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EDITORIAL

DEATH-BED CONSULTATIONS.

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It has passed into a proverb that special sessions of Congress denote a weak administration. When an administration is strong, when it feels itself safe in the saddle, it can afford to wait for the regular time when Congress reconvenes. When, on the contrary, the administration feels the ground under it shaky, and does not rely upon its own nerve, then it needs Congress to lean upon, to throw at least part of the responsibility on, and to put things into shape. Such an administration hastens to convene Congress in special session. In a country where, like this, government is by party, the conduct of parties reflects the motives that guide government itself. What is going on now among the “minor parties” is, accordingly, of no minor importance. One may judge their sense of safety, their sense of conscious ascendancy by their own conduct.

Among the minor parties the Prohibition party may be ignored from the start. It is in no way a child of our American social or political life. It is a political abortion, a cross between Bible misquotations and capitalist hypocrisy. There remain the Socialist Labor Party, the Social Democracy, with headquarters in Chicago, the Social Democracy, with headquarters in Springfield, Mass., the Populist Party, the Silver Republicans, and the Middle-of-the-Roaders. How are these conducting themselves? With a single exception, they are all calling for special conventions.—Both wings of the Social Democracy, the Populists, the Silver Republicans, the Middle-of-the-Roaders, each of them, while boasting of “great success,” gives the evidence of great shakiness in its anxiety for a national convention, to be held as soon as possible, if not sooner.

The exception to this tell-tale behavior on the part of the minor parties is the Socialist Labor Party. It alone is not bothering about special national conventions. Like administrations that feel perfectly safe and strong, and that, consequently, care not to convene Congress in special session, but abide the regular time, the Socialist Labor Party serenely pursues its course; it does not indulge in hysterics;

its conventions are left to occur in the regular order; and, in the meantime, it carries on its work, uninterrupted.

'Tis not the votes cast or polled; 'tis not the claims made; 'tis not the oratory and declamations indulged in that serve as a test of a political body's confidence in itself. The test is the principles on which it stands, the tactics that it pursues, the character of its organization. And among the manifestations of this test is the body's conduct after the battle. The nervous craving for conventions, manifested by all these minor parties, except the Socialist Labor Party, immediately after election betrays the fact that one and all lack confidence in themselves. And well they may. Neither their principles nor their tactics nor yet the character of their organization is of a nature to inspire them with confidence. Feeling the ground shaky under them each wants company. Hence that novelist of sights, several of them wanting to hold conventions in common!

While the "United (?) Socialists (?)" and kindred reformers, who are looking for short-cuts across lots, are losing themselves in the woods and seek to keep themselves in countenance by wild halloas, the Socialist Labor Party looks down at the set and wonders how long it will be before these would-be teachers of the people will themselves learn the ABC's of the Social Question.

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