

EDITORIAL

## PLUCK-ME STORE DELIRIUM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**I**N the course of three days—May 14, 15 and 19th—Senator Goff, who, together with his colleague, Senator Chilton, is the Senatorial agent of the West Virginia coal mine owners, delivered a lengthy speech. The speech, kept out of the *Congressional Record* in the course of its delivery because of its being left incomplete from day to day, was finally published in full in the *Record* of the 22d.

It is well that it happened this wise. As a connected whole, the speech is appreciated all the better. Its leading feature might have escaped notice had it come out piecemeal. As it now is, the leading feature leaps forth clearly. It is Delirium—one long delirium superinduced by the iniquities of the West Virginia coal regions being uncovered, and the desire on the Senator's part to keep the lid down.

It would be hard to pick out that passage in which the delirious shriek is most piercing. It is a long succession of shrieks, each more piercing than the other. Take this one, for an instance:—

In the endeavor to justify the conduct of the present Governor, Hatfield, together with the conduct of his predecessor, Glasscock, in declaring martial law, and the conduct of the State's Supreme Court of Appeals in sustaining the court-martial sentences, the Senator said:

“I find also in the *Writings of Jefferson*, an authority both sides of this Chamber respect, Volume 5, page 378, the following:

“There are extreme cases where the laws become inadequate even to their own preservation, and when the universal resource is a dictator or martial law.”

So delirious was the Senator that he was not stopped by the fear that his falsified quotation would be detected by his hearers and readers, even without consulting the volume from which he read. The hearers of the Senator, likewise his read-

ers, were all familiar with the facts in West Virginia.

In order to render the quotation true, the facts in West Virginia would have had to be these: “Martial law declared and courts-martial established in regions where all other regular tribunals ceased to operate.” Under such circumstances martial law may be conceived as necessary for the preservation of the laws themselves. But this was not the case in West Virginia. According to the express words of the dissenting Judge Robinson, “the criminal courts of Kanawha county were open, able and with full jurisdiction to try the charges against” the prisoners who were bayoneted before the drum-head courts-martial. With these surrounding circumstances, or facts, the conduct of the Senator amounts to reading into the quotation from Jefferson the facts as they existed in West Virginia; accordingly, the Senator’s conduct amounted to quoting Jefferson as saying that courts-martial may be set up in a region in which the regular courts are and continue to be in full operation, and that while one set of people are sent for trial to the regular courts, another set may be dragged before the courts martial—a shameless falsification of what Jefferson did say, a shameless slander upon Jefferson.

His pluck-me store—he called it “company store”—yields him more revenue than his mine, was the admission made by one of the Pillars of West Virginia society. This Pillar eclipsed even the skinning to which he subjected his wage slaves in the mine, with the plucking that he practised upon them in his “company store.” The fumes of that pluck-me store swag swelled the leading note in the screeches of Senator Goff’s delirium.

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