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John D. Rockefeller as a Witness

Sioux Falls (S. D.) Press: The public will therefore receive with satisfaction the mandate of the court should it visit the extreme penalty upon the Standard Oil offenders.

Fort Worth (Tex.) Record: Whatever may be the amount of the fine, Standard Oil company will not be seriously affected financially by the payment thereof. It has come to be a pretty well established fact that the dear people are the ones of last resort when it comes to paying the fines that are assessed against corporations. The assessment of fines is no punishment at all. The corporation simply smiles when a fine is assessed and passes it on to the people. The remedy, therefore, lies deeper than in a monetary forfeit. If the men who direct illegal practices were severely dealt with the illegal practices would stop. There would be no necessity of injuring the legitimate prosecution of the industry nor of weakening honest investments. It is the lawlessness in any industry and not the industry itself that should be destroyed without delay or evidence of fear by the courts, and some day that will be done.

Dallas (Tex.) Times-Herald: John D. Rockefeller has returned to his home at Cleveland. John D. is not well posted on Standard Oil matters, William Tilford, his financial man, is doing Europe and will not return to

America until late in the fall. Happy is the man who can devote all his time to sacred things and unload responsibility on his wicked partners.

Columbus (Ohio) Press-Post: It isn't every billionaire who can leave the making of his fortune entirely in the hands of a board of directors, as Rockefeller claims to have done.

Joplin (Mo.) Globe: Mr. Rockefeller's tremendous business ability is unchallenged. From penury to the pinnacle of "the world's richest man" is a gap that could be bridged by nothing excepting tremendous ability. Is it conceivable that a man of such remarkable talents could be in ignorance of the policies and plans of the company of which he is the president, in which he is by far the largest stockholder, from the earnings of which he has for many years received an annual income of a dozen or more millions?

Manifestly, it is not conceivable. It is not believable. Mr. Rockefeller may not have perjured himself according to the letter of the oath in his testimony at Chicago. But in the spirit of the obligation he undoubtedly did perjure himself. President Roosevelt would probably call Rockefeller a liar were it up to him to comment.

How do you account for Rockefeller, the pious, and Rockefeller, the pirate? may be asked. The accountant from whom the law should demand an accounting at this time is nobody but John D., himself.

Nashville Banner: The fining of a corporation does not fit the punishment for corrupt or lawless practice upon the guilty parties. There may be many innocent stockholders who would suffer from the imposition of an immense fine upon a corporation, or the real punishment in such a case may be imposed upon innocent consumers, who will be made to pay increased prices for the products of the corporation in order that the corporation itself may recoup. Exact justice in the case of a corporation which has violated the law will not be done until the individual managers who are directly responsible for the lawlessness are punished as individuals.

Buffalo (N. Y.) Courier: Old John D. appeared in court at Chicago yesterday—and he would have appeared to much better advantage had he not excited public indignation and ridicule by striving to evade service of the subpoena.

Pittsburg Dispatch: Possibly the full testimony may develop more important matters in Mr. Rockefeller's testimony than appears at this time. But if the outcome should be a free treatment to the immunity bath to gain from him knowledge that could have been secured from official or statistical sources Judge Landis' insistence on his appearance may take on a strong resemblance to a boom-rang.

New Orleans Times-Democrat: Mr. Rockefeller has been careful not to afford Judge Landis any assistance in fixing these fines, but his marvelous ignorance regarding his own business justifies the assessment of a penalty sufficiently heavy to make the president of the Standard Oil company take a keener and more wholesome interest in the lawful conduct of its affairs.

New York World: John D. Rockefeller cut a delightfully modest figure in Judge Landis' court yesterday

in Chicago. So far as appeared he was merely a witness answering a subpoena like any other witness. He had not been excused from attendance on the ground of personal convenience; he was not represented by a doctor's certificate of ill health. Judge Landis had issued an order that he should appear to answer certain questions, and he appeared. He did what the ordinary law-abiding citizen would feel compelled to do in the circumstances, which is the more remarkable because heads of the Standard Oil have not always shown themselves so submissive to the law.

New York Press: Of course Judge Landis is not responsible for the farcical nature of the proceedings in every other respect save that of the investigation which he has set in motion.

Judge Landis must know that a fine of \$29,000,000 against the Standard Oil company of Indiana would not be a penalty imposed upon Messrs. Rockefeller, Rogers, Archbold and the other heavy stockholders of the Standard Oil company of New Jersey, the holder of the stock of the Indiana corporations. If he imposes such a fine the burden will be inflicted upon the oil consumers of the United States.

A \$29,000,000 fine would be taken from the treasury of the parent corporation—that is to say, the oil trust—and then charged on the books to the cost of production, just as if it were the price of an oil refinery or the expense account of H. H. Rogers or the salary of J. D. Archbold. Afterward the consumers of the United States will be charged to make up for it.

It would be ever so much better for Judge Landis to fine the Standard Oil company of Indiana the lowest amount which can be levied under the law so mistakenly invoked against the monopoly by the department of justice. If Judge Landis will see this, and then will have the courage to give in open court his reasons for refusing to be a party to the punishment of the people for the crimes of the railroad and oil monopoly rebaters, he will make an enduring name for himself.

If Judge Landis is the man we take him to be from the attitude he has occupied in this case we shall be disappointed if he does not give it as his opinion that the guilt for crimes like those which have been revealed in his court is personal, and that it ought to be brought home to individuals by means of the law which awaits enforcement on the statutes. Certainly this is the truth about the case against the Standard monopolists, which is well known to all students of the country's most acute economic problem.

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