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EDITORIAL

## FIRST PEACHES, NOW COAL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ONLY the other day the public was informed that the peach crop was rotting up-State. The crop was plentiful; but seeing that its owners insisted on paying only starvation wages and even less than that to gatherers, none came and the crop was left to spoil. Now comes the news from Pittsburg, Pa., that Mr. Francis L. Robbins, the President of the Pittsburg Coal Co. and also, together with John Mitchell, chairman of the Civic Federation's Department of Trade Agreements, is of the opinion that the output of coal is too large, on account of which "the operators are not making any money." Mr. Mitchell's associate Robbins proposes a very simple method to remedy the "evil." He proposes to reduce the output by means of a shutdown of at least one month; and he reasons further that the supply having been reduced below the demand the price will rise, and the operators will be happy. The gentleman puts his conclusion concretely into figures. Says he: "An advance of 10 cents a ton on coal would mean an increase of \$2,000,000 in our receipts."

And is it for this that Nature toils and causes peach trees to bloom and bear their luscious fruit—only to rot on the branches as evidence of the divine right of the capitalist to superintend the crops? And it is for this that this earth-ball went through the geologic period of carbon-making—only to reduce the coal supply to coal-famine level in graphic illustration of the divine right of the coal-mine owners in those deposits? Mr. Baer said something to that effect during the great coal strike of three years ago. Mr. Mitchell at that time fought Baer. Will he now announce a change of heart, now that his associate Robbins is acting upon Baer's motto? Surely Mr. Mitchell must do something of the sort. What would become of his favorite myth regarding the reciprocal interests of Capital and Labor, if he, "Labor," did not play shuttlecock and battledoor with his friend Robbins? Moreover, what an excellent

opportunity is not now offered to Mr. Mitchell to prove the myth regarding the “reciprocal interests” of Capital and Labor, when his duped miners are to be laid off for a month or more and left to starve so that Mr. Robbins may make the \$2,000,000 which he is after? Mr. Mitchell could get Father Curran, who recently stood by him, to write another address for Mitchell to deliver proving the sanctity of Labor in its readiness to immolate itself in favor of the Robbinses.

Unfortunately, while Mitchell would be delivering the pious address, some pestiferous Industrial Workers of the World man would, ten to one, be distributing some Labor leaflet showing that the Capitalist breeds famine and coins famine into profits.

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