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## EDITORIAL

### PLASTERS ON WOODEN LEGS,—AND FURTHER OFF.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**R**EPRESENTATIVE [Francis M. Griffith](#) of Indiana has introduced a bill in Congress “to check the accumulation of exorbitant wealth in private hands as a ‘public nuisance,’ and secure wellbeing to all.” The scheme is to limit the size of private fortunes to \$10,000,000. Everything over the limit is to escheat to the State, to be applied to the reducing of “the burdens of the taxpayer.”

The taxpayer does not exist whose real objection is to the paying of taxes. What he frets about is the smallness of his means to pay the taxes with. “Give me the income,” hollowed {hollered?} out an irate voter to the politician who was denouncing the income tax on all incomes above \$5,000 a year, “give me the income, and I won’t mind the tax!” The “taxpayer,” the fellow “burdened” by taxation, is the Middle Class man, the small property holder; and Mr. Griffith being a Democrat, it is, indeed, that class he has in mind. The reason the small holder is so burdened is that his small capital disables him from competition with the large fellow; disables him so completely that he can barely live, let alone pay taxes, besides. Lower the taxes, even remove the “burden” wholly from his shoulders, and that does not increase his income by one cent. His small capital makes the thing impossible; makes impossible even his keeping the little income he gets; makes certain his losing even that. Evidently, what the small holder is in need of, dire need of, is the raising of the capital he operates, not the lowering of his taxes. The applying of the excesses over \$10,000,000 private fortunes to the “lowering of taxes” is, accordingly, no better than a plaster on a wooden leg.

If such is the case with the small holders, how stands it with the non-holders, the propertiless wage-earners,—the Working Class? If with some little capital the small holder is unable to hold his head above water, and a lowering of taxes, to him who is a

taxpayer, would be but a plaster on a wooden leg, what, to the Working Class, who have no property on which to pay taxes, would the scheme amount to of appropriating everything, in excess of \$10,000,000 in private hands, for the purpose of reducing “the burdens of the taxpayer”?

It would be a plaster on some one else’s wooden leg.

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