

EDITORIAL

## WOULD THEY WERE ALL LIKE HIM!

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A** COMPULSORY education bill has just been defeated in the West Virginia Senate. The spokesman of the majority was Senator Snyder. It is not often that capitalism indicts itself as thoroughly as it did in this instance. Indeed, we know of no instance when it did the job so thoroughly.

The following were Senator Snyder's arguments for opposing the bill:

First. To compel children to attend school "would mean the destruction of Wheeling industries;"

Second. The peace officer's duties, so as to enforce the bill, would require him to ascertain the children of school age, and that "would mean an invasion of the home;" and

Third. To compel children to go to school "would work a hardship to many widows supported by their young children."

Senator Snyder's arguments have at least the merit of candor:

—Capitalist statisticians; the labor skates placed in charge of the Labor Bureaux; the trades journals run by the "labor lieutenants" of the capitalist class; professors, pulpiteers and politicians, the whole pack of these have been declaring that child labor is "going, going, gone!" But here comes an authorized spokesman of the capitalist class, and the question coming up in a practical, concrete form, steps forward flat-footedly and says:

"Child-labor is here; it is flourishing; and what is more, without it our Wheeling industry would die. We capitalists need the sap of childhood to exist. The capitalist system can not do without it. The choice is simply—Capitalism and stunted childhood, or robust childhood and no Capitalism."

—Capitalist colleges teach that the sovereign rights of one individual end where the

sovereign rights of another begin; and that the sovereign rights of the Commonwealth are above those of the individual. Upon this as the basis, modern government invades the home with its police so as to trace crime; invades the home with its Health Departments so as to check disease; invades the home with its Fire Departments so as to arrest conflagration. But here comes an authorized spokesman of what considers itself the top-notch of civilization and says:

“Ignorance—the mentally and physically dwarfed manhood of the future citizen, the majority at that of the population—is trivial, is a neglectable quantity in comparison with the crime our Police chase, the small pox our vaccinators are on the warpath against, the fires our firemen fight. These justify the ‘invasion of the home’: the deterioration of the race does not.”

—Even the loins of capitalism have strained the ethical principle that “no man shall profit by his own wrongdoing.” But here comes a spokesman of that very capitalism and declares:

“The widow of a workingman is left necessitous because, although the bread-winner produces fabulous wealth, capitalism decrees that golden fruit to its pets, the idle capitalist. Consequently, that widow needs the support of her children. In this the All-Seeing God Capital reveals his wisdom. He causes the interest of Capitalism, the poor-widows-maker, and the interest of the poor widows to coincide. Both need child-labor. Capitalism may, therefore, justly profit by the distress that it works. It may justify the child-labor, which it needs, with the distress of the widow which it brings on.”

Who will deny that Senator Snyder is worth his weight in gold? Would that all our capitalist props were Snyders!

When Carnegie, addressing the electrical engineers, said, “We stand for the royalty of man,” he couldn’t possibly have had in mind the abominable child labor of the South, or the murdered and maimed iron and steel workers of the Carnegie relief fund. He couldn’t possibly have had in mind these and a thousand other evidences of the slavery and slaughter of the American working class, which betoken its awful degradation and not its exaltation to the heights of royalty, when he expressed that sentiment. What Carnegie had in mind, what he meant by the royalty of man in this country, was the predominating influence and arrogance of the capitalist class, that class which would

tain be an aristocracy like that of the royalty of Europe, failing in which, it creates distinctions that would raise it above that aristocracy in every respect. There can be no royalty of man under the domination of such a class.

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