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IMPUBLICITY

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

THE first recourse by way of remedy for the existing impublicity of corporations is that of vigorous private initiative from within, industry by industry, taking up the issue of orderly and adequate publicity as a matter both of duty and of expediency. The street railways, for example, have long since adopted a standard form of accounting, although it seems not to be universally put into effect. A uniform classification of accounts for gas companies has been adopted officially for over twenty states. The influence of the trade associations, for the moment confined to efficiency and production data, might well spill over into the field of finance. Much that is helpful might emanate from the Investment Bankers Association of America. Much has indeed been accomplished. But one runs head-on against a serious obstacle. To a considerable degree within each industry it is a case of all or nothing. The laggard corporation, persistent in secretiveness, lays a heavy penalty upon its progressive rivals all down the line. This does not apply among public utilities, for they are industrial monopolies, more or less. But in the domain of private competitive enterprise it is only the all-powerful factor in the business, conscious of its own worth and importance, — like the Steel Corporation or the General Motors Company, — which can throw reserve to the winds, making a full