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EDITORIAL

UNLOCK THOSE PRISON GATES!

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHILE by lightning express the report of the deportation of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone from Colorado to an Idaho jail was carried to all parts of the country, accompanied with ex parte allegations of their guilt as the ground for the arrests, there is now arriving, by slow freight, facts, authentic facts, that convict the Governor of Colorado and the Governor of Idaho of perjury in the violation of their oaths of office, that convict them of conspiracy against the civic rights of the citizens, and that nail upon them the infamy of being, true to their class interests, the faithful lackeys of the aggregation of bandits known as the Mine Owners' Association. The following are the authentic facts:—

1st, The extradition papers applied for by the Governor of Idaho charged the men, not with complicity in, but with actual commission, and being present at the commission of the murder of ex-Governor Steunenberg. Steunenberg—these papers, applying for the extradition of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, swear—was murdered at Caldwell, Idaho, on December 30, 1905. Extradition can not be granted except against fugitives from justice. The papers applying for the extradition state under oath that the three men were at Caldwell on the day of the murder, and then fled the state.

2nd, Pettibone, Haywood and Moyer are residents of Colorado, of Denver, at that. The first had not been in Idaho for five years; the second not for over a year; the third not for three months previous to the commission of the crime.

3rd, The Governor of Colorado honored the application for extradition without giving the three men an instant's opportunity to prove that it was physically impossible for them to have committed the crime they were charged with. He gave then no hearing.

4th, Instantly upon signing the extradition papers, the Governor of Colorado hied him out of Denver to Colorado Springs.

5th, Before the extradition papers were signed a special train was being gotten

ready and a militia corps was on guard.

6th, The three men were seized, jailed, rushed to the train and speeded out of the State to Idaho.

These facts throw light upon another. They explain the secrecy of the proceedings, they explain the hurry, they explain the denial of a hearing to the men, they explain the sudden disappearance of the Governor of Colorado from Denver. Men charged with the commission of a crime may not always be able to purge themselves at a preliminary hearing. But when the men are able to prove a perfect alibi; when the witnesses, able to attest the long continued residence of the accused in the very city in which the examination is to be held, are plentiful; when, in short, the Governor's chamber in Denver, could have been filled full, and at a moment's notice, with reputable citizens of Denver itself, in all walks of life, able to swear that the accused were in that very city, hundreds of miles from Caldwell, at the time of the commission of the crime;—when all that is the case, then the Star Chamber proceedings at Denver became luminous. Truth is that which fits the facts. The only theory that fits the facts in the case is that both the Governor of Idaho and the Governor of Colorado knew that there was no ground for extradition; that they had to pretend to believe there was such ground; that, fearful lest their flimsy false pretense be torn to shreds if the slightest intimation of the felony they had in contemplation leaked through, they had to act like dark-lantern thieves, and in a hurry too; and that, fearing, even then, that the conspiracy might be frustrated—Denver being of all places the one where the accused, that being their residence, could most readily overwhelm the Governor with proof of their alibi—the Governor sneaked out of the city to where he could not be reached until the men were beyond his jurisdiction.

Governors of Colorado and Idaho, unlock the prison gates in which you now hold Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone under false imprisonment!

Governors of Colorado and Idaho, your lawless career has gone far enough. It invites, aye, it incites social dissolution. Before it is too late—unlock those prison gates!

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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