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EDITORIAL

THE GREAT TRUST.

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THE National Salt Trust has been hailed as the first of the great international trusts, but it is really only a subsidiary trust to a number of others which are controlled by practically the same persons. Rockefeller, while not the head of it, is one of the leading spirits, and that means that the new trust has behind it the millions of the Standard Oil, and the other industries in which Rockefeller figures. Morgan, the Goulds, etc., have also an interest in it, and the other leading stockholders are drawn from the richest concerns in the country. It is easy, for this reason, to see that the National Salt Trust was floated to protect and extend the operations of many other trusts. It has control of practically the whole salt output of the world, and what it does not now control is either worthless, or held for future operations.

Through the control of the salt industry, it is easy to take other industries in hand. The hide and leather, the canned and pickled meats, etc., are entirely dependent upon it, and as these industries are already well centralized, it will be but a short step to add them to the salt trust. Even in prepared foods, a business that has grown to gigantic dimensions, there is a bond of unity, and as the whole tendency of modern industry is to draw the bonds closer, it will be but a little while before there is an amalgamation that will unite practically all the articles that are used daily.

This new phase which trustification has assumed touches upon the very thing that the opponents of the trust said could not be handled. It sweeps into a gigantic whole those branches of manufacture that seemed impossible to unite. It takes the whole field of the necessities of life, and it paves the way for a trust that will make all the other trusts seem but infants.

There are at present more members of the middle class dependent upon trade in food stuffs than in any other line. It was the last refuge of the middle class. Those who succeeded at all thought themselves safe, and they looked upon the concentration that went on in steel, railroads, lumber, etc., as something with which

they had no concern. Their business was based upon commodities drawn from such divergent sources that any attempt to corner them seemed chimerical. It was just as chimerical twenty years ago to believe that the steel industry could be centred in the hands of a few. Improved machinery dispelled that idea. To-day, the results of improved machinery are felt in other branches of business. Those who controlled the machinery have accumulated such an excess of wealth that they can do for the scattered industries that supply the chief items of every-day consumption what the men in those industries could not do for them. But this very fact tends to eliminate more and more members of the middle class, because the giant capitalist does not trustify the smaller industries for the benefit of those engaged in them, but for his own.

Thus the organization of the Salt Trust is of vastly greater significance than the organization of the billion dollar steel trust. In the latter there were comparatively few concerned before the reconstruction took place. There are many more in the former, and the ramifications of the business include practically every department that has been running on the basis that the middle class looks upon as “independent.”

The last act of the great drama of trustification and concentration is being played. The last refuge of the middle class has been stormed. Nothing remains now but for the class-conscious Socialist Labor Party to take up the work for which the capitalist class is criminally incompetent—that of completing the trust, organizing it for the benefit of all the producers, and making it the collective property of the whole people.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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