

# The People.

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FIRST EDITORIAL

## S.L.P. and S.T. & L.A. Opportunity and Duty.

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**T**he rumors, that are coming in thick and fast from the Eastern coal fields of the land, open an opportunity and point to a duty that the class-conscious movement of the working class in our country may not fail to seize, and is imperatively called upon to perform.

In the first place, it is evident that, within short, there will be, at least attempted, a repetition of the economic drama, ending in tragedy, of last year. The, by nature, more favored coal fields of West Virginia, enabling the operators to stand out independent of the rest of the coal combine, is a throne in the side of the latter. Strikes are to be fomented; labor is to be again thrown into convulsions by one set of coal barons for the purpose of bringing the West Virginia set to terms. Everything points to that.

In the second place, the annual report of the Ohio State Mine Inspector, covering 1897, shows that the total average annual earnings of the Ohio miners were lower than the previous year. In 1896, the earnings were \$221.55; now they are \$192.05. Were a truthful report of the other coal fields published, a similar condition of things could be recorded in all the other States.

Such is the condition the class-unconscious movement of the workers leads them to; such are the "immediate advantages" the labor-fakir-controlled "pure and simple" organization secures to the toilers; such are the fruits of the "practical" work of the "Union-loving" labor leader, as against the "unpractical" plan of the "Union-Wrecking" Socialists. Taking, furthermore, into consideration the fat political job into which the miners' president, Mr. Ratchford, has just landed, the situation and the case of New Trade Unionism against Pure and Simpledom may be summed up in this sentence:

"Death and Starvation for the rank and file; fat jobs for the Labor Fakir."

With such facts, sensible to vision as to touch, the opportunity of the Alliance men

is matchless, their duty imperative. The Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance organizations among the miners can not, if properly undertaken, fail to crop up in large numbers; their rise will be an exact barometer of the degree of safety of the men; and the increased impetus they would give the political movement, by the increased vote of the Socialist Labor party, will be an increased protection to these long-suffering and sorely-tried toilers, in that such increased poll will be a warning to the exploiters that the impunity with which they have hitherto trespassed on the miners is drawing to an end, that the influence of the Labor Fakir among them is on the wane, that these have discovered the secret of success and of their redemption—the closely knit class-conscious economic and political movement of the Proletariat.

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

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