

EDITORIAL

LIGHTS ON THE LEE SHORE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THROUGH its senior Senator, Knute Nelson, the State of Minnesota has memorialized Congress with a set of resolutions regarding the Standard Oil Company.

The memorial requests Congress to enact a law providing for Government ownership and control of oil-producing industries sufficient to control prices and “break the gigantic and unjust monopoly now existing.”

The reasons for the request are enumerated in a series of whereases which precede the request:—

1. The existence of “a very strong sentiment in favor of suppression of the gigantic monopoly”;
2. The Company’s control of the Nation’s if not the world’s output of oil, giving the Company unrestrained power to dictate the market prices;
3. The Company’s discrimination between State and State;
4. The Company’s products have become a necessity of every profession and vocation;
5. The Company has absorbed nearly all competitors.

Lo a string of lights on a lee shore with a gale blowing.

At a season when the logic of capitalist development is illustrating the soundness of Socialist Science;—at a season when capitalist concentration is demonstrating the Socialist tenet that the economic interests of the working class furnish the key-note for the solution of the increasingly intolerable social ill-being;—at a season when popular illusions, born of primitive American conditions, are dropping thick and fast, like leaves in autumn, blown off by the gale of economic evolution;—at this season, the typically capitalistic industry is singled out, not with whereases to turn

the people's face in the direction from which alone help can come, but with whereas that are meant to turn the face of the people in the direction of the bankrupt Class, the Middle Class, the Class whose every member strained to become a Standard Oil himself, and the falseness of whose economics is illustrated by their Class's ruin.

The "sentiment" that there is, to the extent that there is a healthily organized sentiment, is NOT for the "suppression" of monopoly;—the sentiment is for the demopolizing of monopoly, so-called, by placing it in the workers' hand, saving its achievements and abolishing its evils.

The "evil" is NOT that the monopoly "dictates the market prices";—the evil is the monopoly's power to reduce the share of Labor in the fruit of its toil, and thereby enslaving ever larger numbers.

The Legislature of Minnesota, along with its senior Senator Knute Nelson, is filling the role of wreckers, the miscreants, who, seeing a ship in distress, light fires to mislead the navigator, wreck and despoil him.

But, while meaning evil, both Legislature and senior Senator, are accomplishing good. The lights they burn serve, each and all, to warn the navigator of the Ship of State that where the lights shine is the lee, with its girdle of breakers.

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