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EDITORIAL

## A VALUABLE SPECIMEN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**W**HAT is being called the “strike epidemic” does not cease to bring to the surface some remarkable “revelations.” Among these is the “revelation” of the Hecla Iron Works.

The Hecla Iron Works is—or shall we henceforth have to say “was”?—a profit sharing concern. Mr. Francis Jackson, its secretary, says:

“The 5,000 men in our employ have been receiving high wages. They have been happy and contented, and they have been benefited yearly by the co-operative system, whereby they have been sharing in the profits.”

Like a clap from a clear sky, these idyllic conditions suddenly come to stop; nay, worse, they are transformed into—well, we won’t use the word. In short, the men are all locked-out. Let Mr. Francis Jackson tell the tale to its end:

“The men put in a demand for a fifty-hour a week basis, and that finishers be paid 36 cents an hour, and helpers 25 cents an hour. The company decided on emphatic action; it refused, and locked them all out. MEN CANNOT BE MEMBERS OF A COMPANY AND ACT THAT WAY AT THE SAME TIME.”

Certainly an odd state of things!

Here we have partners (that’s the theory) proposing to exercise partnership rights, and yet getting incontinently bounced for it. Partnership implies part-ownership; ownership implies the right to enjoy the thing owned. The enjoyment of a business concern is in direct measure to what one gets out of it; nor is the idea of “enjoyment” compatible with wages insufficient for civilized livelihood, or with hours incompatible with civilized manhood. Here, then, we have 5,000 partners (remember, that’s the theory), on one side, and 10, or perhaps, only 5, on the other; and yet the 5, or be it 10, have it in their power to, and actually do throw the 5,000 flat upon their backs on the

side-walk, and upon a-quarter of a minute's notice, at that!

No wonder Mr. Francis Jackson is dazed, staggered by the question, How did we manage it? It is not presuming too much to imagine the 5,000 partners, dazed, in their turn, and, in their turn, staggered by the question, How did they manage it?

Like volcanic eruptions, that throw up from the bowels of the earth concealed minerals, never dreamed to have been there, and which are then picked up from the surface, studied, and enlighten the race upon Nature's secrets, this "strike epidemic" is throwing up queer specimens of, to some, never dreamed of socio-economic minerals. One of these is the Hecla Iron Works lockout of 5,000 "partners." May these 5,000 partners and the 55,000,000 and more wage slave population carefully study the specimen. It will enlighten them on what there is in "profit sharing."

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

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