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EDITORIAL

SQUIRMING LIKE A CRIMINAL.

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“**E**VEN if they [Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone] had actually been kidnapped—taken without authority of law and brought into this State—no honest man would wish to have them returned if they are guilty of this crime”—so runs the latest squirm of the McKenney Mine Owners’ Association through their mouthpiece the *Boise Statesman*.

The *Statesman* might have added: “Even if the Governor Gooding, who is the chairman of the Board of Pardon, went about declaring that the men are guilty, NO HONEST MAN WOULD WISH TO HAVE THEM SET FREE IF THEY ARE GUILTY.”

Or the *Statesman* might have perorated: “Even if Orchard and Steve Adams are the off-scourings of society, men whom no sane man would believe, even under oath, NO HONEST MAN WOULD WISH TO HAVE THE PRISONERS SET FREE IF THEY ARE GUILTY.”

Or the *Statesman* might have reasoned: “Even if the Mine Owners’ Association stands convicted of employing criminals, like McKenney, Beckman, Sterling and Scott, to do criminal acts in order to embroil the Western Federation of Miners, NO HONEST MAN WOULD WISH TO HAVE THE PRISONERS SET FREE IF THEY ARE GUILTY.”

Or the *Statesman* might have argued: “Even if Adj.-General Buckley Wells—the hero, who in Telluride dragged the aged miner Floaten out of his bed, brutally maltreated the man’s wife, and marched him barefooted over the snow to jail at the point of the bayonet—was the military chief put in charge of the train that stole out of Denver with Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone; NO HONEST MAN WOULD WISH TO HAVE THE PRISONERS SET FREE IF THEY ARE GUILTY.”

Or the *Statesman* might have contended: “Even if Gov. Gooding’s military agent

in Colorado, Lieut. McClelland, said "To hell with the Constitution!", NO HONEST MAN WOULD WISH TO HAVE THE PRISONERS SET FREE IF THEY ARE GUILTY."

Or the *Statesman* might have pleaded: "Even if no man in Colorado is safe from personal violence if he is a persona non grata to the Mine Owners' Association, NO HONEST MAN WOULD WISH TO HAVE THE PRISONERS SET FREE IF THEY ARE GUILTY."

Or the *Statesman* might have advanced the principle: "Even if Gov. Peabody and Adj.-Gen. Sherman Bell, political and military lackeys of the Mine Owners' Association, in violation of law solicited and received passes from railroads in consideration of past services and of services to be rendered [see photographic reproduction of these autograph letters on pages 11 and 18 of the pamphlet *Behind the Scenes*, Labor News, 2-6 New Reade street, New York], NO HONEST MAN WOULD WISH TO HAVE THE PRISONERS SET FREE IF THEY ARE GUILTY."

Or the *Statesman* might have invoked the theory: "Even if the Mine Owners' Association is a lawless organization gotten up among other things for the purpose of running small mine owners out of Idaho, Utah and Colorado, and confiscating their property, and even if Govs. Gooding and McDonald are members of the said Association, NO HONEST MAN WOULD WISH TO HAVE THE PRISONERS SET FREE IF THEY ARE GUILTY."

The *Statesman* might have kept this up ad infinitum, and, instead of strengthening its case, would have weakened it by every additional "argument" along that line. Each is a dodge, a begging of the question, a squirm that betrays the criminal heart and intent.

No honest man wishes to have guilty men escape. Every honest man wishes to have the guilty punished. That is not the issue. The issue is that every honest man has his face set as flint against any conspiracy intended to have innocent men held guilty upon the testimony of scamps, and the management of the prosecution guilelessly considered pure when, in fact, it is corrupt as hell. Accordingly, the issue between the *Statesman* and honest men is that, on the one side, the *Statesman*, well knowing how important to the success of the dark plot is the public belief in the integrity of the scamps who concocted the plot, and of the corrupt officials who

undertook its execution, strains every nerve to present the real criminals in the garb of honesty and the guiltless prisoners in the light of crime; while, on the other side, honest men are intent upon tearing the mask of integrity from the real criminals, thereby putting the people upon their guard, enabling them to judge of the motives of the depraved conspirators, and properly to weigh the value of the testimony that comes from such sources. Of prime importance at the trial is the public knowledge that the mantle of lawfulness and order, which the prosecution of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone wraps itself in, is but the sheepskin that conceals a wolf. Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone would have hanged by this time, an imposed-upon public—imposed upon by the lying reports concerning both the prisoners and the prosecution—would have believed the land rid of a trio of cockatrices, and would have unsuspectingly reposed their confidence in the real cockatrices—the skip-jack officials of Colorado and Idaho around whose heads the *Statesman* is seeking to draw the halo of “Saviors of Society.”

Well may the *Statesman*, together with its compeers, the subsidized press of the capitalist class, squirm at the insistence with which the unprecedented performance of the extradition of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone is being exposed; well may it squirm at the fearless exposure of the lawless character and antecedents of the witnesses, of their backers, and of their official and military protectors—the weight of testimony, the color of actions, depends upon the nature of the witness and upon the actual reputation of the performer. Only criminals squirm under the glare of light.

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