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EDITORIAL

“WHEN THIEVES FALL OUT,” ETC.

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WHOM does President Truesdale of the Lackawanna Railroad mean when he charges “the miners of the bituminous regions” with exerting their powers to cause a strike in the anthracite region because “the soft coal miners” would benefit by such a strike? Whom does he mean by the bituminous, or “soft coal miners,” who would benefit by a strike in the anthracite regions, and hence are seeking to encompass an anthracite strike?

Does he mean the mine owners, or does he mean the mine workers, or does he mean both?

There is so much pregnant truth in President Truesdale’s utterance that there should be no confusion of thought, brought on by confusion of terms, in the matter.

Suppose the anthracite mine workers strike. What would follow?—A scarcity of coal, which would cause a rise in the demand for bituminous coal, and which, in turn, would send up the price of such coal. Would the bituminous coal mine *worker* benefit by that? Not a bit. On the contrary.

The wages of the bituminous mine worker would not rise by a copper. Wages do not depend upon the money that the employer takes in. Employers and their heelers try to deceive their employes with such a theory. They try to make the employe believe that his interests are reciprocal with the interests of his employer—“the more the employer makes the higher the wages of his employes,” so runs their song. There is no truth in that. Employers may make money hands over fists, and yet wages may plunge down heels over head. Under the rule of employerdom the workingman is not a human being at all, but an article of merchandise. The larger the supply of cattle the lower goes the price of beef. So with the workingman and wages. Wages depend upon the supply of labor in the labor-market. The supply of bituminous mine workers is plentiful. Let the price of bituminous coal soar upwards, it will not raise the wages of the workers. So far considered, the

bituminous workers would have nothing to gain but also nothing to lose in case of an anthracite strike.

But there is more to consider.

The moment a strike is declared in the anthracite region a strike assessment will be ordered in the Union. The anthracite men being out on strike can not be expected to pay the assessment. From whom will the assessed dues have to come? Why, from the bituminous workers. They being in the same United Mine Workers' Union, and expected, in fact, ordered to remain at work—they will have to pay the assessment. Thus, with no higher wages, and with a strike benefit to defray, the bituminous workers would, not only not benefit, they would suffer from a strike.

President Truesdale can not have in mind the soft coal, or bituminous, workers when he says "the soft coal miners" would benefit by a strike and, consequently, are seeking to promote one. He can only mean the bituminous mine *owners*. And pregnant is the truth that lies therein. The bituminous mine owners will profit. Without having to raise the wages of their employes they will be able to raise the price of their soft coal so long as the strike lasts. In order to make the strike last, after they shall have succeeded in engineering its start, they will themselves act as financial secretaries for the Unions of their employes, by "checking off" the strike benefit—as they did in 1902 when they raked in millions, thanks to the anthracite strike.

President Truesdale, as an anthracite mine Prince, is a fellow plunderer of the working class with the bituminous mine Princes. As such the two sets of Princes will be seen to go together and keep each others' secrets. But a time comes when these Prince plunderers of Labor fall out—then they blurt out their secrets. Not the least of the secrets of the plundering Princedom is that they engineer strikes against one another. A valuable secret to know. It points out the worthlessness of pure and simple Unionism. Only such sort of Unionism lends itself to promote capitalist interests. It points out the necessity of industrially organized class-conscious Unionism. Only that is bona fide Unionism, because only such Unionism can not turn one set of the working class into an organized scabbery against the other.

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