

# Ohio's Big Stick for the Trusts

## The Law that is Making her Oilmen, Icemen, Coalmen, Harvestermen and Even the Laundrymen Behave Themselves



Attorney General Wade H. Ellis, Who is Backing Some of the Prosecutions.

Chase Stewart, Real Father of the Ohio Anti-Trust Law.

E. T. Humes, Prosecuting Attorney of Delaware, O., Who Brought the First Prosecution.

**I**N NEW YORK the State has investigated the insurance companies; in Chicago and Washington is after trusts of many sorts and many magnitudes; but it has remained for the Commonwealth of Ohio to get right down to earth and unlimber its big sticks against illegal combinations of trade with immediate designs upon the poor man's pocketbook.

There, men who combined to increase the price and diminish the size of the sick child's piece of ice have been fined or sent to jail. There, too, the coalman, oilman, the harvest-machine man, and even the laundryman, have been called before the bar to explain why they have conspired to raise prices of necessities.

The Vacuum Oil Company, a child of the Standard Oil, has been forced out of business; the Standard Oil is under the ban, with John D. Rockefeller himself cited to appear before the courts in September. Dozens of representatives of the Bridge Trust have been indicted, and the end is not yet. Indeed, the fight appears scarcely to have begun.

And all through a law—the Valentine-Stewart Anti-Trust law—which, although on the statute books for eight years, has not been made seriously operative until within the last twelve months or so. Since then it has been busy almost every day.

Under this law there is no question as to the meaning of the word "trust" in Ohio, or as to when the law is being violated. Each point is defined beyond the shadow of a doubt.

**T**HE institution at Findlay, Ohio, of criminal proceedings against John D. Rockefeller, head of the Standard Oil Company, and his announcement that he would defend himself, have focused the attention of the whole country on the Valentine-Stewart Anti-Trust law.

Attention was attracted to the law so widely in this case, not because it had not been at work before, but because the game it sought to capture was so big. The violators of the statute in Ohio have been uncomfortably aware of its presence for quite a time.

be reckoned with to a fine degree in the administration of justice. At the time the law was passed, the prophesies were many that it would prove another dead letter. For a while the predictions were good. With the revival of the Roosevelt spirit, indictments began to fall in showers in several counties of the State.

Under the Valentine-Stewart act, the first prosecution was begun in 1900, five years after it became a law. This was really a test case. Early in that year a petition signed by several hundred working men of Delaware county was presented to Prosecutor E. T. Humes, of Delaware county, requesting him to make an investigation into the Delaware Coal Exchange, composed of eight of the leading coal dealers of that city. A copy of the constitution and by-laws of the exchange was placed into the hands of the Prosecutor, showing that the purpose of the organization was in direct violation of the criminal sections of the law.

Immediately the charges were laid before the Grand Jury. On January 14, 1901, indictments were returned against eight dealers, all members of the Delaware Coal Exchange.

At this hearing, the judgment of the Court of Common Pleas was reversed, and the criminal section of the Valentine act held unconstitutional.

Convinced that the opinion of the Circuit Court was wrong, Prosecutor Humes appealed to the County Commissioners of Delaware county for permission to take the case to the Supreme Court of Ohio for final adjudication. The Commissioners, however, refused to stand the expense.

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Indeed, it was not long before the courts were busy in many places.

But the ice dealers of Toledo are not alone in their woes. In Columbus numerous individuals of that enterprising fraternity have been indicted for being members of an association similar to the one proved to exist in their sister city.

Not content with a legitimate profit, the icemen of Cincinnati have also fallen into the clutches of the Valentine-Stewart Anti-Trust law. There the ice dealers indicted number fifteen. The individuals or firms are: The Ice Company, The Ice Dealers Association, and the Ice Dealers' Association.

Each of the individuals or firms indicted has given bond in the sum of \$500 for appearance at court.

The icemen are not suffering in solitude in Cincinnati. The laundrymen are keeping them company. Not long ago the price of washing was increased arbitrarily. Here was another direct grab at the public's pocketbook.

### Things That Are Interesting to Know

**G**lasgow, as a city, owns property worth \$70,000,000, and 6000 acres of parks.

length of half an inch, and then its life is from 100 to 150 days. By means of a camera the wink of an eyelid has been measured, and it was found that twenty winks can be made in 4 seconds.

Several other provisions are made in the measure, including a charge of \$2 per day against a corporation that violates the law after proper notice has been served on it by the Attorney General or a prosecuting attorney.