

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 145.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1907.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

DE-LIGHTED!

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**T**REMENDOUS applause” is reported to have greeted Gov. Hughes at the mass meeting of the Civic Forum in Carnegie Hall when he gave vent to the words: “We want the idea of Trusteeship to grip the consciences of Directors of corporations, convincing them of the disgraceful perfidy of using the opportunities of their trust to make personal fortunes.”

Who, or what, is a “Director of a corporation”?—A Director is a promoted capitalist.

When, or for what reason, is a capitalist promoted?—He is promoted when he has proved himself fit on the lower benches of capitalism.

When, or in what way, does a capitalist prove his fitness on the lower benches?—He proves his fitness by his success.

In what does capitalist “success” consist?—A capitalist’s success consists in his gathering the rich fruits of the principle that “the capitalist is not in business for his health,” and his strict application of the principle.

In what consists the strict application of that principle?—Its strict application of the principle consists in unflinching “cleverness.”

In what does “cleverness” consist?—Cleverness consists in sharpness; it consists in buying cheap and selling dear; it consists in, not merely trying to, but succeeding in overreaching everyone he comes in contact with; it consists in misleading by misrepresentations whereby he may purchase cheap, or sell dear, as the case may be, or both simultaneously. It consists in alertness to scent the troubles of others, and in still prompter alertness in utilizing the opportunity to his personal advantage. It consists in steering as close as possible to the criminal code, and, when the code is run foul of, in the proper use of wire, with press and courts, to be pronounced a Saint. In short, “cleverness” consists in “looking at the world as your

oyster,” and the contents of the oyster as legitimate prey for him to take who can, and him to hold who has the power.

There is as much sense, sociologically, in expecting “conscience,” or absence of “perfidy” in a capitalist who has been promoted to a Directorship, as there would be sense, zoologically, in expecting the qualities of an Agnus Dei in the wolf’s cub that has grown into parental full size.

No wonder the wolves of several stages of growth—the Mr. and Mrs. Henry Clewses, the banker Isaac Seligmans, the Justice Morgan J. O’Briens, the official economist Franklin H. Giddingses, the Bishop Potters, the Rabbi Silvermans, the George Barklay Moffatts, etc., etc.—who filled the audience in front and the stage behind Gov. Hughes, “applauded tremendously.”

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

Uploaded November 2009

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