insult.

High School Cadets. Please start a fund to purchase two brown derbies for H. F. B. and J. L., for the most foolish idea that has yet appeared in print. Putting khaki leggings on the high school cadets would make them look less military than they do now. What is the idea of adding perhaps another dollar to the cost of the cadet uniform, to prevent strangers in town from thinking the cadets are ushers or bell boys? The cadet regiment is in the neighborhood of thirty years old, and the cadet uniform needs no embellishment to please even the eye of these two critics. Do these individuals sell khaki leggings, I wonder? I hope that Mr. Kramer will read their suggestion and pronounce it piffle. OLD CADET NOW IN THE SERVICE.

SONGS OF A DAY LONG DEAD. Scum out O'Grady, You have no time to spare. You're stranded on a beach, Twenty miles from anywhere. If you don't mind your business, There will be a vacant chair, So scum out, O'Grady, scum out.

BIG BUSINESS

(Continued from First Column.) animals and saving certain glands for medical purposes, the utilization of everything in the animal—such work for the present should be left to the intense, concentrated and SELFISH attention of the individual. Another question, of course, follows: "Would you put the farmers and the consumers at the mercy of a gigantic organization?" NO! The Government of this country should protect the farmer producing the meat and the consumer eating it. And the governments of the South American republics should do the same—and they may be trusted to do it. Strict supervision and control of the people's food supply, insuring its sale at a reasonable profit, is Government business. For the gigantic meat business of the United States it has been said, and so far as we know, without contradiction, that the packers' profit does not exceed 3 cents on the dollar of business. What is infinitely more important to the nation's prosperity, the by-products saved in the packing industry on a gigantic scale, that could not be and ARE NOT saved in the little butcher shop, actually produce a larger sum than the total profit of the big packers. In other words, they actually save what they get. Big business, properly supervised for the producer's and consumer's protection, giving to the public a fair part of the profits of co-operation, cannot be TOO BIG. The bigger the country's business the better, if honest. And Government ownership of the natural monopolies of the country cannot be too complete or come too soon.