

EDITORIAL

THE WORST CONFIRMED FROM LOS ANGELES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE worst suspicions concerning the Dark McNamara Affair are confirmed by the Los Angeles despatches of the 5th instant, reporting the sentences.

James B. McNamara, the rough-neck youth who pleaded guilty of blowing up the Los Angeles Times Building and thereby causing the death of twenty-one persons is given a life-sentence, instead of the death-sentence which he deserved.

John J. McNamara, the brother and National Secretary-Treasurer of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers' Association; the man who was extradited from Indianapolis for the identical offence and whose high-handed method of extradition it was sought to justify by reason of his being the "chief offender"; the man who jointly with James B. was indicted at Los Angeles for the murderous felony; the man against whom, together with his brother, District Attorney Capt. Fredericks claimed to have "an almost perfect case"; that man is allowed to plead guilty of a lesser offence by a good deal, is let off with the comparatively trivial sentence of fifteen years, and the indictment against him for the Times Building felony is quashed.

And all that upon an "agreement" by which the two sides—the supposed felons, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the supposed guardians of the Law, the District Attorney and the Judge,—had "compromised"—exactly, as was foretold five days before, when the pleas of guilty were entered.

The comedy was performed as per program.

"Compromised"? A strange word, under the circumstances.

Compromise with felony—murderous felony at that?

The nostrils of whose mind are so dull as not to scent the stench?

Nor is the reason for the precipitance of the performance any longer a secret.

Lincoln Steffens may or may not have had the leading role in the matter that be ascribes to himself. Nevertheless, his detailed narrative, in the *Globe*, of the several steps that led to the “final compromise” tally exactly with Mr. Darrow’s statement: “Things were happening in which big people were interested. The movement was impelling.” Who these “big people” were Mr. Steffens recites by name. They were the leading real estate interests, banking interests, merchant interests—all of them interests which, in a town of the type of Los Angeles, were suffering seriously from a trial that scared away capital and settlers and visitors for the approaching winter season, and which dreaded the consequences of the long protracted ordeal that the trial threatened them withal.

Once more Property, the sovereign in Capitalist society, asserted its attribute of ruling man, instead of itself being ruled by man. The movement of the “big people,” read “big Property,” became compelling. The “compromise”—a crime, whichever way looked at,—was the monstrosity that the heaving mountains brought forth.

Either there was a miscarriage of justice in Los Angeles, with the sworn guardians of the law as leading delinquents; or, at least in the instance of John J. McNamara, there is one more judicial felony entered on the list of judicial felonies with which capitalist officials seek to save their faces. Felony to cover up felony.

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