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R. M. Hamilton, Mgr. Fenelon Falls Branch

Scientific Thieving.

In his recent investigation of the prison at Lincoln, Neb., where the inmates mutinied with such fatal results to the prison officials, a representative of the Appeal found that out of a total of 430 persons sent to that prison during the years 1909 and 1910, 357, or 83 per cent., had been convicted of crimes against property.

Theft in some form is the prevailing crime, and private property is at the bottom of it.

The prison is essentially a class institution. It is the antithesis of the millionaires' club. Both are recruited from the idle class; one from the idle poor and the other from the idle rich.

The prison is as indispensable to the capitalist system as the workshop is.

Private property enforces poverty, poverty enforces theft, and theft enforces imprisonment.

Once in a while a bankrupt capitalist goes to prison, but as a rule the inmates are of the working class.

Under the rule of private property theft is a crime of the gravest consequence; it attacks the very foundation of society, which is private property.

Stealing is second only to murder, provided, of course, the thief is not a captain of industry, a wizard of finance or a merchant prince.

Ruling class robbery, scientific stealing on a large and legalized scale—which lies at the foundation of private property, and without which that institution could not exist an hour—is of course not in the criminal category of lower class theft, punishable by imprisonment as an attack upon property and an offence against the state.

Property and state are in this connection interchangeable terms, the private owner of the property being of necessity the ruler of the state.

The 83 per cent. of prison inmates who have been convicted of stealing are not in the class of scientific thieves.

They have stolen in a small, crude and criminal fashion such as purse-snatching, foot-padding or burglary, and it is right that they should be in prison for not knowing better.

The Chicago beef packers have stolen millions in violation of the anti-trust law, through secret rebates and falsified book-keeping; but they stole in a dignified, scientific manner, compared to which petty thievery is criminal, shameful and contemptible.

Rockefeller, Morgan and Carnegie have gotten away with hundreds of millions; but they are all well-approved and eminently respectable robbers, and patron saints of private property.

Marshall Field robbed the city of Chicago, the county of Cook and the state of Illinois of millions by making perjured returns of his taxable property; but here again the scientific method sanctifies the robbery, and we behold another pillar of private prop-

erty as a shining example to the rising generation.

The few robbing the masses wholesale—that is private property, the holiest institution among men. But for the exploited, impoverished victims to take back at retail that of which they have been robbed wholesale—that is an attack upon property which must be swiftly and sternly punished.

Whether you are in the plutocracy or in the penitentiary depends altogether upon whether your stealing is scientific or otherwise.

In the capitalist system the great thieves are aureoled saints and occupy the highest seats in the synagogue—the petty pilferers, despised criminals—buried alive to rot away in prison holes.—Eugene V. Debs.

Public Pawn Shops.

Having come to the conclusion that laws will not prevent the loan shark from skinning his needy victims, some prominent men of Kansas City have organized a "public" pawnshop that will loan money on any kind of security at a very low rate of interest, as the only way to protect the victims from usury. Paris, France, has a real public pawn shop, that has been operating for years, for which the city furnishes the capital, and it has never lost a cent, though it loans immense sums in the aggregate. The principle involved in this action of the Kansas City men is one that they deny exists. When we Socialists insist that the elimination of profits is the only cure for the graft and crime and hoodling, they deny the static. But they admit it when they desire to eliminate the graft of the loan shark. Suppose that the nation should embark in the coal business, and produce and sell coal at its cost—how could the private coal dealers raise the price in cold or any other kind of weather? If the public sold coal or oil or sugar at cost, how could the corporations sell their products for more? Would the people pay them big profits if they could avoid doing so? But while the people can buy these things nowhere but from the trusts, what good will laws do? They must buy from the sharks of trade, just as the needy must borrow money from the loan sharks if there is no other place to get it. Collective or common ownership of the industries would protect the people from extortion—nothing else will. Will the people always remain blind to their own interests? Socialism will make the need of any kind of pawn shops unnecessary. People can then have employment that will bring them an income so large that they will need borrow no money in chattels or any other property. Then the loan sharks and other sharks will have to go to honest, productive work or starve. How would that suit you?—Appeal to Reason.

Laying the Corner-Stone

The first deposit, with which you begin a Saving Account, is as important an event as the laying of the corner-stone of a fine building. You are laying the corner-stone of your position in the world, of your circle of business acquaintance, of eventual success. Can you afford to postpone that first deposit?

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M.W. Reive, Manager