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EDITORIAL

KELLER AND CUNNINGHAM'S CHANCE.

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J. C. KELLER of Cleveland and Frank M. Cunningham of Omaha, {} presidents respectively of the City Carriers' National Association and the Rural Carriers' National Association, have been peremptorily dismissed from the postal service of the United States. The offence that the two men were found guilty of was palpable—at least to the capitalist officials of an industry nationalized under the capitalist class.

Keller and Cunningham were of the opinion that the salaries of their rural fellow craftsmen should be increased. They were not content with merely entertaining such a notion, a notion so wholly subversive of “law and order”; they put the notion into operation. Congress had voted down a bill framed according to the aforesaid subversive and traitorous notion. Keller and Cunningham proceeded to labor for the election of a friendly Congress. They worked against every renominated Congress candidate, without regard to party, who was opposed to increasing the pay of rural carriers; and they went so far along the nefarious path they had entered upon as to seek to pledge Congress candidates to support measures beneficial to postal employes! That was to touch the limit of bold-and-badness. The principle of propriety, sanity and loyalty is clear in the premises. Moreover, the President had made it still clearer in his late message to Congress. In his usual nervy style, he there pointed out the “very grave impropriety for Government employes to band themselves together for the purpose of extorting improperly high salaries from Government”. And the President, never a man of vague phrases, proceeded more specifically as follows, to wit: “Especially is this true of those within the classified service. The letter carriers . . . should be amply paid. But their payment must be obtained by arguing their claims fairly and honorably before the Congress, and not by banding together for the defeat of those

congressmen who refuse to give promises which they cannot in conscience give." Never yet was there a Sinai from whose storm-swept crest a graver precept of conscience was uttered in more statutory terseness. Keller and Cunningham were guilty. There can be no question about it. "Pernicious activity in politics" is the official technical designation of the crime. The designation is severe, yet not a whit more so than the crime deserves. And so the two culprits were summarily cashiered.

All season is fit for contemplation. The cold and bleak winter season is especially fit; it is all the more so when the contemplator is out of a job. Keller and Cunningham, now relegated to snowballs for meat and to blizzards for shelter, have a matchless opportunity to rise to the highest flight of contemplativeness. They have the opportunity to contemplate the fact that when directors of railroads, that are employed by the Government as mail carriers, put their heads together to designate one of their members to be boosted into the Senate so as to support measures beneficial to the said railroads, such a meeting is "a legitimate gathering of American citizens for the commendable purpose of thrift"; but that when wage earners, employed by the Government as mail carriers, put their heads together to see to it that only such Congress candidates be elected who will support measures beneficial to postal employes, SUCH a meeting is a "very grave impropriety", and a "banding together for the purpose of extorting improperly high salaries from Government." They will have leisure to contemplate the fact that when directors and leading stockholders of railroads, that are employed by the Government as mail carriers, aim at obtaining larger payment for their roads, it is eminently legitimate for them to caucus in secret, exercise secret pressure upon Congress, and concert measures for the election of their own creatures and the defeat of those unfriendly to them; but that when wage earners, employed by the Government as mail carriers, aim at obtaining larger payments for their services, THEY must limit themselves to "arguing their claims fairly and honorably before Congress", and that to concert measures for the defeat of unfriendly congressmen and the election of friendly ones is an indecent act against which conscience revolts. They will have time to take in a bird's-eye view of the situation, and the bird's-eye view will reveal to them that there are two distinct standards—one for the Capitalist Class, the other for them, the Working Class. Arrived at that point, their heads must be

wooden, indeed, if the electric spark of intelligence does not illumine it. The illumination will start a voice that will thunder into their ears: "Strike hands with the rest of the Working Class! Overthrow the Capitalist System of Plunder behind the mask of Hypocrisy! Rear the Socialist Republic!"

Matchless, in their martyrdom, is the opportunity for instruction offered to Keller and Cunningham.

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

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