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EDITORIAL

## WHAT THE MATTER IS WITH CARNEGIE.

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**A**NDREW CARNEGIE recently spoke at the Conference of Governors, recently held at the White House. Why should not he? Though not a Governor himself, is he not a maker and ruler of Governors? With a knowledge of the fact he attended the conference; in recognition of the fact, he was given the floor. He spoke to the point, and true to the Italian proverb according to which the tongue touches the tooth that aches.

Carnegie's address was upon the urgent necessity of conserving the iron and coal fields of the land. He adduced long lists of figures to bear out his point that, if something is not done, and done p.d.q., the iron and coal will be exhausted within two centuries. Strange is the sight of a capitalist who looks two centuries ahead. One and all they are vandals. They think of the present only. "Beat money out of anything, though the land be turned barren, the forests consumed, the rivers dried up—beat money out of what you can now lay hands on. It will last your time"—that is the motto. There is no capitalist but in him is the soul of Louis XV., who, seeing France going to the dogs, shrugged his shoulders and said, "After me, let the deluge come!" What, then, is the matter with Carnegie? Is he really an exception to the rule? Has he really a thought for the morrow? Not a bit.

When the New York Central Railroad was still in its formative period, and its branch lines had still to be established in this State, the company struck a highly liberal posture. "All who wish," it declared, "should be given a free opportunity to open new fields with railroads." The company felt quite at ease against competitors, being well entrenched in Albany. Its declaration was intended only to give it a free hand to seize land on which to lay its new tracks. To the tune of its declaration it caused laws to be passed at Albany under which "anyone" who got out a charter to lay out railroads could appropriate the land he needed, and then settle at leisure

with the farmers whose territory was trespassed upon, and whose land was forcibly confiscated. That part of the history of the State of New York is written in blood, and it is marked with bribery, the latest publicly known instance, that reached the point of a scandal, being that of the factory inspector Florence Donovan, since passed from sight in disgrace. So soon, however, as the New York Central's extension lines were perfected, the company struck a new posture. The old law was repealed, piracy in seizing land for railroads was pronounced wicked—henceforth. The first move was intended to let down the bars, the second move was intended to shut off future competitors, or to raise the bars back again—in both instances in the interest of the company.

Carnegie, now straining for the “protection” of the coal and iron fields by law, is at the second stage of the New York Central Company. He now holds large tracts in the iron and coalfields. He thinks himself safe. The thing he now needs is something to prevent other capitalists from doing what he has done. Hence his now howling against the “wasting of our coal and iron fields.” Fully aware that his slogan of twelve years ago: “None can get rich by legislation,” was untrue, the distinguished patriot now looks to legislation to raise a Chinese Wall around him so as to keep marauding capitalists from “wasting the country's resources”—and insure the monopoly he now holds.

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

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