

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 12, NO. 42.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 1911.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE CLEFT STICK ITS SYMBOL.

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THE Controller Bay has brought on a controversy that suggests a symbol for Capitalism.

The leading controverters are unquestionably leading figures in capitalist society—Taft and Roosevelt.

Roosevelt condemns the action of the Administration for opening to settlers the Controller Bay territory, on the ground that that territory offers the best, if not the only chance for a free outlet from the great Bering River coal fields. By allowing individuals to take possession of the outlet, so runs the Roosevelt viewpoint, these acquire monopolistic powers over the coal fields. Hence, the Roosevelt conclusion that it was “the imperative duty of the Government” to keep Controller Bay as part of the national preserve.

Taft upholds his own action of allowing individual possession of the Bay on the ground that Alaska needs, above all things, development; and that such development, the construction of railroads to the coal fields, for instance, is out of the question unless certain privileges are guaranteed to would-be developers. Hence, the Taft conclusion that “good policy” orders the affording of special privileges.

The issue is clear—

Either grant privileges which inevitably create a monopoly, turning a gift of Nature into the private property of individuals, with all the evils that thereby hang;

Or, prevent the monopoly and bar the said evils by refusing the privileges, and then doom a gift of Nature to remain inaccessible to man.

Here we have a social cleft stick, each of the two sides of the pincer drawn clearly on the canvas of capitalist society.

Taft, or Roosevelt,—both standing on the capitalist principle of the private ownership of the necessaries, whereby to render the gifts of Nature available to

mankind—which is the worse?

The one rejects the gift; the other hands it out to private hands; there to become a scourge to the rest of the people.

The one condemns society to stand still; the other lashes society backward to a feudal status.

The one has his feet in the clouds of Insurgentism or Reform; the other has his feet “solidly planted” on the “practical principles” of Stalwartism or Standpattery.

With the Democratic party holding the stick, the people, in general, the working class, in particular, are held between the two clefts into which the Republican party is clove.

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Uploaded June 2012

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