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SECOND EDITORIAL

It Is a Curious Fact.

By DANIEL DE LEON

President E. Benjamin Andrews, of Brown University, has been forced to resign. This was the upshot of a conflict between him and his Board of Trustees. He believed in and advocated the free coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen ounces of silver to one of gold, and they did not. That this conflict should have arisen is nothing odd; the oddness of the incident lies in the reasons given by the Trustees for the stand they took.

The Trustees maintain that the money question is dividing the people in two hostile camps: consequently, hold they, a College Professor should not strike an attitude to increase the irritation; the Trustees aver that some large donations had been as well as promised to the University, but had not been given because of President Andrews' attitude: consequently, say they, his attitude was injurious to the establishment. Nor are the Trustees alone in justifying President Andrews' expurgation with the above reason: all the gold bug capitalist papers that express themselves upon the subject, so far as we have any knowledge of, give the same grounds, make the same arguments, and adopt the same conclusion.

This is a curious fact.

Far be it from us to join the jackal howl of the silver mine barons' press, to the effect that the treatment of President Andrews is an "act of czarism," an "infraction of free speech," an "abuse of power," or, as a Western silver bug paper puts it, "an act of tyranny that cries to heaven perpetrated upon American freedom."

That Mr. E. Benjamin Andrews should not be the presiding genius over an institution of learning, is an opinion we have long held; many a year ago we proved his unfitness for his post, being ignorant in the elements of political economy—a branch for which he had a predilection in a degree that was in direct ratio with his

ignorance of the subject. Mr. Andrews' views on finance are absurd. It is not too much to demand of a College President that he be a man of scientific training, especially in the department in which he attempts to lecture. Did the Trustees of Brown University say: "This man is ignorant, unfit for his post; we must get rid of him?" Did they, in short, put their disapproval of his conduct upon his incapacity? Had they done so, they would have been right. But they did not. The stand they take amounts to this: "A College President may be fit or unfit as a superintendent of learning; he may hold to nonsense or to sense: that affects our judgment of him as little as whether his eyes be blue or grey. What does affect our judgment is whether he can attract donations. The university is not here to give out learning; it is here to rake in donations. Can a President cause donations to flow this way, then he is our man; can he not, then out he goes."

This is the curious fact that this E. Benjamin Andrews episode brings out clearly. A fact that constitutes the corner-stones on which most of our universities and colleges are reared, a fact that marks them ulcers among the many ulcers that capitalist—gold and silver bug—society breeds, and that fester on our body social.

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