

Daniel De Leon

## **Editorial: Bribery**

In an interview, published by the *Tribune* of the 15th inst., Chauncey M. Depew is reported to have said that he gave, on an average, ten passes to every member of the Legislature, besides his personal pass. In a letter to the *Evening Post*, better known as the *Pest*, a “Railroad Official” observes, in relation to this statement, that Depew “did not half tell the truth,” and then proceeds to tell a little more as follows:

In every State there are men vested by law with the power to decide what price should be put upon railroad property for purposes of taxation. These men, by a silent, invisible exercise of judgment which cannot be assailed or impeached on any ground, can make taxes high or low for a railroad company. They ask for passes as a matter of right, and then do as they please; but if you refuse to give them what they want, they give the knife a turn after they have driven it into you. A railroad official recently told me he had lately taken an entire board of a certain State, with families and friends, in a special Pullman car to — and back home again free of expense of any kind, with a result of largely diminished taxes to his company in that State. Companies who will not do these things are in poor standing with taxing boards and other officials.

Go on, gentlemen of the railroad fraternity. Tell, tell! Show the simple-minded people who persist in voting for your political lackeys how, in the words of the Socialist platform, “democracy is perverted to the ends of plutocracy.”

*Daniel De Leon*

Passes, by the way, are a very small item of bribery. Won't "Railroad Official" tell us something—were it only a thousandth part of the truth—concerning the more effective and less visible forms of corruption? Would he not, for instance, give us only a few pages of the "operating expenses" account of his company, with a transcript of the vouchers for every item?

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