

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 12, NO. 170.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1911.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

## ROOSEVELT AND THE STEEL TRUST AGAIN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A** CORRESPONDENT finds fault with the *Daily People* for “pitching into Roosevelt” in the matter of his having allowed Messrs. Gary and Frick to induce him to suspend the anti-trust act during the panic of 1907. Our correspondent asks: “What else should he have done? Let the panic go on ripping up the country? It is the part of a strong man to break through red-tape.”

Our correspondent illustrates the oft repeated observation that Roosevelt has debauched the public mind, and caused himself to be admired for his supposed strength, whereas the fact is he is a weak man, and guilty of all the weaknesses of weak men.

What would a strong man have done?

Given the conditions under which the then President Roosevelt was approached on that morning in 1907, a strong man would have said to Messrs. Gary and Frick:

“Gentlemen—Your words amount to a suggestion that I violate the law, by winking at its violation.

“I do not hold that my duty as President binds me to such a strict observance of the law that, even if the observance ruin the country, rather the country’s ruin than the law’s violation. No. I recognize that the law is there for the country, not the country for the law. The law is there to enable and help the country to live; the country is not there to illumine the law. I recognize that emergencies may arise in which the Chief Magistrate is in duty bound to incur a law violation. The country’s history presents the case of President Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase. It was such an emergency. And bravely did Jefferson face it. He violated the law, and then threw himself upon the mercy of Congress to approve or disapprove, and, if it disapproved, to impeach him, a sentence before which he would have reverently bowed.

“Gentlemen, the bearing of this is that the emergency must be of such momen-

tous nature as to justify the act. If the emergency is of such a nature the act will be imperative upon me.

“You say that such is the nature of the emergency—unless, in violation of the law, you are allowed to purchase the stock of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company from a certain firm whose name you do not mention; unless you thereby supply that certain firm with the cash it needs; unless you do that the firm will fail, and, being a firm of gigantic proportions, its failure will drag down many other firms, thereby greatly extending the panic with incalculable injury of the country.

“Gentlemen, it follows from all this that the crucial point is that firm. It all turns upon whether that firm does occupy the strategic position for evil that you hold. If that firm does, then it is entitled to receive from me the sacrifice that you counsel.

“Therefore, gentlemen, seeing that I am the one to do the sacrifice, I am entitled, I am in duty bound to know that firm’s name before I can decide. I may not, I am duty bound—bound in duty to myself, first of all—to know that firm’s name, so that I may act with open eyes, and with intelligent responsibility.”

That’s the way a strong man would have acted. Roosevelt did not, upon his own showing, act thus.

Upon his own showing Roosevelt consented, without the firm’s name being disclosed to him. Such is the weakness that such conduct betrays that it is just as likely Roosevelt did know the firm’s name, but was afraid to say so to the Stanley Committee lest he be suspected of peculation, as that he did not know the firm’s name according to his testimony—a weak man’s conduct, either way. The bully is a weak man.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded November 2012

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)