

CURT COMMENT ON TOPICS OF INTEREST

Ever hear the story of the monkey and the jar of chestnuts? You remember that the monkey inserted its paw into the jar, grasped a handful of the nuts, and was unable to withdraw the paw without unloosening the nuts. Being too greedy for that it held on until the master came along and punished the thieving monkey.

The "Douglas Combine" reached its paw into the chestnut jar, grabbed a handful, and was too greedy to let go and thus get its hand out. Along come a few who had revolted, and before the combine could get loose it had received a terrific spanking—as terrific as it was deserved.

As Admiral Schley said, "there is glory enough to go round," but among those who deserve especial credit for administering condign punishment to the "Douglas Combine" is Katouc of Richardson. Although numbered among the "wets" he is not one who is willing to sacrifice everything for the "wet" cause, nor would he stand for the decidedly corporation frame-up that the "combine" presented. All the opposition needed was a rallying point, and Katouc provided the point. The rest came so easy that the "combine" is hardly yet aware of what hit it. It merely knows that it was hit.

As a result of the whole thing the legislature is splendidly organized and can now get right down to business. The senatorial fight will be nil. Twenty years ago—or even ten years ago—a senatorial scramble meant thirty or forty wasted days. This time there was no excitement, no log-rolling, no oil room, no lobbying. Gilbert M. Hitchcock was elected under the new dispensation without a ripple appearing on the surface.

Now let the legislature rush the direct legislation bill through without amendment or change. Then let it take up the county option question and settle it as far as it is possible for this legislature to settle it. Then, after taking care of the different institutions and departments of the state, let the legislature handsomely equip a bureau of publicity and immigration, and then adjourn and go home.

Just how the news columns of the daily papers are controlled by the business office is evidenced by the flaring advertisements that C. W. Post is printing in an effort to offset the disclosures of fakery made by Collier's. The daily newspapers have made no mention of the fact that Collier's secured a verdict of \$50,000 for libel against Post. Post charged that the Collier's attacked his products because he would not advertise in that magazine. The jury rendered a verdict inside of two hours—the largest amount of damage ever awarded in a libel suit. The trial disclosed that Post faked his "testimonials," that he made absurd claims of medicinal virtues for his products, and that he got his start practicing mental healing. The trial further disclosed that Post's products are largely bran and molasses, and that his advertising made claims for it not allowed by the government to longer appear on the packages. Collier's verdict against the faker of "Wellville" was one of the biggest news stories of the year, but the Associated Press and the United Press did not feature it. Neither did any of the big daily newspapers that think more of Post's tainted dollars than they do of giving their readers the facts and the news.

U'Ren—accent on the last syllable, please—of Oregon is the man who is responsible for all the advanced legislation of that progressive state. He has been agitating for a quarter of a century. Today he sees success. Oregon, with the possible exception of Oklahoma, has the best laws of any state in the union. Nebraska boasts of being the best educated state in the union, but to date it hasn't developed any LaFollette's, U'Rens, Beveridges or Bristows. We've had men who have cut big figure in national politics and policies, but where, please, is the Nebraska man who has started in at home to reform things and give the people long delayed justice? In this connection we are reminded of the drunken man who threw his hat into the street and declared he could whip any man in town. He got no response, whereupon he jumped up, cracked his heels together and declared he could lick any man in the county. Still no response. Then he declared, with emphatic adjectives, that he could lick any man in the United States. Biff! and a man smote him on the chin and knocked him

galley west. When the braggart arose and wiped the dirt from his clothes and the blood from his nose he quietly remarked: "The trouble with me was that I took in too much territory the last time." Among others we are wishing that some of our big political leaders would take in a little less territory.

It took thirty years of agitation and education to bring people to a demand for the initiative and referendum. Will it take them that long to realize that even the initiative and referendum is not so great a reform as the land value tax? Of all men the farmer should be the most ardent single taxer, yet the average farmer will froth at the mouth at the mere suggestion. And why is it that the "intelligent farmer" can not understand that while the farm lands of the United States represent less than 18 per cent of the total land value, the farm lands pay 58 per cent of the total tax raised upon land. A tax on real estate improvements is a tax on thrift and enterprise. The man who buys a lot and builds is fined for his enterprise; the man who buys a vacant lot and lets it lie idle is rewarded for his lack of public spirit. The farmer who improves his quarter section is fined for doing it; the man who owns the untilled quarter section next to it is reaping where he has not sown—and the enterprising farmer is furnishing the seed and bringing the crop to the harvesting point for the other fellow. Our revenue laws are silly—indeed they would be ridiculous were they not so expensive to men of enterprise and industry.

Perhaps some reader of this department owns a house and lot within eight or ten blocks of Thirteenth and O. If so, compare your taxes with those of the Rogers tract lying on the south side of O and east of Thirty-third street. What made the Rogers tract so valuable? Certainly nothing that the owner thereof has done to it. Twenty years ago that tract was not worth \$150 an acre. Today you could not buy it for \$150 a front foot. Every dollar of that value was put on by the men and women who have made Lincoln, not a dollar by the owner. The people who make the values should have some share therein. Think it over!

The street cars of Omaha are built for the "pay as you enter system" and the conductors stand outside. The street cars of Lincoln are not built for that system, and the conductors stand outside, usually in the way of passengers. The narrow platforms, the lack of provisions for egress, and the generally dilapidated condition of the cars all go to make the "pay as you enter" system in Lincoln something more than an annoyance.

Despite the nature of his crime and the short sentence therefor, one can not help having a bit of sympathy for Dr. Johnson because of his age. Even the short sentence of two years probably means his ending his days behind the stone walls. But even though feeling something of sympathy for him, who will say that his punishment is not richly deserved? By its verdict the jury convicted him of sacrificing two lives—that of a girl led to her ruin by a lecherous youth, and that of a babe unborn. The calendar of crime may contain worse ones, but if so we have not heard of them. Newspapers and individuals are estopped from commenting on the young man who led the victim of Johnson's criminal practice to her downfall. If Amanda Mueller's death serves to teach a lesson to other young girls she will not have died in vain. But it will not. There are scores of young girls in Lincoln headed downward, not because they are inherently bad, but because criminally foolish fathers and mothers are failing to take the aforesaid girls in hand and keep them off the streets.

Congressman Tawney is a bit late with his economy program, but just the same his remarks thereon are mighty pertinent at this time. The regret is that Mr. Tawney did not begin with it sooner, not waiting until his progressive constituents pried him loose from his standpat job. His figures, however, serve to show up the Strenuous One as a man who thought war, dreamed war, hoped for war and was even daffy on the military program business. The eight years prior to Roosevelt's bloviating administrations the war department cost an average of \$24,000,000 a year, and the navy department \$27,000,000 a year. During the seven years of the Strenuous One's administration