

EDITORIAL

CANNON AND PER CAPITAS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

EX-SPEAKER Cannon's speech in the House, delivered on April 19 against Canadian Reciprocity, and commented upon last week in these columns,¹ contains another passage worth mentioning, as affording a measure of the degree of reliability that may be attached to the utterances of some of the foremost "intellects" of bourgeois society.

Reviewing the statistics on the wheat crop Mr. Cannon came to the year 1910, "when the crop of wheat in the United States, amounting to nearly 700,000,000 bushels, was all consumed in the United States, except about 60,000,000 bushels." He then asks: "What was the per capita consumption of wheat in the United States last year?" And pointing to the 700,000,000 bushels less 60,000,000, answered the question triumphantly: "Nearly 7 bushels!" Nor does Mr. Cannon leave any doubt as to the exact meaning of what he meant. Surely less than two minutes later, and returning to the country's crop of wheat last year, he emphasizes his point with the declaration: "The people earned sufficient wages to consume 6½ bushels of wheat to each man, woman and child."

Does the ex-Speaker know that the volume of the good things in the land is not the measure of what the workingman gets, or does he not know that? Is the ex-Speaker aware that, if the number of wage-earners their women and their children were divided into the total wealth the country is said to own, each of these would be a per capita possessor of not less than \$5,000, and that this amount, or anything like it, is not in the possession of the vast majority of the proletariat, or he is not aware of that? In other words, is the ex-Speaker really at the benighted stage of expecting to ascertain individual conditions by the per capita system, or does he know better?

¹ "Cannon and the Farmer," *Daily People*, April 29, 1911.—R.B.

One of two things—either ex-Speaker Cannon is no wiser than the dullard, who, when told that Rockefeller and one of his laborers owned together \$100,000,001.10, swallowed the “numerical average,” or per capita lie that each of the two owned \$50,000,000.55; or the ex-Speaker is not so dull.

At any rate the ex-Speaker’s economic conclusions are not worth a pinch of the snuff he is said to take.

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