

# The People.

VOL. VII, NO. 23

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1897

PRICE 3 CENTS

EDITORIAL

## Too Much, or too Little.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**L**ast week the New York Chief of Police Conlin withdrew from office. In retiring he said:

“My retirement is due entirely to my loss of eyesight and to my poor health. I have worked hard and needed rest. Crawling on to sixty years of age, after forty-two years of labor, I feel as if I ought to spend the rest of my life in peace.”

As he reached the age limit, his application was granted, and from now on till his death he will receive a pension of \$3,000 per annum.

This sum is much too little, or much too big.

He who has worked forty-two years for society; who, in its service has lost sight and health, has certainly, directly or indirectly, produced or helped to produce wealth enough to enable him to retire from work with a stipend large enough to preserve the full dignity of age not only, but to partake of the full mead of enjoyment that his remaining days in life may require as a civilized man, in a civilized community, in a country of unbounded wealth. If ex-Chief Conlin, of the Police Department, did bestow a lifetime of useful services to society, then a \$3,000 annuity is an insult, it is a disgrace both to the giver and him to whom it is given: it is too little.

But was the work of ex-Chief Conlin a work that aids society in the production of wealth, a work that pushes society on to a higher, better plane? No. The police are needed only as an evil required by another evil. Where all have their own, none is in danger of being deprived of what is his; at any rate, even if an exceptional mental monstrosity should turn up in such society as to covet and take what is others', he would be so exceptional and apparition as to need no vast armed machinery to afford protection against him. In our present social system, however, the large majority are robbed of what is theirs; the plunder is held and enjoyed by a frail minority; rapine becomes a “feature of human nature”; and the misery thus inflicted becomes so vast

and tangible a force, so productive of violence, that an extensive body of men is requisite to protect the plunderers in their booty. It is in this barren “work” that ex-Chief Conlin exerted himself, lost eyesight and health, and from which he now retires. For such service a \$3,000 annuity is too much. At the retirement of such a man, the motto should rather be: “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded October 2003