

The People.

VOL. IV, NO. 8.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MAY 20, 1894.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

EDITORIAL

A WORD TO ERRING BROTHERS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE General Executive Board of the Knights of Labor issued to the Order on the 11th instant a notice in which this passage occurs:

“Remember, that the money question will have to be settled by the next Congress, and that no man receive your votes for Congress who does not recognize the right of the people to control and issue the money or medium of exchange of the United States.”

Unfortunately the solemnity of this warning is not in keeping with the facts.

In the first place, the next Congress neither will nor can settle the money question. No Congress controlled by employers and fleecers of labor, or the representatives of such, can address itself to the task of settling the money question. So long as the capitalist class rules Congress, whether through goldbug bankers or silverbug mine owners, Congress will be unfit even to deal intelligently with the question of money. There is no evidence that the next Congress will be controlled by the workers; it may pass hands; the free trade labor skimmers may lose their hold upon it and the protection labor skimmers get on top; the gold bugites may get a black eye and the silver bugites may turn up in strength; but in either case it will be capital that will rule; private owners and usurpers of that which should be the whole people's will be in office; and they can not solve the money question.

In the second place, the next Congress can not solve the money question because the money question must, by its very nature, be the LAST instead of the FIRST of the social problems to tackle. Not until the problem of the nation's machinery of production has been settled, i.e., not until the people have assumed or resumed full control of all the things that are necessary for production, can the

money question be settled. We may have a monometallic or we may have a bimetallic basis; we may have gold, or silver, or pigtails, or platina, or peanutshells as bullion, as the material upon which the money value may be printed, and we shall remain in the same seething waters of the money question + because all such materials—gold, pig-tails, silver, peanut-shells, platina, etc.—would have remained the private property of the private holders of the things that are necessary to produce them. Once, however, the people hold in their own hands the land and the capital whereby to operate the land, the now intricate looking money question will become simple; with the disappearance of conflicting private interests, the only way out of the present complexities of the money question will have become evident. The nation's machinery of production has not yet become collective ownership; the next Congress will not even remotely try to undertake that preliminary reform; it is consequently an error to believe, or indulge the hope, or promote in others the hope, that the next Congress will settle the money question.

In view of these facts, it is equally an error to point out to the membership of the Order as the men deserving of the membership's suffrage those who simply recognize the right of the people to control the money of the land. Goldbug skimmers of labor hold that view, and with that view they have demonetized silver; silverbug skimmers of labor hold that view, and with that view they want to monetize the commodity for the production of which they pay their mine-workers starvation wages. No doubt a nation's money must be controlled by the people, but to accomplish this end only such men must be sent to Congress who "realize the right and the necessity of the people's controlling the whole production and distribution of the nation's wealth; controlling the nation's whole machinery of production." All others should be voted down.

In our land there is only one party that sets up such candidates—the Socialist Labor Party.

Whoever wants the solution of the money question should vote for the candidates pledged to rear the Co-operative Commonwealth and to demolish the Capitalist or Wages System of production.

Whoever does not want this—well{,} let him vote for any other candidate of any other party, it matters not a particle which.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded October 2002