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EDITORIAL

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TO the trumpet blast of: "The law provides that all citizens of the United States shall have EQUAL OPPORTUNITY to subscribe," the Secretary of the Treasury invites the people to contest for \$30,000,000 of bonds of the Panama Canal loan. The lists are thus opened; with their opening the simultaneous disclosure is made that the contests in capitalism differ from the contests in feudalism only in that feudalism frankly and manfully declared the inequality of the classes, and openly enforced it, while capitalism, obedient to the chicanery of its spirit, affects an equality that it does not and cannot practice.

The periodical pretence, raised on the score of the "large savings" of the Working Class, as "indicated by the millions in the Savings Banks of the nation," has been thoroughly and repeatedly punctured. Repeatedly and thoroughly has the fact been proved that the Savings Banks are asylums for the funds of the middle class, not infrequently for the funds of higher capitalists themselves, and that workingman depositors are rare. The Working Class has no savings. Its earnings are a pittance, a declining pittance, and even that pittance is inhumanly reduced by the soaring cost of living, intensified by the declining quality of the goods. Whoever may enter the lists for the Panama Canal bonds, the workingman is excluded as effectively as if a feudal herald stood at the gate and barred his entrance. The contestants, bidders, will be the rich. They alone have more money than they know what to do with; they alone can profit by the opportunity.

"A free field and no favor" upon the lips of the representatives of capitalism spells c-h-e-a-t. A field is not free merely if there are no impediments thrown across it; it is not free, it is as partial as if the most partial discrimination were exercised during the race, if the nature of the contest, from the start, excludes any set of men. To saddle one man with a weight so heavy that he can not move, and to free the

shoulders of another so that he can be swift of foot and then open the race with the cry: “A free field and no favor” is the act of a hypocrite. It is so with capitalism. A privileged class is furnished with wings to fly, the masses have their wings clipped; “equality of opportunity” is, under such circumstances, a revoltingly hypocritical cry.

What wonder if one capitalist concern sends out tainted meat? What wonder if another prates about the beauties of “competition” while it burns down competitors? What wonder if a third capitalist concern commits perjury in its reports? What wonder if cheating, swindle, duplicity is the stock in trade of all? Hypocrisy, false pretense is the breath in the nostrils of capitalism. It is to capitalism a natural act—how natural, how unavoidable, may be judged from the spectacle of the “rate bill” and the packers inspection bill being boasted about as evidences of the integrity of an administration that simultaneously pretends it offers “equal opportunity” to all the citizens of the country to bid for the \$30,000,000 Panama Canal loan!

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