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EDITORIAL

MCNAMARA'S LAMENT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNDER the title "The McNamara Case," Mr. Samuel Gompers publishes in the current month's *American Federationist* the following argument, supposedly in the interest of John J. McNamara:

"There are in Indianapolis eight international headquarters. All of the international unions whose headquarters are located here [Indianapolis] were invited by official representatives of the city to make this their home. Some of them have been here for years, the International Typographical Union for twenty-three years, down to the latest addition, the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders with an official residence of a few months. They all employ citizens of Indianapolis as clerks, accountants, bookkeepers, stenographers, etc., and at the highest paid wage for this class of labor. They have on deposit in Indianapolis banks at the present time, and have had for years, hundreds of thousands, yes, millions of dollars, that in turn flow through the avenues of trade, money that has been an important factor in making Indianapolis the great commercial city that it is. Are we then entitled to no consideration from the officers of the municipality, or the representatives of the State? If the procedure in the McNamara case is to be officially endorsed, then we can safely assume that the answer to our question is in the negative."

About McNamara's cast of mind there is nothing definite known in this office except that, differently from his brother, who spends his time in jail reading books of light fiction, his reading consists of philosophic works on psychology. Proceeding from these premises, the supposition is warranted that, when the passage quoted above comes under his eyes, John J. McNamara will lift his voice in lamentation:

"Woe is me! Can it be that my friends have turned traitors? Or are they so densely stupid as to place my claims to a square deal upon a plane that allows no room for a deal that is square? Can they be so ignorant to fail to perceive that the move against me is but one of the scores of moves of the land's Plutocracy on the

chessboard of the Social Question, and that this particular move, although incidentally directed against Labor, is in fact a pawn pushed against the king of the 'Small Holders' on the chessboard? Is it pure and simple fatuity that causes my friends to proclaim the financial facts whose only effect can be to proclaim our affinity with the 'Small Holders,' and thereby intensify the assault upon us? For what else can the argument of clerks employed, and moneys deposited in banks by us tend to do? What can this line of argument tend to achieve but to draw the attention of the Plutocracy to the smallness of the number of our employes, compared with the legions of the Plutocracy's dependents, and to the drop-in-the-bucket size of our 'hundreds of thousands, yes millions' beside the Plutocracy's hundreds of millions, yes, billions?

"Woe is me! The plight I find myself in is the consequence direct of the false theory that we planted ourselves upon—the theory of equality between Capital and Labor, and the false tactics that flowed therefrom. We were lulled by the notion that, as the Capitalist Class deals with its wares, so could we deal with our ware, labor power. We were lulled with the notion that, as capitalist sellers deal with capitalist buyers, so could we, the presumptive peers of the capitalist, deal with the capitalist buyers of our commodity. We failed to understand the deep class cleft which separated the Working Class and the Capitalist Class, and which completely altered our relations to each other. We failed to perceive that the class cleft made actual slaves of us, serfs of the capitalist glebe under the external and deceitful appearance of equality. And now, when the Plutocracy's terrific onslaught upon its own kindred, the 'Small Holders' should have enlightened my friends upon the fact that the fiction of the square deal has been abandoned by the plutocratic rulers, even toward their own flesh and bone, and that the day of 'crush or be crushed' has arrived,—now these friends (or are they traitors?) still prate of a square deal for US!

"Woe is me! A stupid friend is worse than a wicked foe. Now that my friends should show their teeth—now that by the peeling of the same they should proclaim that also their eyes are peeled—now they know no better than to strike a posture that is but the offering of your throat to the executioner's knife. The plea of equality, the plea of 'consideration,' these be pleas strangely out of season when the cannon of the class war is thundering in our ear, and its boom announces the Plutocracy's

decree of our utter downfall, along with that other long tolerated caricature of the Plutocracy, the 'Small Holder.'

"Now, when my friends should turn around sharply; turn their backs upon Capitalism, and their faces to the Working class, and buckle down to the work of uniting them on the political as well as on the industrial field; now that my friends should at last cast off past illusions—now they rig themselves in the shredded rags of those identical illusions, illusions that events have torn to shreds.

"Is it fatuity? Is it treason?

"Woe is me!"

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