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Methods of the Trusts Menace to All Property

Recent developments in Russia show how insecure property may become under an absolute form of government. Where no limit to the power of a ruler or a ruling class is established the tendency is inevitably toward public disorder, conspiracy, and in the end, revolution.

No country that is constantly menaced by revolution can be prosperous, because economical and political instability destroy confidence. At times the industries in such a land may enjoy a brief prosperity while the people remain passive, but long-term investments will, as a general rule, be considered unsafe. Ultimately the business interests come to understand that the government offers insufficient protection to both life and property. This is the most dangerous crisis in the history of any government, for then revolution finds numerous and ardent supporters among the moneyed class. Such a crisis seems to be approaching in Russia. The inability of the government to check disorder, to prevent the looting and burning of property, must convince the business interests that peace and prosperity are impossible without a change in the form of government. If, as now appears likely, the business interests join with the laboring classes in not only demanding, but in fighting for, a more liberal form of government, the autocracy of the Romanoffs will be doomed.

It is apparent that ultimately absolute rule leads to mob rule and both are a menace to life and property. Those countries are the most prosperous where human rights are the most respected, where privileged classes do not rob the people, and where the laboring classes do not bear an unjust share of the taxation. Germany, France and the United States are notable examples of nations that offer adequate protection to life and property. In all these countries the people enjoy a large measure of self-government.

In our own country the dangers that menace popular rule are an equal menace to property, and if the business interests of the country understood this as they should they would have a selfish

motive in destroying those inequalities which are producing a privileged class of multi-millionaires. Graft, corruption, discrimination by tariff or freight rates, all tend to enrage the people. In the end the result must be public insecurity. Confidence is being weakened not only by speculation and by bank failures resulting from dishonesty, but by an economic condition which has produced general unrest and dissatisfaction.

In a constitutional republic, where the people govern themselves and where the right of the majority to rule is recognized, the danger of revolution is remote. But the real danger in the United States is the conviction spreading among the people that they are governed by the railways and trusts, that in the contest between men and money the victory too often is on the side of money. Herein lie the seeds of the revolutionary spirit and of general insecurity. This unrest and insecurity cannot but injure business and unless cordial relations are restored between the laboring classes and the business interests hard times must result. Those who have flattered themselves that money always wins must not forget that money is sometimes on the side of the people.

It is not at all improbable that the trusts will find themselves isolated in the next presidential campaign and if the small business men and the laboring classes combine the trusts will suffer defeat. In Philadelphia the laboring classes and the business interests formed a coalition against a corrupt ring and a great corporation. The contest was short and decisive. The people won.

It is true that the business men are usually the most deceived class in any country. It requires harsh experience to convince them that their interests are not identical with the interests of the money power, but in times of acute public stress they discover that they can only obtain security for their property by aiding to restore general contentment, confidence and prosperity, and that does not mean the contentment, confidence and prosperity of any privileged class, but of the whole people.

Laws Must be Enforced Against Defiant Offenders

The Nebraska Grain Dealers' association, which has been using well-recognized trust methods to destroy competition in the grain business of this state, has been condemned more by the testimony that was not given at the Havelock hearing than by the testimony that was. When prominent members of the association refused to answer every pertinent question on the ground that an answer might incriminate them, the public needed no further evidence of guilt.

The ruling passion of the association was strikingly illustrated by William E. Morely. After demanding and receiving witness fees and mileage he refused to testify on the ground that he was one of the men being sued; and for the further reason that any answers he might give, might tend to incriminate him. That was, indeed, "easy money," and the kind of money the members of the association are striving to obtain at the expense of Nebraska farmers.

The Loomis anti-combination law, under which the Worrall suit is brought, is very sweeping. This law was passed in 1897. It was an act to prohibit combinations among grain dealers or any

understanding, contract or agreement that would restrict competition in the buying or selling of grain.

Section 11,513 makes it unlawful for any person, partnership, association or corporation engaged in the business of grain dealing, etc., to enter into any agreement or combination that will prevent the fullest competition in the sale or purchase of grain; to prevent competition by requiring any members of an association to refrain from dealing with shippers or dealers in grain who are not members of the association; or to require its members not to sell or consign to or purchase of such persons as transact business with other persons and companies which refuse to deal through the association or any of its members. Boycotting dealers who are outside an association or combination of this character is also prohibited under the same section. The property of the offending person or corporation is made liable for the full amount of the damages.

With such a law on the statute books it is a matter of astonishment that the grain dealers of the state should have dared to form an association whose object, according to testimony already adduced, is to perform those acts which are specifically prohibited by the law. Their hardihood can only be accounted for on the theory that they had no fear the law would be enforced.

Indeed, this is the theory on which all lawbreakers proceed. They hope first of all that their crime will not be discovered, but they plan either to destroy or circumvent the law if the crime is