

TRUSTS AND CORPORATIONS.

"The federal government in Washington proposes to establish a fertilizer trust and is bringing strong pressure to bear on those fertilizer manufacturers, which hesitate to join, to force them into the trust".

If such a news item appeared, it would generally be considered as a hoax, but if found true, what a howl there would arise! At the same time, the announcement has just been made that the German government proposes to establish a trade monopoly of nitrogen products: nitrogen minerals (salt peter), synthetic nitrogen products (lime salt peter, cyanamide, ammonia), manure and fertilizers, the arrangement to last until 1922, with renewal thereafter.

When towards the end of last century individualistic production broke down by the disastrous effects of unbridled competition, in the industrial corporation a more efficient tool of production was recognized, and the rapid growth of corporations, and groups of corporations tending towards monopolies or trusts, followed. But the vast power of the industrial and transportation corporations, in the absence of any effective national control, led to frequent abuses: inefficiency and waste, where efficiency and economy should rule, stock watering and wrecking of corporations for financial

profit; as we had altogether too many instances, until finally the present wide-spread opposition against the corporation resulted, and the government started to break up and destroy industries' most efficient tool, instead of curbing the abuses resulting from the lack of national responsibility.

When the same corporate development of the industry took place in Germany, a powerful centralized government guarded the nation against the abuse of corporate power, and while favoring and encouraging the corporation as the necessary step towards higher productive efficiency, stood as arbiter between the corporations and the people's interests, and as the result, the antagonism against corporations never arose, but the corporations grew unchecked, and combined to trusts or monopolies (cartels). Instead of legislating against trusts, as we do, the German government encouraged and assisted in their formation. So the potash syndicate was brought about by the action of the government, and now the nitrogen products ^{are a} monopoly.

The result was an industrial efficiency beyond anything ever dreamt before, threatening and defeating the supremacy of the former industrial nations, and as again illustrated in the present war. . . . Whatever may be our opinion on the causes and the moral issues, the fact is that

after a year's war against the entire world, cut off from almost all commerce by the blockade, in spite of the limitation of its narrow climatic range, Germany is able to take care of itself far better than the other nations, has not only kept its enemies out of its own territory, but occupies many thousands of square miles of hostile country, and the hopelessness of defeating Germany is best illustrated by the war reports of the Allies, which celebrate as great victories, when they are able to stop or repel German attacks.

In the meantime, we, through our national government, fight and try to destroy industrial corporations, that is, industrial efficiency, break up corporations and trusts and attempt to turn the times back to the past age of individualistic production, while our corporations very largely are still maintaining the attitude of persecuted innocence, and blame everybody else for the situation except their own wrong doings, and the dead-lock is complete. Shall we wait until the war is over, and our industries, disorganized and warring with each other and with the national government, have to meet Germany's re-organized national industrial machine, more perfect in its organization than its military machine, or is it not about time that we

realize the situation, understand that it is national suicide to destroy the corporations and their cooperation in the trusts, and encourage and assist national industrial organization, just as Germany has done and is doing, while at the same time destroying the ability of the corporations to abuse their power to do harm?

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