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EDITORIAL

TWO CONUNDRUMS, NAY, THREE.

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THE December *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Labor Bureau* comes out with a suggestive series of facts. The minimum wages necessary, according to Prof. Small, for proper living, \$1,000 a year, turns out to be far above the figure received by the large majority of the wage earners of the State. The detailed figures show that about \$12 a week is the earnings of employes in manufacturing industries, while the earnings of employes in mercantile establishments drops even lower, down to \$10.30 a week—and this in the State which Senator Lodge proudly pronounced “prosperous” during the child-labor debate in the Senate.

This series of facts grow in suggestiveness when coupled with another set or series:

First. *Bradstreet's* states, December 14, 1906, that the average cost of living has, since 1896, INCREASED 55 per cent;

Second. J.J. Hill, an unquestionable railroad authority, declares that a train gang on his lines “handles more than seven times as many ton miles of freight as do the train gangs on English, French and German railroads”;

Third. In a public address Secretary Wilson of the Department of Agriculture said “one American farm hand produces more rice than 400 Chinamen.” It has been computed that Chinese wages being 10 to 12 cents a day, if the rice workers of this country were paid at the same rate for results produced by their work, their wages would be \$44 to \$48 a day instead of the \$1.50 which they receive.

All these facts put together suggest two conundrums:

First. It being a favorite capitalist expression that “the rich are not getting richer and the poor poorer, but the whole people is improving in wealth”—how long will it take the Working Class, under the above conditions, to reach the Rockefeller point of wealth and take a rest?

Second. Seeing that the above quoted conditions spurn the theory of popular progress in wealth, but points to popular intensification of pinching poverty—How long will it take China to imitate New Zealand by seeking to exclude the product of the “pauper labor of America,” and go further and imitate the United States of to-day in shutting doors in the face of American “pauper labor” itself?

There is a third conundrum suggested by the above conditions plus the spasm that griped the intestines of the mind of Secretary of the Treasury Shaw when, at a recent banquet, he exclaimed: “God save this country from its prosperity!” The third conundrum is—How long will it take the Working Class of America to realize that the safety of the country depends upon them, and, realizing the fact, organize themselves in such manner and proceed in such wise as to render the “prosperity” of the Nation a blessing instead of the curse that is to-day, and the alarm that it awakens?

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