

a better atmosphere in politics. For politics have been ventilated for the first time in several years by the exercise of free discussion, free assemblage and the secret ballot. No one can say that the assumption of democratic traditions has produced miracles of constructive programs. But no one can deny that there is more vitality in American citizenship than there was six months ago. The arch of the repression is probably broken, and the restoration of the opportunities of free government on its way.

## A Case of News Suppressed

**D**OES the great advertiser, with his power of controlling income, ever affect the news columns of the American press? Newspaper owners resent that charge. They ask for proof.

Not often is proof indisputable. The link between the advertiser and news editor is seldom clear. The great merchant does not tell the editor what he ought to think of foreign policy. Probably not once in a thousand times does he suggest that this or that interpretation be put upon rising prices or a steel strike. Nevertheless, there remains a norm by which most editors steer. There are exceptions—but most newspaper proprietors, we believe, are profoundly influenced by a desire not to acquire in the eyes of their large advertisers a reputation of being “unsafe” or “radical”—such a reputation as might be earned by displaying any really unorthodox news or opinions in such matters as Russia and rebel strikes and labor’s guiltlessness of the major share in rising prices. Not active coercion, but unwillingness to run a risk considered unnecessary is the persuasive factor.

So runs the case ordinarily made by those who believe that in the field of American journalism he who pays the piper calls the tune. It is an effective case only when someone fits together a long series of isolated dispatches and sets them beside a history no longer in dispute. That sort of study is not often made. What happens, more often, is this:

There comes a suddenly illuminating incident which may involve only a narrow set of circumstances, but which must, in the eyes of many people, suggest implications in the whole field under editorial discretion. Such an incident, we think, occurred last week in Philadelphia.

On Tuesday, May 18th, according to a brief dispatch to the New York Times, United States Commissioner Manley issued warrants for the arrest of members of the firm of Gimbel Brothers, operators of the large department store of that name, charging them with violation of the Lever

act. The warrants called for the arrest of Jacob Gimbel, president; Ellis Gimbel, vice-president; Egbert Lough, secretary; Maurice Guggenheim, treasurer; and E. L. Symser, manager of the food department. Gimbel Brothers had charged unreasonable prices for sausage, tea and cocoa—read the affidavit.

Now the subject of profiteering and the high cost of living, is a “live” newspaper topic, if at all; Gimbel Brothers is a firm with which most of Philadelphia trades; and yet—

In the columns of the Philadelphia Public Ledger and the Philadelphia North American of the morning after Commissioner Manley issued his warrant (that is the morning of May 19th) we find no mention of the fact that such a warrant ever had been issued.

The Philadelphia papers are interested in profiteering. In the North American, on the morning of the 13th, you will read that warrants were sworn out, in New York, for the arrest of obscure parties by the name of Max Muller and John McElroy and Mrs. Franzie de Silva. The Public Ledger has published news of a similar sort.

These Philadelphia papers were interested enough in profiteering to give their readers news of warrants issued, even when the offender was an obscure party, far from Philadelphia.

They were not interested in telling their reader that a federal warrant had been served upon the great firm of Gimbel Brothers, right in the heart of their own city.

What is the answer?

## Playing with Federal Controls

**I**T is becoming daily more apparent that the government is meeting an unprecedented railway crisis with hopelessly inadequate weapons.

The condition of transportation paralysis today is fully as bad as it was in the fall and winter of 1917. Loaded freight cars are ranged in solid blocks in the gateways and terminals, unable to move; empties are standing idle on side-tracks; there are not enough cars to go around, and the warehouses are full to bursting with goods awaiting shipment. Railway employees are deserting for other more lucrative employments. The roads are under-equipped, under-manned, and financially starved. The result is that factories are laying off their men, that the distribution of the necessities of life is gravely impeded, and that a terrific strain is being put upon the whole banking and credit structure of the country.

Moreover, it is quite apparent that if left

their own devices the railways will accomplish nothing toward remedying the situation. They are not even attempting to formulate a labor policy which will stop the wholesale desertion of railway employees and restore the impaired morale and efficiency of railway labor. All responsibility for such a policy has been shifted to the government. As to railway finance, the greater part of the railways of the country are admittedly helpless. So far as the operating problem is concerned, the experience of the war shows conclusively that self-help is futile. Traffic officials are loyal first of all to their own corporate employees, and in a system of competitive railroading that loyalty is as often as not in direct conflict with national traffic efficiency. Even under the emotional patriotism of the first few months of the war the railway officials proved incapable of subordinating their competitive impulses and suspicions to a cooperative system of car service. Much less can we expect them to do so today, when the war harness has been shaken off.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the railway executives who three months ago were proclaiming the superior efficiency of unhampered private operation should today be clamoring at the doors of the Interstate Commerce Commission for a restoration of war control, for priority lists, and for compulsory pooling of rolling stock. The press has taken the cue, and already we have dramatic pen-pictures of Commissioner Aitcheson, like a commanding general mobilizing the rolling stock of the country and by heroic measures bringing order out of chaos.

The step was no doubt a wise one, and it may be assumed that the Commission is making the best use of the powers and personnel under its control. Yet when compared with the magnitude and difficulty of the task their efforts approach the grotesque. To operate a competitive railway system on a basis of national efficiency is no easy task. It is not enough to sit at a desk in Washington and mulish orders and resolutions. The main problem is the administrative one. It may be necessary, for instance, to divert a large block of freight cars from one line to another competing line. To give order for such a diversion is easy enough, but to carry it out through the medium of a reluctant and recalcitrant traffic manager is a very different matter. Mr. McAdoo and Mr. Hines found the only solution of the problem in a complete nationalization of the operating personnel. If a traffic manager disobeyed orders he could be fired. A large, well organized department manned by trained railway men, with a staff in Washington and branch organizations throughout the country was necessary to make federal control of railway operation a reality. Today this organization is destroyed, its per-

sonnel dispersed throughout the country, its powers abrogated by the Esch-Cummins law. Instead we have an unwieldy and overburdened deliberative body, containing not a single trained railway executive, without a trace of an operating staff, with powers circumscribed by law and no means of enforcement except the slow and uncertain process of litigation. Instead of relying, as could Mr. Hines, on a network of subordinate railway officials throughout the United States, trained railway operators who could take responsibility and carry out orders, the Interstate Commerce Commission must rely both for information and execution of orders upon interested parties over whom they have no executive control. Their only disinterested source of information seems to be their widely heralded corps of a hundred boiler inspectors and safety appliance experts who were mobilized for the occasion. And their only means of enforcement are district attorneys and courts.

It must be apparent that with such an instrument but little can be accomplished. Without adequate powers and personnel, the Interstate Commerce Commission is merely playing with federal control. Its sonorous pronouncements and manifestoes signify nothing.

There is only one way out of this deadlock of paralysis and impotence. Real federal control must be restored, control by administrators rather than deliberators, executive control rather than quasi-judicial control. It is not too late to repair the wellnigh fatal error which Congress made when it disregarded the warning of the Railroad Administration and of the Brotherhoods and scrapped the machinery of federal control at precisely the time when the need for it was the greatest. Mr. Hines should again be conscripted and his powers restored.

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# Two Leading Democratic Candidates

## I. McAdoo

**I**F the Republicans do not nominate a man who can interest the people now voting for Johnson, and if the Democrats nominate McAdoo, it will be a hot summer for the Republican candidate; and about September fifteenth Mr. Will Hays will begin to sleep badly. For McAdoo is a little like Lloyd George. He knows not only what the owners of votes are thinking now, but what they will be excited about a few weeks from now. He has the political sense: he mobilized his war psychology before most people, and he demobilized it before the rest. He has the gift, which Roosevelt had and Wood lacks, of feeling with, but just ahead, of the mass of the voters, in short the gift of popular sympathy. He is possessed by what he feels, and men possessed in politics are infectious. Of all candidates he has incomparably the greatest sensibility to the prevailing winds of public opinion. Johnson, who is no mean politician himself, is by comparison immovable because more elemental; Wood is torpid and Lowden contracted and Hoover detached and deductive, but McAdoo is swift to note and swift to tack.

He picks his course quickly, moves fast upon it, and with great audacity. It may not be quite true, as one interviewer claims, that Secretary McAdoo made eight or nine important decisions one day going down in the elevator of a building in Washington, but it is somewhat in the direction of the truth. He is an agile man. He does not hesitate or brood or procrastinate or reflect at length. Instinctively he prefers the bold and the decisive to the prudent and tepid course, for he is a statesman grafted upon a promoter. The man described as the entrepreneur in the economic textbooks is, I think, the basic McAdoo, the kind of man who really likes enterprise more than profit, organizes ideas, and anticipates wants. That kind of man is first "sold" himself to an idea and then "sells" others. What he is determined to do he is passionately determined to do, once he falls into his stride. He said in 1915, when addressing the Chamber of Commerce of the United States at Washington in advocacy of the Shipping Bill:

Since I have come to Washington there is one word in the English language with which I have become more familiar than any other, because it is the one word that is used most. I say that advisedly. I use it myself too much, and every time I use it I get ashamed of myself. You can talk to any man about anything and the first thing he says is, "I am afraid of so-and-so and so-and-

so." He is afraid of something. Where is the courage of the American nation? Where is that virile power that has made this American nation great? Has it disappeared? I do not believe it. We are not afraid of anything, my friends, so long as we walk the path of rectitude and justice as a nation, and we intend to do that; and if this shipping bill passes all this talk about getting into international difficulties is mere twaddle.

There are, I imagine, things of which McAdoo is afraid but they are not the usual spooks which terrify public officials. He is not afraid of responsibility, nor of dinner table gossip, nor of Congressional investigation, nor of private life, nor of the editorial writers, nor of experiment. Above all he is not afraid of words. He is remarkably free of the clatter made by rusty old tin can words like reactionary, radical, socialistic.

I believe there is no intelligent banker, business man, or citizen of this country, who understands the Federal Reserve system and its workings, who does not thank God for the great law which created that system, whether it be socialistic or whether it puts the government into the banking business or not. (October 13, 1915, before the Chamber of Commerce of Indianapolis.)

He had fought for that system and had helped to make it, he was for it, he was "sold," and he was prepared to thank God for it, and make a monkey of any one from Senator Root down who had opposed it. When McAdoo is under way he treats them rough, as almost any Republican candidate would quickly discover. He will not stand on ceremony. If he thinks miners are underpaid, if he knows that mine operators are overpaid, if he sees the government muddling, he will not hesitate to call the public's attention to the statistics of profit which exist for public use in Senate document N 259, 65th Congress, 2nd Session.

In that famous instance he did no more than quote figures which over a year and a quarter have been public property, but he will not play an insider's game as insiders play it. He has not the normal reticence and inhibitions of finance and politics. By experience as well as temperament he is an outsider who knows the inside wires. He is disposed at critical moments to tell more than is usually told, even at the risk of inconveniencing a few people and of scandalizing many. McAdoo is distinctly not a safe person in the ordinary use of the word. He is less safe than most devout progressives because he is so clever and so sophisticated. He has a devilish knowledge of the tender spots, and a willingness to touch them occasionally.