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EDITORIAL

## MR. ROOT'S "PHILOSOPHY OF THE CONSTITUTION."

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE very best speech, so far delivered against the popular election of Federal Senators, is at the same time the worst. The unique distinction for having achieved the unique feat falls to Senator Root.

The speeches hitherto delivered against the proposed amendment fall in a mold that may well be called "ancestor worship"—a manifestation of paganism that our generation is still, in spots, violently addicted to. Senator Root's speech fell into that mold. In so far, it stated nothing new, nor gave the suggestion of a new idea. It was the old sentimental posture. Clothe Sentiment in the phrases of Thought, as Senator Root did; clothe flimsy sentiment in the buckram of legal enactment, and the net results are truly charming. The combination was attempted by others. With none was it so perfect; hence, none other was so masterly.



ELIHU ROOT (1845-1937)

Such was the nature of the subject that the very excellencies of the address defeated it at every inch.

The Senate and the House combined, Congress, are a flower of the tree of Political Government. But each emphasizes some specific feature of Political Government. Altho' Political Government implies rule, and that implies subjects to be ruled; yet Political Government may imply the thought of political freedom, for the rulers. The House implies as much: the Senate implies exactly the opposite. The Senate is the express recognition of GOVERNMENT without regard to the

GOVERNED. When Senator Root appealed to the "highest philosophy" of the Constitution he struck a chord that resounded sonorously—and for that very reason sounded the knell of that particular "philosophy."

The "philosophy" of the Constitution conjured the document into existence. Another philosophy is rising; its spirit tolerating no "political government." Obviously, appeals directed to certain philosophy that is obsolete are ineffective in the measure that they are perfect—in their way.

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