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EDITORIAL

## IMPROVING UPON THE “AVERAGE” SAW-DUST GAME.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**S**UPERINTENDENT John Bealin of the New York State Department of Labor has come out with a “statistical” report. He gives the number of depositors in the State’s saving banks at 2,275,383. He also gives the population of the State at 7,268,894. He then argues, in proof of the prosperity of our people:

“When it is borne in mind that the average family consists of five persons, it would be seen that almost every household in the State had at least one bank account.”

This argument is a decided step forward in the brazenness of the saw-dust game of “Averages.”

The Republican and Democratic placemen of capitalism have hitherto ventured merely to hint at an abstract “average”; they call it “per capita.” They would quote the billions of wealth in the land; they would then divide that figure by the number of inhabitants; and, pointing at the robust quotient, they would pronounce that the “per capita” wealth of the nation. That fraud has been more than once conclusively exposed in these columns. It was shown that, if 10 men in a room have an aggregate amount of \$100,004.50, with 1 of them having \$100,000 while the 9 have only 50 cents a piece, it would be a manifest fraud to state that the “per capita” of the wealth indicated by the figures is \$10,000.45. Such a statement concealed the fact of the actual poverty of nine-tenths of the people in that room, and insinuated their general prosperity. It was conclusively shown that that “per capita” game was nothing short of a “saw-dust” game. It was the insinuation of a falsehood to add the total wealth of the nation; divide that by the total population, the bulk of which has

next to nothing; and then give the quotient as the “per capita” of the people’s wealth. Huge, however, as was such a fraud on the people, it will be noticed that those “statisticians” did not say that the average inhabitant had that amount of wealth: they merely insinuated the lie.

But now comes Mr. Bealin and utters the lie plumply. He divides the total population of the State by the total depositors in banks, and, the average family being of five persons, he is not satisfied with saying that “the per capita of bank accounts is at least one per household,” he brazenly says: “Almost every household in the State HAS at least one bank account.”

Apart from the fact that “depositors” and “persons” are not the same thing, seeing that savings banks do not take deposits to any amount, and that, therefore, the same person may be and frequently is a depositor in several banks;—apart from that fact, that may not be overlooked, what does Mr. Bealin’s statement amount to? This:

It matters not whether of the 735,621 families of New York City, for instance, the overwhelming majority do not, as they actually do not, know how a bank book looks; it matters not if only 100,000 of them have savings bank accounts;—all that matters not. Dividing the number of depositors in {into?} the number of households, the quotient is 735,621{,} consequently every household HAS a bank account. What of the 635,621 who have not a cent to their names? Matters not! They HAVE bank accounts, at least one—so sayeth Mr. Bealin. “But we are hungry, and know better!” “Shut up!” shouts Mr. Bealin, “here are the figures. You HAVE a bank account!”

How comes it that Mr. Bealin takes such a stand? His flow of speech in the Unions has earned for him the epithet of the “Demosthenes of Labor”; it has not, nor has any act of his earned for him the epithet of a “bold man.” Should not this act of his, out-Heroding the capitalists in their falsifications, deserve the title of “boldness”—whatever the boldness may be in? No. Mr. Bealin as a “Labor man” is but a tube for the capitalists who buy him to speak through. Through Bealin as a tube these capitalists dare to lie all the harder. They would be ashamed to lie so brazenly themselves. But they imagine they are not seen if they toot their lies of prosperity into Labor’s ears through the tube of “Superintendent John Bealin.”

In this matter John Bealin is merely passive. He is not bold. And his

passiveness is the latest device of the confidence man, Mr. Capitalist, to improve his "average" saw-dust game by.

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