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EDITORIAL

WHERE THE WEALTH LIES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

SOME allowance for the delicacy of diplomatic language must be made in accepting the statement of Prof. Lucien Cayeux, who has come on a mission from the capitalists of France to study the mines in this country, to the effect that the copper and iron mines of Minnesota are the richest in the world.

What Prof. Cayeux would have said, did not courtly indirections and Gallic politeness conspire to restrain him—and what he will yet say at some exclusive banquet before he quits these shores—is that the copper and iron minERS of this country are the richest in the world.

Not the richest in the world in the sense that they enjoy the most wealth; far from it; but richest in the very sense that a mine is said to be rich: they contain a vast store of wealth to be worked out and appropriated by others.

A mine does not extract and profit by wealth contained within itself. It is someone else who comes along, gouges out that wealth, and grows rich by it.

Identical is the case with the miner, the mine worker. He profits not by the wealth, the labor power, stored up within him. Not for himself do those thews exert their strength; or that heart pump its blood. Not for himself does he labor and do all his work, and in the sweat of his brow eat his daily bread. It is here also someone else, the employer, who gouges out that wealth and grows fat upon it; while eventually the mine worker, like a worked-out mine, is discarded, and the employer seeks out a new “claim.”

The fact that the American workingman gets a lower per cent of his product than the workman of any other advanced nation, supplies the key to Prof. Cayeux’s statement, penetrates the veil of his unctuous language. Not in the copper and iron

veins of Minnesota, but in the veins of the copper and iron miners, lies the wealth the master class waxes great upon.

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

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