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EDITORIAL

A PAUPERS' NATION.

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WHETHER out of pure deviltry or what the New York *Sun* for several days kept standing at the head of its editorial column, and without comment, a statement to the effect that the two Treasury experts called in by Mr. Underwood's committee made independent estimates of the number of citizens who would pay an income tax on the basis of a \$5,000 exemption, and that 412,360 was the higher, while 282,620 was the lower estimate. The *Sun's* statement correctly adds that the number of the taxed will be increased somewhat on the basis of a \$4,000 exemption; and closes with the figures for the population of the United States—"over 95,000,000," and the figures of the popular vote for President last year—"over 15,000,000."

All the figures may be accepted as a substantially accurate. What's the conclusion?

The first conclusion is that the United States, despite "our phenomenal prosperity" is a paupers' Nation.

If barely 500,000 of our 95,000,000 population will be taxable on the basis of a \$4,000 exemption, how many must not fall below the \$4,000 line of income!

Roughly figured the number of our population of {at} least 10 years of age engaged in gainful occupations is not less than 30,500,000. If of these barely 500,000 have a \$4,000 income there are 30,000,000 whose income does not exceed \$4,000.

But the figures for that vast mass and large majority of 30,000,000 do not of themselves convey an idea of the condition of that mass. As a matter of course all do not enjoy a \$4,000 income. Even if they did the disproportion between the 30,000,000 with only a \$4,000 income, and the barely 500,000 with an income above \$4,000 is stunning. When, however, the fact is considered that the average earnings

of the proletarian mass falls below \$600, then the complexion of that 30,000,000 becomes graver—a graveness that is accentuated by the bills that are being passed to support widows and dependent mothers, besides the too-numerous-to-need-mention other evidences of deeper poverty, poverty many fathoms deeper than a \$600 income itself denotes.

Nor yet do such considerations sufficiently set forth the complexion of the 30,000,000 mass. Color and magnitude depend greatly upon contrast. The complexion of the 30,000,000 mass of population below the \$4,000 line is only imperfectly got from the circumstance that it is below the \$4,000 income line. Above that line stands a plutocracy with millions of income. The incomes, above the \$4,000, certainly average much nearer to a \$100,000 than do the incomes below \$4,000 average above a \$600 mark.

Is the *Sun's* statement meant for a goad to the forces that are back of the income tax?

Is the statement meant to warn the capitalist mouthpieces of the income tax that their proportion will uncover, in exact figures, conditions that the masses have been vaguely feeling, and which, being accurately known, will cause the growing mass-discontent to assume the proportions and character of a deluging tidal wave?

Is the *Sun's* closing statement concerning our electorate meant for a pointer of what may be expected from an, at the least, 10,000,000 majority of absolute and relatively pauper ballots?

Whatever the *Sun's* purpose—whether diabolic, or otherwise,—the facts and figures which it brings in juxtaposition flashlight the United States a paupers' Nation. . . . a paupers' Nation star-gazing on top of a volcano.

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