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EDITORIAL

## IS IT A MERE COINCIDENCE?

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE article, recently published in these columns on the “Wages in the Shoe Industry,” present in the cold figures of the Census bulletin a gruesome picture of the condition of the shoeworkers. With an increase, since 1890, of over 18 per cent in the value of the product, of nearly 7 per cent in the number of shoeworkers, and of nearly five times as large an increase in the volume of the product and its value as in the number of the workers, the figures reveal an absolute **DECREASE OF 2.5 PER CENT OF WAGES**. The figures thus throw on the canvas a picture of sharp decline in individual earnings, and the sharp increase in individual exploitation.

Is it a mere coincidence that such a sharp change, for the worse to the workers, for the better to the employers, falls in with the birth, rise and ascendancy among the shoeworkers of the Tobin-Eaton Union, officially known as the Boot & Shoe Workers’ Union? Is it a mere coincidence that such a sharp change falls in with the period during which the Tobin-Eaton Union held the presidency among the shoeworkers? Is it a mere coincidence that such a sharp change falls in with the Tobin-Eaton system of “taking the men in the shop as they are found,” leaving “all questions of wages for future consideration and granting the Union Label to the employer” the moment his employees have been “Unionized”? Is it a mere coincidence that such a change to the shoeworkers falls in with the Tobin-Eaton system that guarantees to the employer immunity from strikes and furnishes him the “Union Label” means of advertisement in exchange for his compelling his employees to chip in towards the support of Tobin-Eaton? In fine, is it a mere coincidence the increased exploitation of the whole Working Class, as revealed, however unwillingly, by the Census bulletin, falls in with the period of decided ascendancy by Gompers’ A.F. of L., and has reached a point when the grim joke has

become current: “When the workingman has reached 45 years, take him out and shoot him: he is too worn out to be of any further use, and too poor to keep himself”?

All this is certainly no mere coincidence. The Capitalist Class and its politicians know what they are about when they accept the pure and simple labor leader to their banquets, when they share with him some of their political offices, when, in short, they take him into their service.

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