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EDITORIAL

## ILL ANSWERING ILL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**LTHO' more than a month old, the article in the *Toronto Mail and Empire* of last February 21, entitled "Labor Interest in War" is of fresh interest, now that objections are loud against the British Cabinet Minister's proposal to suspend naval construction for one year.

The *Toronto Mail and Empire* brushes aside as of "exceedingly theoretical nature" the reasoning of the Socialist Labor Party propagandists of peace, who picture the "armor plate interests," the "Maxims, the Armstrongs, the Krupps" as the beneficiaries of war, and the working masses as having "no interest in war, except that of the man who becomes a mark for a bullet." While admitting that "every right-minded person deprecates the enormous waste of energy necessary to keep up the military power of the nations," our Toronto contemporary, nevertheless joins issue with the S.L.P., and it does so by quoting Brougham Villiers who, in his book on *Modern Democracy*, says:

"The abolition or even the considerable decrease of militarism, as things are, implies a vast amount of human misery and tremendous outcry for 'more work,' i.e., in this case the restoration of militarism."

Planting itself upon this reasoning, the *Mail and Empire* arrives at the conclusion that "the contention that armaments and the interest of labor are wholly dissociated is not to be admitted unconditionally"; in other words, "as things are" militarism "gives work," therefore keep things as they are, and sing the praises of militarism as "a giver of work," hence, a preventer of "a vast amount of human misery."

The story is told of a medical genius that, being called to attend a child who had the smallpox, gave the messenger a little vial with a pink liquid saying: "I don't know anything about smallpox; I have graduated on fits. Give the little cuss this.

That will throw him into fits. Then call me. I'll cure him of the fits."

The best that Capitalism can say for itself is that it cures society of the fits that it throws society into.

In the domain of literature such pranks are called "jokes." In the domain of science the pranks are called quackery. In the domain of ethics the pranks are branded as "Ill answering ill."

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)