

EDITORIAL

THE NEW “HARTFORD CONVENTION.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

HOXIE, an inhabitant of the State of Connecticut, employed on the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad, was injured in Auburn, Mass., while coupling cars on a train running from Worcester to Norwich. Planted upon the act of Congress approved April 22, 1908, Hoxie sued the Railroad Company for damages in the Superior Court at New London. The case traveled up to the Supreme Court of the State, and there it was dismissed by the unanimous opinion of the Judges.

The reason for throwing out the case of Hoxie is not the ordinary one of conveniently finding that the injured plaintiff was guilty of “contributory negligence.” The reason given by the court marks an epoch in—what? It marks an epoch in what may best be termed the devilward course of events. The reason given by the Connecticut Supreme Court is, in plain English, that the act of Congress is unconstitutional.

Nearly a hundred years ago there gathered, in the same State of Connecticut, a number of leading New England folks who agreed in the opinion that their section of the country should secede from the newly organized United States of America. From the town in which these gentlemen met, their gathering was called the Hartford Convention.

Nothing came of the Hartford Convention. But, within a hundred years, the decision of the old convention has been practically enforced by the Supreme Court of the same State. The pronouncing, by a State Court, unconstitutional the act of the supreme legislative body of the land might be called a case of triumphant South California Nollification {Carolina Nullification?}; seeing the performance took place in Connecticut, what else is it but a Hartford Convention carried into execution?

When the full power of the Federal Government is to be used against

workingmen on strike for living conditions, and a Gen. Miles is let loose upon them with Federal infantry, cavalry and artillery to "break the backbone of the strike," then we hear loud declamations of "The Union, one and indivisible." When, however, the Federal Government enacts a law looking to some measure of protection for the wage slaves, then, presto, the strings are pulled, and up-to-date Hartford Conventions strut the stage.

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

Uploaded by Donna Bills, September 2010

socialists@slp.org