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EDITORIAL

THE LAW! THE LAW!! THE LAW!!!

By DANIEL DE LEON

ABOUT 12,800 acres of land on the borders of Controller Bay, Alaska, and set aside as part of the Chugach Forest Reserve, are, with 12,800 tongues yelling “The Law! The Law!! The Law!!!” at Messrs. R.S. Ryan, Morgan and Guggenheim, three renowned pillars of the Law.

The settled practice of the Executive Department is to give thirty days’ notice of the withdrawal of land for public entry. With a notice of thirty days, land, thitherto held by the Government, may be entered upon with opportunities equal to all; all, able to acquire private rights, can make their entry. This practice is shown by Senator Pointdexter of Washington to have been violated by the President in the interest of Ryan, Morgan and Guggenheim with regard to the 12,800 acres in question. No thirty days notice having been given, and the opening of the land for occupation having been made in secret, it is alleged, and in secret conspiracy with the parties aforementioned, they were enabled to file scrip before any one else had notice, and thereby gobble up the whole acreage.

The manoeuvre affected, however, not merely the possession of the 12,800 acres on the shores of Controller Bay. As a consequence of the ownership of that acreage, together with previous rights acquired by the gentlemen, absolute control is obtained of the only portion of the harbor which is navigable. Thus the ownership of the land on the shores of Controller Bay carries with it the control of the transportation to the Alaska coal field amounting to a monopoly.

The exposures made by Senator Pointdexter will probably put a spoke in the wheels of this dark conspiracy, especially seeing the exposure has been followed by the “Dick to Dick letter.”

Suppose the exposure had not been made. One may figure to himself the indignation of Messrs. Ryan, Morgan and Guggenheim had any one attempted to land on

the navigable portion of Controller Bay and attempted to export coal.

“The Law! The Law!! The Law!!!” would have been invoked by the piratical crew. They would have held up their deeds for inspection. Their subsidized press would have published photographic copies of their deeds. And, in chorus, press, Guggenheim, Morgan and Ryan—Ryan, press, Morgan and Guggenheim—Morgan, Ryan, Guggenheim and press—would have called the wrath of heaven down upon the heads of the “law-breakers.”

Guggenheim, Ryan and Morgan are no worse than any other set of Law-invokers. Behind the cry of “The Law! The Law!! The Law!!!” there ever is some monstrous violation of law,—some monstrous act of robbery.

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