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EDITORIAL

“DIRECT NOMINATIONS.”

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GOV. HUGHES, together with the “interests” arrayed on his side and for whom he speaks, in favor of “direct nominations” on the one hand, and, on the other hand, Wm. Barnes, Jr., Raines and Wadsworth, together with the “interests” that oppose the move, find themselves in that peculiar tangle of argument that will ever be found to plague those who do not come out with what they really aim at—usually because ashamed to do so.

The custom has hitherto prevailed of nominations being made by conventions consisting of delegates. The direct nominations plan is to supersede nominations. The voters for delegates are themselves to vote for the candidate whom the delegates would otherwise nominate. The “direct nomination” plan would do away with the intermediary of a delegate, hence the name. Hughes is for the change; Barnes and others are against.

In favor of the change Hughes argues that it would do away with the political boss and promote democracy. Against the change the argument is that the change would destroy true democracy, that is, representative government: men coming together and discussing the merits of candidates would be more likely to make a wise choice than isolated voters, on the same principle that hundreds of thousands of men can not meet and legislate wisely.

Both are right and both are wrong, for the simple reasons that neither side dares to proclaim what it is after, and both set up the mask of “democracy.”

When the Wm. Barneses Jr., come out in the panoply of paladins of “representative government,” what they mean is the perpetuation of the sham “representative government” which enables a certain species of men to raise themselves into positions that hold the political fastnesses through which legislation, needed by the capitalist class, must flow. This species of men are the

political bosses. Their function is to levy toll upon the capitalist.

When the Hugheses, pouter pigeonlike, strut upon the stage against “bosses,” what they mean is not the abolition of the “boss.” The “boss,” they know, is an unavoidable being in class rule society. What they mean is the abolition of the expenses they now incur in the toll they must pay the political boss.

“Direct nominations” is a mask behind which the capitalist class seeks to retrench and economize. “Anti-direct nominations” is another mask behind which the political bosses seek to keep their jobs.

The agitation for “direct nominations” is not a political, or otherwise ethical move. It is nothing but a belated rumbling of the panic—a shrinkage of the earth crust of capitalism—a dead set to save expenses. No wonder the agitation is met with a counter agitation. The political bosses find themselves in the position of workingmen who are threatened with displacement by an improved machine which saves their wages for the employer.

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

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