

THAT STANDARD OIL DECISION

The decision of the supreme court in the Standard Oil case does not mean anything worth while to the people of this country. The court holds that the company is a monopoly in restraint of trade. That everybody knew. The court declares that the corporation must be dissolved inside of six months. That is a joke. The corporation will dissolve, of course—and immediately reorganize. Then it will continue the same old game of grab, maybe under a different name, but with the same captains of finance in control and manipulating things in the same old way.

The court holds that "corporations whose contracts are not reasonably restrictive of competition" are not affected by the decision. No pointer, however, is given as to what is "unreasonably restrictive of competition." The court itself gives the Standard Oil company a hint as to how it may evade the Sherman anti-trust law. Let the Standard Oil company dissolve and return to the former plan of a lot of corporations, each controlled by men who are controlled by the Standard Oil octopus. Then, "if the various pipe lines, owned by different corporations, determined, in the public interest, so to combine as to make a continuous pipe line. SUCH AGREEMENT OR COMBINATION WOULD NOT BE

REPUGNANT TO THE ACT." The quotation is from the court's decision.

The Standard Oil company may now proceed to purge itself by reorganization, after which it may proceed about its business as before. Instead of being a great victory for the people, the court's decision in effect makes a rope of sand out of the Sherman anti-trust law. It gives, to all intents and purposes, judicial sanction to the claim that there are "good trusts" and "bad trusts," but fails to enlighten us as to which are good and which are bad. It says the Standard Oil company has been guilty of violating the Sherman anti-trust law, but it inflicts no punishment. The only violations of the Sherman anti-trust law that are punished by fine or sentence to imprisonment are those committed by men who organize for the protection of their lives and industrial welfare. Violations in the interest of the dollar are passed over with orders not to do it again.

Any popular rejoicing that has been done over the decision of the court in this case has been premature. The decision has merely given the administration a further excuse for pressing for the federal incorporation law—about the most dangerous menace to popular rights and state control of state internal affairs ever fronting the people.

SANBORN'S KNOCK-OUT DECISION

If the decision of Federal Judge Sanborn in the railway rate cases stands, it will mean that the states will be deprived of even the privilege of controlling rates within their own borders. Judge Sanborn holds that state legislation affecting rates are reflected in interstate rates, thus affecting commerce between the states, and consequently violating the provisions of the federal constitution. Of course a state may not attempt to regulate interstate rates, and if in attempting to regulate rates within the state borders, the end of regulation by state railway commissions is in sight. It is all delightfully simple, and delightfully pleasing to the railroad corporations. Just as soon as the supreme court sustains the Sanborn decision our state railway commissioners will become merely a species of sub-liminated clerk. All they will have to do will be to make changes requested by the railroads, quibbs gupps pue sthery gnyjssip bles about station facilities. The railroads spent millions in lobbying against the laws creating state railway commissions and giving the commissioners power to perform some real service for the people. With a stroke of his pen Judge Sanborn has done for the railroads what any army of lobbyists failed to accomplish. Just as the people were priding themselves that they had subdued the railroad corporations and

made them the servants and not the masters of the public, along comes a federal judge appointed for life and responsible to nobody, not even God, and upsets the reform work of a generation.

It may be that in the future the people will wake up to the menace of a federal judiciary appointed for life, responsible to no authority and wielding powers not dreamed of by the framers of the constitution and the founders of the republic, and not even dared by czar or emperor.

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