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FIRST EDITORIAL

Not an Empty Boast.

By DANIEL DE LEON

What is considered the most remarkable industrial organization in the history of manufacturing is about completed. It is a mammoth \$50,000,000 wire combine. The report of those who engineered the consolidation runs thus:

“A nest of blast furnaces will be erected without delay on the banks of the Black River. The new organization reaches to the very roots of the industry, including all the wire rod capacity in the country, and having control of the supply of materials from the ore in the ground to the wire nails and the finely spun wire, used for all purposes from the manufacture of cloth to the erection of a telegraph line, the finished product of the industry. The company will own iron mills about Lake Superior. Some of these are the Jackson mine of the Cleveland Rolling Mill Company, the Oliver interest in the Oliver-Carnegie purchases on the Mesaba range, and the Tilden and Norrie mines. Like the Carnegie Company, in its line of structural material, rails, and other heavy stuff, the wire consolidation, in its own line, WILL BE ABLE, WITHOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCCESSFUL COMPETITION FROM ANY SOURCE WHATSOEVER, TO SUPPLY WHATEVER MARKETS IT DESIRES TO ENTER.”

This last clause is no empty boast. And what does it mean?

It means, first, that, to a greater extent than before and more brazenly than ever, the myth about labor's right and capacity to change its master has been curtailed.

It means savings at a tremendous rate, and that these savings will be made at the expense of the workers, whom such consolidation renders superfluous, who are thrown upon the streets, and who, by increasing the supply of labor reduce the price of labor, or the wages of the worker.

It means increased power to the private holders of so essential a social institution, and deepened dependence for the workers who alone will produce all the wealth yielded by the well-ramified concern.

Finally, it means one more object lesson of collective labor and its productivity; one more giant object lesson of the absurdity of such collective labor going hand in hand with private ownership; one more heavy blow on the back of a social system whose productive powers are rotten-ripe for public ownership; one more long stride towards the Social Revolution.

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