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EDITORIAL

## CONGRESSIONAL GLEANINGS— POPULAR ELECTION OF SENATORS.

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**T**HERE has been before Congress a joint resolution to so amend Section 3 of Article I of the Constitution that Senators shall be elected by a direct vote in each State. The resolution originated in the House, it is the product of the New York Representative William Sulzer of this city. It has been before this adopted by the House only to be ignored by the Senate. At this Session of Congress it turned up again. The circumstances under which it did, and the words with which its father dug it up anew are truly characteristic.

It happened on May 10. The House was not engaged in the consideration of some bill or subject on which the Sulzer joint resolution could be legitimately grafted. The House had under consideration the question of under-ground life-saving stations in coal mines. One should think that, with such a subject before it, and mine disaster occurring upon mine disaster, each new one more appalling than its predecessors, every minute of the time of the Representatives would be deemed precious enough to bring *direct* relief to the members of the working class engaged in mining, coal especially, instead of wasting time upon a scheme, such as direct election of Senators by the voters, which, even if, indeed, it were beneficial to the people, the benefit could accrue only *indirectly*. Not so thought Representative Sulzer, who is grooming himself for our Democratic candidate for Governor.

The language held by Mr. Sulzer was in keeping with the wrong occasion chosen. The gentleman had much to say about “restoring the Government to the people”; also that “the will of the people shall be, as it ought to be, the supreme law of the land”; also about “governments deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed”; and more to the same effect along that line. Nevertheless, and all this notwithstanding, Mr. Sulzer declared that he wanted “the Government at all

times to be directly responsible to the *just and reasonable* demands of the people.”

Shocking contradiction!

If the only source of a Government’s just powers is the people; if the will of the people ought to be the supreme law of the land; if these two principles are admitted, what business has that people’s Government to pry into the justice and injustice, reasonableness or unreasonableness of demands? If a Government has the power to determine what demands are just and reasonable, and what demands are not, then it must have the power to grant the one and reject the other; in which case all the talk about Governments “deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,” and all the talk about the “will of the people being supreme,” is just so much idle declamation, mere buncombe. If, on the other hand, the source of Government is the people’s will, and if that ought to be the supreme authority, then all attempt of Government to determine what are and choose just and reasonable demands, is Usurpation, and to advocate such a procedure, as Mr. Sulzer did, is to condone, promote and incite Usurpation.

Unenviable is the sight of Mr. Sulzer’s intellect impaled on either horn of the dilemma. Yet charity should be extended to the gentleman—at least at the hand of the Socialist. The Socialist never martyrs the individual wrong-doer. He sees in the wrong done the act of a class. It is the bourgeois who spoke through the lips of Mr. Sulzer; and the bourgeois is obsessed with the superstition that he is Providence to the working class. As such the bourgeois regularly tells his workmen: “The Union is a good thing; organize Unions and join them; and I shall ever be glad to acquiesce in all the Unions *just and reasonable* demands.” Any wonder the bourgeois carries this language with him into the committees of his class called the “political government”?

Mr. Sulzer has convincingly proved that, under class-conditions, and whatever the method of election of political rulers, the proletariat is no part of the people, whose consent is the prop of the government, or whose will is supreme.

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