

REPORT

GLEANINGS 'LONG THE ROAD. {8}

By DANIEL DE LEON

EN ROUTE TO MILWAUKEE, APRIL 28.—Frequently, in private talks and also in the course of my addresses, I have said the I.W.W., also the S.L.P., should hire a man to do nothing but travel in the Pullmans, and jot down the talk of the capitalists in the smokers. Everywhere these gentry will furnish points to the intelligent reporter; West of Denver the folks turn with greatest frequency upon the I.W.W. The capitalist utterances are simply rich. Of these I have literally scores. Have been trying to work them into these “gleanings.” So many fresh incidents keep on recurring from landing place to landing place that the “folks” have been crowded aside. I had meant this time surely to jot down a batch of them. Again they will have to be crowded out. They will not be wholly suppressed. If not from 'long the road, then from *The People's* office direct they will be published.

* * *

The great Spokane meeting on the 19th, was opened by Wade Parks reading the following letter from Vancouver, B.C.:

“Hands across the line (that capitalistic fiction) to the Boy's of Spokane from the Boy's of the Arm and Hammer in Vancouver, British Columbia. We had the largest Hall in the city packed to the stairway as far as De Leon's voice could reach. Many have regretted the chains of wage slavery were not taken off in time for them to get within the hearing of his voice. Hoping you will have the same success as we had, with fraternal greetings to all, R. Baker, Organizer, S.L.P.”

The greeting was received with lusty rounds of applause.

* * *

Another Spokane gleaning affords a stray-light upon pure and simple political

Socialism. H.L. Hughes is an S.P. man of Spokane. He is the Editor of a local labor paper in partnership with David C. Coates, who does not confine his “work” to offering to boost mining stock for a consideration and denouncing said stock when his “strike” fails, but extends his work, i.e., drops his fish-line into other streams as well. Hughes is an affable and refined gentleman. His friends in the Spokane community are many. In view of his popularity the Spokane S.P. thought {of} setting him up as their candidate for Mayor. On all sides it is admitted no other S.P. man could poll the vote Hughes would center upon himself. Votes, regardless of what they represent, being the S.P. stock in trade, they thought of Hughes. But Hughes would not. The scorpion, it has been observed, carries in his tail the poison that kills him. So with the S.P. pure and simply political scorpion. The very S.P. craving for votes keeps the S.P. man Hughes from heading the flypaper S.P. ticket. It happens this way: The Democratic candidate for Mayor, one Daggett, “a friend of the Unions” (read A.F. of L.) is an intimate of Hughes. The S.P. Hughes’s nomination would take votes away from the capitalist and A.F. of L. Democratic candidate. Accordingly the Socialist Hughes will none of it, and the Spokane S.P. accepts the wisdom thereof. Thus pure and simple political and “neutrality towards Unions” Socialism appears in full “panoply” in Spokane considerably getting out of the way of capitalist and A.F. of L. political aspirations.

* * *

In Spokane also I had the pleasure of meeting the S.L.P. man Chinn, one of the witnesses for the defense at the recent trial of Steve Adams. Chinn’s testimony was important towards establishing Adams’ alibi and confronting the suborned witnesses whom the Federal Mining Company furnished the prosecution.

* * *

Not far from Spokane, in Washington, an incident occurred that should go down in history. The central figure was another S.L.P. man—George Franklin. He had charge of a gang of men engaged in railroad construction. The men’s wages were \$1.25 a day when they started. Within three weeks their wages had gone up to \$2.00. Shortly after the men started work Franklin telephoned to the office of the Superintendent that the men refused to work unless they got a 25 cents “raise.” “Let ’em have it, {”} was the answer, and “make ’em work!” A week later Franklin

telephoned again: "The men want another raise!" "How much?" "25 cents, more a day." "Can't you put 'em off?" "No; they refuse to work unless they get the raise on the spot." {"}— — the — — —; let 'em have it!" The third week the office telephone rang again. Again it was Franklin at the other end. "What's the matter now?" "The men want a raise of wages." "Again?" "They want 25 cents a day more." "What in — is the matter with those — — fellows?" "They say they won't do another stroke of work unless they get 25 cents more." "Can't you jolly them for a week or so?" "Jolly them? Why, they are as set as flint." "What has come over the — — — —?" "They want 25 cents more. They say: 'No raise, no work!'" {"}—The scoundrels! Let 'em have it. I wish they were in —!" A day or so later the Superintendent came down to the place where Franklin's gang was at work. The work had proceeded well, and was well done, nevertheless the Superintendent's hair stood on end at the sight he saw. He happened to come in at the noon hour of rest, and there were the men, like so many birds strung along a telegraph wire, seated along the rails reading. In the hands of each was—A COPY OF THE *WEEKLY PEOPLE!*

Franklin was discharged summarily, "with the contempt, that his conduct deserved." The men, however, kept their \$2 a day. The bailiwick of Franklin was the only spot in the State of Washington where the rise in wages outstripped the rise in the cost of living. Franklin was abreast, if not even ahead of the Japs, of whom the California Labor Report complains they are "merciless towards the employer." Franklin evidently is not an A.F. of L. incubator of the Civic Federation Kindergarten where the wage slave is taught that his highest duty is to promote the interests of the capitalist class.

* * *

The area I have been traversing the last week is rich in information on the "Moyer-Haywood-Pettibone Case." It is clearer and clearer that the real objective was the I.W.W. Capitalism will tolerate the nuisance of an A.F. of L. The Working Class, in its ignorance, as Marx puts it, can give trouble only to capitalism; but as Marx further puts it, capitalism has every reason to dread the Working Class in its intelligence. The A.F. of L. system, which keeps the Working Class disrupted, may have some inevitable annoyances to capitalism; the I.W.W. which organizes the Working Class GOVERNMENT is too dreadful to tolerate—if it can be knocked

down. The kidnapping of three men was expected to be a knock-down blow to the I.W.W., and Haywood was the particular sinner aimed at. The further details I gathered go to show that the capitalists never meant to have the case “tried.” The scheme was to infuriate the people around Boise and Caldwell through slanderous newspaper articles, and have them lynched. That would have saved the “authorities” the necessity of proving their case. In this they were thwarted. They had not counted with their host. The publicity given to the facts in the case scuttled the lynching bell scheme.—Since then the “authorities” have had to take another tack. The indecency has been witnessed in Idaho of special legislation enacted with the “case” in view. For instance, formerly the State had only 5 per cent. of challenges of Jurors. The law has just been changed giving the State double the number of peremptory challenges. The “authorities” now feel they are in a hole. Public sentiment has undergone a radical change. The further indecency of the President who “avers things”—this “doing of things” has become synonymous with brutality and heels-over-headness—who pronounced these victims of capitalism “undesirable citizens,” and who has since repeated the offense instead of retracting it—vicious wrongdoers love to stagger like a drunkard in their own vomit—all that has mightily contributed towards changing public opinion. It is realized that Roosevelt is but making a bid for support of the capitalists for a 3rd term. He has been denounced as “more radical than Bryan;” now he tries to prove that he is more bloodily reactionary than the Emperor of Germany—Roosevelt’s words in his late letter recall the words of the German Emperor just before the elections of 1904 when he denounced the Social Democrats as “unworthy and undesirable subjects” and bade them leave the Fatherland. Roosevelt’s words recall the fact that the people of Germany answered the barbarian by immediately polling over 3,000,000 votes against him. Roosevelt has helped to clarify the atmosphere in the “case.” THERE WILL BE NO CONVICTION. The worst that may hap is a hurry Jury with a majority for acquittal. This will mean the dropping of the case. In the meantime the scheme has changed to a scheme to hang St. John, at least keep him out of the coming W.F. of M. convention so that the Mahoneys, etc., may have a free hand.

* * *

In Montana I filled a note book with notes. McMullen—readers of *The People*

know the gentleman; he was one of the two reactionist miners delegates at last year's Chicago convention who sought to compete with Gompers in fakirism by seeking to turn the I.W.W. into an A.F. of L. in disguise; the same gentleman, who, as more recently reported in *The People*, proudly announced at a Butte labor convention, that he did not want the full product of his labor. Well, McMullen has been greatly annoyed at these write-ups. He has been going around "saying," not yet "doing" things. He complained the other day to a workingman in Butte about "the man who is sending these write-ups to *The People*." He was answered: "Behave and you won't be written-up."

* * *

If such a thing be possible, Butte is classic ground, more so than any other city in the land, in which to study the capitalist class as a "moral," a "patriotic," a "religious" pillar of society. Everywhere else in the land, we all know that the worst exploiter of the Italian is an Italian boss, the worst exploiter of the Jew is a Jewish boss, the worst exploiter of the Irish is an Irish boss, etc., etc., up or down to the American boss. Butte, however, furnishes the neatest illustration of this truth I yet ran across. Marcus Daily, an ex-Irishman, was a great figure in Butte's ruling class. He was a mine owner. How did he work the thing? He imported a gang of laborers from County Cork, and another gang from County Waterford, Ireland. Over each gang he set a "boss," foreman, of the same county—and then proceeded to work them. As he pulled the mines, the County Cork boss of the County Cork gang would one day address his men saying: "Look at this tally made by the County Waterford gang. If we don't do better than we have been doing, the County Waterford gang will drive us out." Thereupon the County Cork gang would put on more steam, and beat the County Waterford tally. Then it was the turn of the County Waterford "boss" to address his County Waterford gang. He would say to them: "Look at this tally made by the County Cork gang. If we don't do better than we have been doing, the County Cork gang will drive us out." Thereupon the County Waterford gang would put on more steam, and beat the County Cork tally. Upon that it again was the turn of the County Cork gang, whereupon they would once more beat the County Waterford gang's tally, who in turn was made to beat the County Cork gang's tally until the two gangs of Irish working {men} were tearing up

the earth and dying of exhaustion—for Marcus Daily. Nor does the picture end there. Marcus died. Whereupon Bishop Brodell of the diocese pronounced the worthy's funeral oration, holding him up as a bright example for the Catholic youth to emulate! This story was told me by an Irishman who saw the thing himself, and also informed me that the Irish are getting “onto” the game.

* * *

Oh, I almost forgot! Spokane had a pure and simple political S.P.-ite-A.F. of L. loss while I was in that city—at any rate he lay so low that he was thought to have left town. This worthy's style of fighting the principles advocated by the I.W.W. and the S.L.P. is of the approved “un-fanatical” S.P.-ite-A.F. of L. pattern of leaving untouched principles they can not repute and blackguardize me. But his style of personal blackguardism was unique. While his eastern pals describe me variously as a Bismarck spy, or a Jew who denies he is one, or a non-Jew who claims to be one—all of which is remarkably germane to the subject—the Spokaneite went around saying: “I know De Leon well, heard him speak, know all about him, he is a heavy-browed, thick-lipped South American NIGGER—just a NIGGER, nothing else!” Evidently the man had seen me, because the moment he knew I was due in Spokane he vanished. These personal abuses of a person are doubly stupid—they imagine, like Mrs. Malaprop, they can keep back the inrushing tide of the Revolution with their mops of personal slander; and they fail to realize they only aid the Revolution; their slanders are bound to be discovered as such, and then the tide rolls in all the stronger. That this is a fact I have constant confirmation of. Not a place but furnishes fresh proof. The last cities I was in—Spokane, Butte, Minneapolis and St. Paul—took their places with the rest.

Daniel De Leon.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded August 2009

slpns@slp.org