
EDITORIAL

The Two-Shell Game

FOR LONG, much too long to be funny, it has been assumed that the party in power at Washington has been gambling with the fate of the nation with a standard and regulation deck of fifty-two cards (the joker, we understood, was removed); and the sole object of the game, we further were told, was to produce a deal which would please everyone, including the benign and smiling shill at the end of the table who continues to serve as Postmaster General, Chairman of the National Democratic Committee, and Chairman of the N. Y. State Democratic Committee.

It is difficult, at this date, to understand how it has been possible ever to have deluded so many of the 125,000,000 citizens invited to participate in the play for recovery into believing that it was an honest game of cards, in which fate alone held sway. It is encouraging to report that more and more of the suckers are drifting away from the table, on which no new deal has appeared, but at which a remarkable two shell game is being run.

In the words of the Chief Dealer himself, one of the shells is named Recovery, the other Reform and Reconstruction. Under which does America's fortune lie? For months we have been asked to decide. Unaccustomed to this kind of gambling in the conduct of the affairs of our nation, it is perhaps wholly natural that we have called to be shown so persistently what is hidden under the first shell. Fascinated rubes, over and over again we have requested one more look beneath the shell of recovery. Once we called—surely this time we must be right—and were shown a 59.6 cent dollar. Another time we looked and the demon of Unemployment was there. Urged again we still played, hypnotized by a beaming smile

Shell Game

and a dulcet voice, the same shell. In place of the expected prize of renewed prosperity, we found we had captured a statistician's chart which revealed the United States in eleventh place as an industrial nation and still close to the 1932 bottom of the Depression. Again the spiel and again we looked; this time we are offered some horribly juggled figures which the conservative can only read as proof that by the end of the current fiscal year the national deficit will be approximately \$32,000,000,000, or about twice what it was at the end of the Coolidge era.

Now after each of our chagrining defeats to win happiness and prosperity at this two-shell game, we are lured to a continuance to play with benign assurances that perhaps what we really seek and desire is under the shell of Reform and Reconstruction.

The spiel is wearing a trifle thin. The last count of the house proves this. The dealer exhorts the players with new appeals, which he neglected to use earlier in the game. The profit motive and private initiative are not to be sold at a discount at the cashier's cage. Over the heads of the mob he speaks now to his ancient enemies, the private bankers, who have grown cautious, grown extremely skeptical. "It's a pleasure to do business with you gentlemen."

This attempt for renewed faith in the old shell game is meeting with little success. Far-sightedness and concern for the future of the nation are not virtues possessed alone by the altruistic Brain Trusters. Among the conservative and serious players, who still count in America, the terrible suspicion is beginning to dawn: *there is nothing under the other shell either.*—F. W.