

EDITORIAL

WHICH IS THE BLINDER?

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE “Progressive” Senator Albert B. Cummins of Iowa [“Progressive” is the dignified term given themselves in the Senate by the element which, in the House, designate themselves by the more rabby term of “Insurgents”] and “Stalwart” Senator Stephen B. Elkins [“Stalwart” is the more aristocratic-sounding title assumed in the Senate by the element which, in the House, take the more democratic appellation of “Cannonites”] had a passage-at-arms on April 21 that made the sparks fly. The sight of the combatants, as revealed by the sparks that flew, suggests the question, Which is the blinder?

The bill before the Senate was the railroad bill, a complicated bit of mechanism behind which the Railroad Interests expect to find shelter from “persecution.” As such the “Stalwarts” did battle for the bill; as such it was assailed by the “Progressives.” In the midst of the fray “Stalwart” Elkins, aiming to render the contrivance more perfect for the purposes of its construction, supported an amendment the purport of which was the silent repeal of the Anti-Trust Law. “Progressive” Cummins rose, drew sword, and the clash was on.

To “Stalwart” Elkins’ assertion that the amendment was in protection of the rights of the people, “Progressive” Cummins made answer by quoting Horace Mann to the effect that a people, once stirred up, will in the first instance work their will in an orderly, peaceful revolution in political affairs, but, if they find no redress from their servants in office, then “they will write their passions and vengeful desires all over the institutions of our country and they will write them in characters so tremendous and so terrific that not only he who runs may read, but he who reads may run.” And yet, despite this inspiration-full whack upon the shield of the “Stalwarts,” the “Insurgent” urged that “the people of this country are not insisting upon equality of conditions; they are willing to suffer the disparity which

fortune puts upon them. They are willing to go poor while others may go rich; they are willing to live in hovels while others live in palaces, and they make no complaint,” and he urged this alleged state of things as an argument why the “Stalwarts” should not repeal the Anti-Trust law. Whereupon “Stalwart” Elkins parried the thrust with his shield by briefly re-asserting that “the amendment protects fully the rights of the people.”

Which is the blinder—“Stalwart” or “Progressive”?

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