

EDITORIAL

## AT THE TABLE OF DIVES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE figures of the national wealth that are being reeled off by the reports to the Congress of the Departments of the Treasury, Agriculture and the Interior look like astronomical tables of the distance of Jupiter and Saturn from the earth, and their velocity through space. The figures are so plentiful and so long that they make the head swim. They cannot be recited in one breath.

Reading these figures, the conclusion would be justified that our people are seated at the most sumptuous banquet table Nature has ever provided with the aid of man. Yet simultaneously with the figures of the national wealth reported by the Departments there come ominous notes.

'Tis not so much the notes of shocking accidents in mines, on railroads and in factories. Accidents might be unavoidable under the best of circumstances. Earthquakes might upset the best laden banquet tables; thunderbolts may scatter the jolliest of feasts and mingle the sighs of despair with the notes of festive music. The notes that come jarring upon the implied melody of the interminable figures of our national wealth are of a different temper. Two of them may answer for the rest.

Rockefeller gives \$1,000,000 to exterminate the hookworm, Crocker gives \$1,500,000 to fight cancer.

To him who has brains with which to think these two “philanthropies” place our longwinded national wealth in sad light. They strike a note the burden of which denies the fabulous wealth reported to be “national,” and denotes it to be private. They throw a flashlight upon the banquet table. They illumine the “guests.” The Nation is not there: Dives<sup>1</sup> only sits at the board, the Nation picks up only the crumbs that Dives chooses to throw at it.

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<sup>1</sup> [“Dives,” meaning rich man. See Gospel of Luke (16:19-31)—*R.B.*]

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