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EDITORIAL

## ANACONDA CAPITALISM.

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**T**HERE is no end of scandals in this scandalous capitalist world. They are of all sorts and all sizes. They come from every quarter and fly in every direction, teaching nothing as it seems and disgusting nobody. The only wonder is indeed that from time to time a scandalous crew is caught and punished by the not less scandalous agents of capitalist justice.

The scandal of the day is of the land-grabbing kind. It involves Senator Clark, of Montana, the Anaconda Mining Company, the Bitter Root Development Company, the Daly estate, Land Commissioner Catlin and numberless smaller fry, all of whom are to be prosecuted for having “illegally robbed” the people of 140,000 acres and millions of feet of timber on the public domain in Montana and Idaho.

The facts of this particular case are by no means new. They have been notorious for many years. Nor are they unique, for there is not a fortune made from timber or from mining in the Far West, or a large landed estate possessed in the same region, that was not acquired by the same fraudulent means, and the owners of which would not therefore be liable to dispossession if Clark and his fellow thieves were to fall under the hammer of the law.

To one of these facts THE PEOPLE, then a weekly, called attention several years ago. It related how the Anaconda Mining Company, after having obtained, by means that may lawfully be termed fraudulent, a title to rich copper mines that were previously the national property, obtained furthermore from the Secretary of the Interior the permission to cut enough timber on the surrounding public lands to construct and support its underground galleries; how it then proceeded to cut thousands of acres of the finest timber on the public domain, although a few would have sufficed to supply its “legitimate” needs; and lastly how, in order to conceal its theft, it had burned the remaining forest to the ground. THE PEOPLE explained that under the action of the intense heat produced by that immense fire the soil itself had been reduced to ashes and the stones to dust, so that, for several generations to come, not a tree, not a blade of grass would grow on that murdered

land. Although THE PEOPLE took little interest in the land-grabbing schemes that were then carried out, for the reason that they could not be defeated under the capitalist system, but that the land would be returned to the nation on Socialist Day, it objected, in the name and interest of Socialism itself, to this wanton destruction of natural wealth and forces to which the Socialist generations of the future were entitled.

We don't know how it came about that this very Anaconda Mining Company—this self-styled and well-styled Anaconda—fell into disfavor at Washington. Political reasons are unquestionably at the bottom of the case. But we doubt that the gang of criminals to which it belongs will ever be made to suffer for its misdeeds. Capitalism cannot well afford to have the "rights" of a Clark, of a Daly, of an Anaconda, of a Bitter Root declared forfeited. This would prove a bitter pill to many others of the same genus "Brigand," whose power and anger cannot safely be defied by the Attorney General, a political party or a court of justice. The history of the public domain from the creation of the Pacific railways is entirely made up of the very same class of facts and men. For a full settlement with their national robbers the people of the United States will have to wait until the sun of the Social Revolution rises above the now dark horizon. It depends upon them alone to hasten the day.

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

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