

EDITORIAL

PRICELESS ROCKEFELLER'S TESTIMONY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

PITY that a committee of the working class cannot be appointed to witness the examination of John D. Rockefeller, now going on before Referee Franklin Ferris, as part of the Government's suit for the dissolution of the Standard Oil Company.

Rockefeller's testimony on the history of the Standard Oil is only begun. Though only at its beginning already it is rich with instruction.

The Standard Oil started in 1860. The firm's capital was the modest sum of \$4,000. Its business was the refining of oil for illuminating purposes. By 1870 the Standard Oil was a concern of materially different aspect, with a capital of \$1,000,000, which since, has grown many hundred fold. The interest in Rockefeller's testimony lies in the steps, gradually taken, and compulsorily taken, in the development of the concern.

First came the manufacturing of barrels. These had had to be bought. They were too expensive. "We went into the woods," says Rockefeller. Timberlands were bought, trees were felled and dried and a barrel factory, established.—The metamorphosis started. From being a producer of illuminating oil, pure and simple, Standard Oil branched off into a holder of timber lands and producer of barrels.

Next came a second departure, also compulsory. The cost of transporting oil from the cars to the warehouses was too high. Standard Oil then went into the industry of building lighters.

The third stage in the development was the consolidation with other oil refineries. Competition proved too expensive for all. They merged together.

That is as far as Rockefeller's testimony reached on November 18. The testimony, as far as it goes, gives the cue to what is to come. The key note of Standard Oil development is the co-ordination of all the industries, subsidiary to

the refining of oil, and their concentration into one organic body. In other words, the industrial form of production.

Standard Oil, true to that leading historic mission of Capital which renders it the womb of the Socialist or Labor Republic, struck the mold in which the constituencies of the Parliament of Labor are to be gathered. So far Labor has neglected to appropriate the lesson. Hence Standard Oil flourished to supremacy, while Labor has remained petrified in craft organizations, and consequently has shriveled.

Standard Oil is industrially organized capital—the workers in Standard Oil, having remained disorganized in craft Unions, remain wage slaves, with all that that implies.

Rockefeller's testimony, by showing what keen capitalism did, implies what dull craft Unionism has failed to do. Industrially organized like their overlord Rockefeller, the coopers, the lightermakers, the timbermen, to mention no more, would not now be the guild-like concerns they have remained, "autonomous" entities. They would all be branches of ONE industrial Union, with Standard Oil in their power.

What is said with regard to Standard Oil holds with regard to the Nation's plant of production.

Less and less do the capitalists of the various branches of production or service manifest the old suicidal conceit of "autonomy." More and more are they seen ready to subordinate themselves to one another in industrial categories. Craft Unionism only preserves the conceit of olden days—and pays for its vainglory with the galling chains of slavery.

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