

EDITORIAL

CHILTON AND GOFF.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN the Senate of the United States there are found two Senators—one is named Chilton, William E.; the other is named Goff, Nathan.

Both hail from the State of West Virginia, the former under Democratic colors, the other under Republican.

On May 9, Senator Kern of Indiana having called up his Resolution for the investigation of the miners' strike in West Virginia, both the Democrat Chilton and the Republican Goff threw themselves across the path of the Resolution.

"I think," argued Goff, "it is quite apparent from what has already been said that no good can come from the proposed investigation. I should like each Senator to ask himself before voting for it, on what evidence is he voting? What has been presented to the Senate, or to any committee of the Senate justifying such allegations as have been made here relative to the State of West Virginia that will authorize this great deliberative body to pass this resolution?"

"A resolution has been offered, that resolution has been referred to a committee, and a report has been made. The report simply tells the Senate in substance:

"We report this resolution favorably, and trust it will pass."

"On what? On a newspaper statement? On a mere interview given by someone to someone? Or is it on an affidavit of some man or woman who, before the evangel of Almighty God, will state that such facts exist as will justify the Senate in so proceeding? Not a scrap; not a memorandum; not an affidavit."

On what? Not a scrap? Not a memorandum? Not an affidavit?

The flow of the eloquence of Senator Chilton—the first to throw himself across the path of the Kern Resolution—the flow of his words in lavish praise of the virtues of the State of West Virginia, of the eminent civic virtues of Gov. Hatfield, and of his

own undying love and affection for Labor—was frequently interrupted with questions which elicited numerous admissions:—

Senator Chilton admitted that there were “two persons in the penitentiary, now, one serving a sentence of five years and the other a sentence of two years” as a consequence of their activity in the strike.

He admitted that those persons were arrested, tried and sentenced by a military tribunal, a court martial.

He admitted that the regular courts had all the time been open and able and with full jurisdiction to try the charges against the prisoners.

He admitted the illegality of a military tribunal being set up for the trial of some people, when all the time the courts were open for all other people.

He admitted that such a singular tribunal was a mock-tribunal.

He admitted that the Supreme Court of Appeals had sustained the action of the mock tribunal, and admitted that the decision was so untenable that he expected to see it reversed.

He admitted that a dissenting opinion, written by Judge Robinson, branded the proceedings of the military tribunal as iniquitous on the ground that “the criminal courts of Kanawha County were open, able and with full jurisdiction to try the charges against them.”

He admitted that Gov. Hatfield held the full power of pardon in his hands, yet kept the prisoners in jail.

All these admissions notwithstanding, and notwithstanding all these admissions were made on the floor of the Senate by a Senator of his own State, an “unwilling witness,” speaking from his seat; officially and solemnly,—all that notwithstanding, Senator Goff had the cool effrontery to declare, with invocations to the evangel of Almighty God, there was not a scrap of evidence before the Senate to authorize the passing of the resolution, and to make the declaration before the very men who but a minute before had heard admissions that were cork-screwed out of his colleague, Senator Chilton!

By all the canons of psychology, attorneys who conduct themselves like Senators Chilton and Goff have a desperado client, whose desperado interests nothing but brass can subserve.

What client may that be, what interests?

The *Wall Street Journal* of the 10th of May, in an article coolly justifying the recent West Virginia iniquities, gives the answer to the question:—

The client is the coal mine companies. The interest is the desire “to increase profits fourfold,” a desire not possible of accomplishment without the domestic mountain labor of West Virginia is “displaced” by the immigrant miners—a consummation that requires drastic, brutal, high-handed methods that may crush, by appalling, the mind of both the native Labor that is to be displaced, and the immigrant Labor that is to be imposed upon.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded August 2015

slpns@slp.org