

# Newspapers and the Packing Houses

President Roosevelt's message to congress relating to conditions in the packing houses was received in the house without applause. The packers issued a reply to the Neill-Reynolds report saying that their packing houses were clean, their methods sanitary, and denying substantially the material charges made in the report. Their representatives also appeared before the house committee and made defense.

Following are fair samples of newspaper opinion upon the Neill-Reynolds report:

Chicago Evening Post: "The Jungle" is to be dramatized. Whew!

New York Tribune: The popular prejudice against "embalmed beef" bids fair at last to become effective.

Washington Post: Now that we come to think of it, that last piece of meat didn't taste as good as it ought to, either.

Detroit Free Press: As the understanding now is, the president would like to see the cattle take an "immunity bath," too.

Indianapolis News: Or it might be a good scheme to treat the meat trust as the packers are said to treat sick hogs. That is, not let it die.

Bisbee Miner: The principle that the American consumer is entitled to equal protection with the foreign consumer seems a safe and reasonable one to act on.

New York Commercial: Every part of the hog is now utilized; the packing houses used to pack all but the squeal, and now they are certainly putting up the squeal.

Rochester Post-Standard: "None but the brave," exclaims Cartoonist Davenport, "deserve the fare," provided by the meat trust. Mr. Davenport's idea of "the brave" is a turkey buzzard.

Kansas City Journal: It has often been said that the way to beat the beef trust is to quit eating meat, and the author of the "Jungle Book" has enabled a great many people to adopt the suggestion.

Chicago Evening Post: The report contains enough definite matter to dispose of any doubts heretofore existing in the most conservative minds that drastic safeguards about our meat products are needed, and needed forthwith.

Wheeling Register: A powerful lobby is at Washington fighting the pure food bill, while Mr. Roosevelt is jabbing the packers of impure meat in the west. Wouldn't it be as well to concentrate the presidential fire on the Washington lobby? If a proper and comprehensive pure food law could be enacted the packers would be dead cocks in the pit.

Chicago Tribune: The preliminary report of Messrs. Reynolds and Neill justifies the president's demand for a thoroughgoing inspection by the federal government of packing houses and of their products so far as they enter into foreign and interstate commerce. The authors of the report are not sensation mongers. They have not accepted as true unverified statements even in the form of affidavits. They have described only what they saw.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat: The people demanded to know the conditions, and they will be inclined to think that there is a large ingredient of truth in what Neill and Reynolds tell them. Congress' duty now is to take prompt and intelligent action to cure these evils, and also to

prescribe punishment for the perpetrators which will be adequate, to act as a deterrent to all those who, through carelessness or cupidity, make an assault on the public health."

Sioux City (Iowa) Journal: The present agitation is doing rather more than was done by the former high prices of meats to drive one to a cereal food diet. Now is the time for the breakfast food manufacturers to do an extensive line of advertising.

Omaha (Nebraska) World-Herald: Consumers and producers alike, under existing conditions, are at the mercy of the trust, which, having eliminated competition, has been conducting business entirely according to its own will.

Kansas City Post: When we permit such conditions to exist, and when we permit such stuff to be palmed off on us as "pure" food, have we a right to be satisfied with ourselves? When we force these packing houses to furnish only the best meats for export and choose to take the rotten leavings for ourselves can we point with pride to our enlightenment? Can we even permit ourselves to believe that we have ordinary common sense?

Washington (D. C.) Post: When it comes to stirring up a smell, it must be admitted that Upton Sinclair rakes muck as is muck.

Chicago Record-Herald: The Reynolds and Neill report has finally been published, and with it a message from the president which insists on the need of a radical change in conditions at the stockyards and urges the passage of the Beveridge amendment. That there should be a radical change in conditions will be painfully obvious to every reader of the report. It emphasizes the necessity for a general cleaning up and for a thorough reform in the conduct of certain parts of the business. Its details are so revolting that unless there is speedy assurance of a revolution in methods and some satisfactory legal guaranty for the protection of the public the industry must suffer enormous losses.

Milwaukee Sentinel: It is not surprising that close on the heels of the publication of the shocking Neill-Reynolds report comes and "I told you so," statement from General Nelson A. Miles. The disclosures of the report are naturally regarded by Gen. Miles as a tardy but complete vindication of his contention seven years ago, when the "embalmed beef" controversy was raging.

Denver News: It will not be an edifying spectacle to have congressmen from packing house states trying to defend the packing interests and to avoid a thorough inspection. Murder is horrible when it is committed in the heat of anger under terrible provocation. It is more horrible when committed indirectly, in coldblood, under the incentive of greater profits. Let the men implicated in all this ghastly array of horrors be rescued from methods which they could not themselves tolerate if they could realize their awful results.

Kansas City Journal: Although the preliminary report of the Neill-Reynolds commission that investigated the condition of the Chicago packing houses is sufficiently shocking, under the circumstances it can hardly be complete. However, it leaves enough to the imagination to arouse the resentful indignation of a public that now realizes it has been imposed upon grossly through monopolistic greed and willful disregard of justice and decency. As exposed by the report which was sent to congress yesterday, the pack-

ers of Chicago, and perhaps of other cities, stand morally convicted of commercial methods that are a disgrace to civilization, and, unless the Neill-Reynolds report is an exaggeration or tissue of falsehoods, no federal measure of regulation will be adequate that does not provide for the minutest inspection of every process in meat packing, regardless of every form of remonstrance. The packers have brought this upon themselves. They have shown that they can not be trusted. They have imposed upon public trust and credulity to the limit of endurance.

Milwaukee Evening Wisconsin: "Hereafter the packing industry will be closely watched."

Hearst's Chicago American: No one is to blame for the exposures at the stock yards but the beef trust owners and managers themselves. No honest man or honest set of men have ever been "destroyed" by an "inflamed public opinion" when they were conducting their business properly and in a decent manner. If the canned meat industry of Chicago is "destroyed," then the managers, owners and directors of the stock yards have only themselves to thank for its destruction and their destruction. For years the public has bought tens of thousands of tons of these canned food products believing them to be as represented by the United States government label. Now, from a committee appointed by President Roosevelt—a committee that has no object other than to tell the truth—there comes the shocking revelations that have startled the world in the Neill-Reynolds report. At any time during the past few years the members of the beef trust could have put the stock yards business on a clean, sanitary, wholesome and honest plane. To do this would have cost some money—only a small percentage of the millions taken yearly by the trust from the great public. But even this small percentage the trust refused to give up. It has been a question of dollars always."

Wall Street Journal: Bad as the report is, and injurious as it must be to a great trade, yet there is this consoling consideration that it might have been much worse, and, moreover, that the abuses will now be removed by the disclosures which have been made, and by the inspection which will be established, so that the trade can make a fresh start under sound and healthy conditions to recover the ground which it has lost, and gain new territory.

Houston (Texas) Post: It being clear, therefore, that a revolution in the packing industry is essential, it is plain that such a revolution can be brought about only through the application of the authority of law. Experience has shown that the only way for the consumers to obtain decent treatment from the packers is to compel them to be decent—to so change the law that it will be more profitable for them to be honest than to be dishonest.

Minneapolis Journal: The Neill-Reynolds report on conditions in the Chicago packing houses may be disastrous to the meat industry for a time, but what sane person is going to lay the blame on them for the harm done? Shall the conditions they expose, and which the packers do not deny, be allowed to continue because to correct them will cost the packers something?

The New York World: To use President Roosevelt's own words in transmitting the Neill-Reynolds report to congress, "The conditions shown by even this short inspection to exist in the Chicago stockyards are revolting.

## WHERE THE BLAME WILL REST

The Washington Post takes a pessimistic view of the future of the rate bill. It contends that if the law is effective the republican administration will claim and receive all the glory, and that if it proves abortive the democrats will secure all the blame. The Post should cheer up. Credit or blame, whichever may be the lot of the freight rate law, will rest with the party charged with its honest enforcement. Time was when the people might have been deceived in regard to these things, but that was before the days of widespread publicity. Unprejudiced men must admit that credit for the enactment of the rate law belongs to the democratic party, for that party first demanded it, and for years steadily sought to secure it. A republican administration happened to be in power when the public demand for the enactment of the law could no longer be ignored. But the question is not, what party

is responsible for its enactment; it is: Will it be enforced? The Post may trust the people to see to its enforcement, and woe be to the party in power that fails to do its duty.

## "A PROTECTED INFANT"

Referring to the demonstrated fact that American made watches are sold cheaper abroad than at home the St. Louis Globe-Democrat says: "These watches are marvels of cheapness at home, and a protective tariff developed the industry." Well, if the industry is developed why longer afford it "protection." If the industry has reached a point where it is profitable without the benefits of protection, why longer allow it to grab more than it is entitled to? The trouble with a majority of these "protected infants" is that they long ago reached a stage of development that enables them to back Uncle Sam into a corner and make him yield up everything in sight.

Isn't it time to make these lusty "infants" hustle for themselves?

## PLATT

The Chicago Record-Herald asks: "Who can mention a single good thing that United States Senator Platt has ever done for the people?"

The Houston (Texas) Post replies: "Mr. Platt has never claimed to be a servant of the public. He has been a political grafter all his life and has never pretended to be anything else. Platt is not sailing under false colors."

The Post might have added that with full knowledge of Mr. Platt's methods and purposes the republican party elected and re-elected him to the senate, and he has for years been recognized as one of the most influential of republican leaders, and one of the most persistent of "national honor" defenders.