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EDITORIAL

## DID NOT GO DOWN IN VAIN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**E**VERY little while—like beves of birds rising all around from cover, started by one central cause—clouds of articles appear in the Republican-Democratic press on the great degree of prosperity enjoyed by the working class of America “as proven by the reports of the Savings Banks.” The argument is there made that the deposits in the banks are by workmen, and the deposits being huge, the workmen are on the highroad to Asiatic opulence. The identity of the reasoning, the identity of the figures trotted out, the identity of the States compared, etc., etc., betray the fact that the articles are all started from that central bureau of forged “Labor data” located in Washington as the Commissionship of Labor. That would be enough to throw discredit upon the whole batch of periodically re-appearing articles. We have, however, not rested satisfied with that. We hunted the articles down. With figures that spoke eloquently, and with a reasoning that was not to be shaken, Lucien Sanial again and again demonstrated through these columns that the mass of deposits reported from the savings banks proceeded, not from workmen, but mainly and overwhelmingly from capitalist sources, the middle class leading, and that workman depositors were rare. He proved that the figures, whatever else they indicated, did not remotely indicate prosperity among the working class. Just the reverse. A financial catastrophe now takes place in Detroit that sheds valuable side-light upon the question.

Owing to the fraudulent conduct of at least its Vice-President, the Detroit City Savings Bank failed and the bank’s affairs are made public. It appears that the bank’s deposits were close to \$3,000,000. These deposits figure among the sums alleged to be “owned by workingmen depositors” in the latest batch of articles issued from Washington, and published in the papers aforementioned. If workingmen are the depositors of those \$3,000,000 what must one expect to see? Why certainly,

workingmen rushing to that savings bank, anxious, distracted. Nothing of the sort! In the reports of the scenes in front and about the Detroit City Savings Bank, the workingman is conspicuous by his absence. If any there be loitering around, he is looking on, not as a fellow loser, but as an outsider. The people with anxious faces, distracted features, and nervous appearance have all the external marks of non-workers. But that's not all.

While the appearance of the people, who, "with distracted mien" are rushing to the savings bank to "find out," does not betoken the worker, exact information on who the minor depositors are is not yet accessible. But what is already ascertained tells its own tale in cold figures.

One of the depositors, to the amount of \$150,000, is the Board of County Auditors,—not exactly a workingman's organization; another depositor, to the amount of \$467,000, is the Board of Education,—neither is that workingman's funds; a third depositor, to the amount of \$22,000, is the County Clerk, as Register in Chancery,—a handler of wealth, true enough, produced by the workers, but not of wealth representing the savings of workingmen from their wages, it represents wealth sponged from them; a fourth depositor, in the amount of \$39,000, is the Public Library Fund,—nor yet can that be termed "workmen's savings." In all, so far, already the huge sum of \$678,000 is traceable to depositors who are as much workingmen, saving from their wages, as wolves are lambs. And more is to come: and the fuller facts will more completely establish that the depositors in that Savings Bank, for one, were not workingmen.

In collapsing, the Detroit City Savings Bank did more than tear down the false reputation of a ring politico-capitalist: it tears down also a big lump of the false pretences about the prosperous condition of the workers, "as indicated by their mammoth savings."

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