

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 11, NO. 39.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 1910.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE TARIFF SUNKEN ROCK.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ROOSEVELT'S sudden silence on national politics, following speedily upon the visit of Senator Lodge, the political agent of the highly protected American Woollen Company, otherwise known as the Woollen Trust, furnishes a pointer to the fate in store for Republican Insurgentism. Incidentally it furnishes a number of pointers for the correct estimate of facts and the conclusions that flow from them.

Ask any hundred men at random of average information which is the most powerful of any of the capitalist industries in the land, and they will divide between the Standard Oil and the Railroads; few, if any, will mention the protected industries. The reason is obvious. Railroad highhandedness, Standard Oil banditboldness are obvious everywhere. Nevertheless, long as are the arms, and sinewy as are the fingers of these concerns, neither do their arms extend the length of the arms, nor are their fingers endowed with the sinewiness of the fingers of the protected industries.

All the capitalist concerns combined constitute, one knows, a communistic community of pelf. Nevertheless, within this communistic community there are lines of sharp division, marking hostile interests. The Railroad belongs to the latter category; so does Standard Oil which, to a great extent is also Railroad. A not unsuccessful raid upon these by their fellow capitalist communists is no rare, it is a common occurrence. They may be termed "isolated interests" within the capitalist communistic community. There is one set of industries, however, the nature of whom appeals to most of the others. This set consists of the protected industries. Protection affects the capitalist psychology in a way that nothing else does. It affects it so completely as to render it all-powerful towards those of its fellow communists upon whom it preys, and shatters their hostile efforts. It actually smashes party lines. The recent death of the Louisiana Senator Samuel Douglas McEnery has

caused his leading speeches to be reprinted. Among these speeches is the one he delivered in 1897 upon his return home in New Orleans after the adjournment of the Congress in which he, a Democrat, voted for the Dingley Republican tariff. A passage in that speech is fraught with significance. It runs: "The Democratic Senator from California voted for a high tariff on borax because California is a borax producing State. The Democratic Senator from Kentucky earnestly worked and voted for wood alcohol, and the Democratic Senators from Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina favored the protection of rice and lumber. Why did they aid and assist in making the bill protective and then vote against it? The interests they advocated would have been lost by the defeat of the bill. I voted for the interests of Louisiana. I secured the protection we desired, and I did not intend to lose it by taking any chances of the defeat of the bill. Nor was I willing to ask for Louisiana what I would not grant to other States." In other words, that element within the capitalist communistic community that can profit by "working the protective racket" has it in its power to raise sedition within the camp of its opponent fellow communists, and raise friends to itself in that very camp.

It is no accident that Roosevelt, the most headlong adversary of "predatory wealth," one, moreover, who had emphatically condemned the practices of "protection," dropped that issue like a hot potato the instant he became President, and reserved his leonine roars for the Railroad and Standard Oil mainly.

Insurgentism candidly placed the Aldrich-Cannon Tariff on its Index Expurgatorius, along with the Railroads, Standard Oil, etc. By so doing Insurgentism proved the general honesty of its move—and also its general misconception of its own ailment, Capitalism.

The Tariff is the sunken rock against which any sweeping house-cleaning within the capitalist communist community is at any moment in danger of dashing itself in this at one agricultural and industrial land.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded August 2011

slpns@slp.org