

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 3, NO. 249.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 1903.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

VOCAL POCKETS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ALBANY despatches have it that, at the hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on the Child Labor bills, Elbridge T. Gerry, ex-President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, opposed the bills in a violent speech, in the course of which he said:

“What of it if children, under ten years of age, have to wait at 4 o’clock in the morning for the early newspapers! Fine men have been newsboys. This bill will first dose the boy with education, and then brand him with a license. He is not allowed to earn his living, but compelled to be shut up in a hot tenement house to the injury of his health.”

The reporter of this speech must have been half asleep. He got things twisted. His ear was sharp; no doubt of that; but he fixed wrongly the direction from which the sounds came. The words recorded above did not come from the lungs, and through the larynx and other vocal organs of the Hon. Elbridge T. Gerry. They came from his pockets; from his several pockets. It is there they originated and they oozed out by the orifices of those pockets. In point of fact it was not one speech, or a speech at all, it was a series of exclamations, disconnected and flung out, or sputtered out. The exclamations were as follows:

From the pockets holding newspaper stocks:—“What! Limit the boy-peddlers of our papers! That would knock a hole into our dividends! Un-American! The finest men have been newsboys. These bills are shocking!”

From the pockets holding factory-stocks:—“What! Where will this stop? Keep boys from selling papers, and they will be next kept from working in our factories! Un-Christian! Shall these boys be shut up in a tenement house to the injury of their health? Shocking thought!”

From the pockets holding stocks in messenger boys' concerns:—"What! Keep the boys from earning a living?! Shall they be dosed with education during the time that we need them to furnish us with dividends!? Unheard-of Anarchistic scheme!"

And so it went on. The several stocks in the pockets of the Hon. Elbridge T. Gerry were actually convulsed with rage and righteous indignation,—an indignation that found utterance in exclamations, a few of which are reproduced above, and which the reporter mistook for a continuous speech. He did fairly well, all the same, considering the hub-bub of cross exclamations that were leaping out of the Hon. Elbridge T. Gerry's pockets.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded November 2006