

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 13, NO. 215.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 1913.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

HIS SISTERS, HIS COUSINS AND HIS AUNTS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ABOUT the most valuable testimony elicited by the Pujo Investigation Committee is that portion of the testimony given by James J. Hill, the great railroad Captain of Industry of the North West, bearing upon the present status of the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific roads.

About seven years ago, it will be remembered, a great “triumph for the common people” was scored by the administration of President Roosevelt. A Trust was “smashed,” so ran the reports uniformly. It was the court decision, rendered in Minnesota, by the Federal Court “smashing the Merger” of the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific roads. The court had pronounced the Merger illegal; had ordered its dissolution;—and a new era, an era of popular happiness was announced, an era in which the incubus of the Trust would no longer lie heavily upon the Nation’s chest.

The Socialists, that is, the Marxian Socialists, gave on the occasion, a striking instance of their evil-mindedness. They denied that the Minnesota anti-Merger decision would have the effect claimed for it. They went even further. They insisted that the decision was a snare and a delusion. And going still greater lengths in their “viciousness,” they proved their contention. Proceeding from known facts, the Marxian Socialists argued that, external obedience would be rendered to the decision, but that the Merger Trust would remain under the identical and centralized control. The conclusion was expressed in these terms: “Instead of the present holders, their ‘sisters, their cousins and their aunts will figure.’”

At the Pujo Committee’s session of January 24 the following answers were given by James J. Hill to the questions put to him:

Q. The Great Northern and the Northern Pacific are competing? A. Quite active.

Q. Upon the dissolution of the Northern Securities Company you came into possession of a large amount of stock of the Great Northern and of the Northern Pacific? A. Of both. Not a large amount, but a considerable amount.

Q. Your family own, do they not, over 37,000 shares of the Great Northern and own 62,000 shares of the Northern Pacific? A. I do not remember. I think I have somewhere between 25,000 and 30,000 shares of Northern Pacific.

Q. And your son J.N. Hill has about 25,000 shares, has he not. or 20,000 shares? A. Possibly.

Q. And your son Louis W. Hill owns 10,250 shares?. A. Possibly; but I am not familiar with the list of stockholders of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Q. And James J. Hill, trustee, 35,560 shares and Mrs. Mary H. Hill 3,000 shares? A. Yes.

Q. As to the Great Northern, you hold how many shares in that—20,000? A. Yes, as many as that.

Q. Louis Hill 13,520 shares? A. Possibly that is right. I have not the list of the stockholders.

And there you have it!

Sonny J.N.; and sonny Louis W.; and Madame Mary H.; and cousin Louis (without the W.);—all, of course, taking orders from the family head, became the holders of the “scattered” stock.

It can be no otherwise. Given the private ownership of socially necessary things for production, their concentration is unavoidable; and all that capitalist law can accomplish in the way of redress is the sliding picture trick of causing the Captains to retreat from the limelight, and make room for their sisters-cousins-and-aunts dummies.

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Uploaded July 2014

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