

Those who believe that there is any difference between the two old parties live in dreamland. No such difference was discernible, even in broad daylight, while one watched the Legislature at work.

It was the most usual thing, an ordinary matter of course occurrence for the minority leader, supposedly representing the forces of the Democratic party in the most important Legislature of the Union, to rise upon the floor, to orate against a proposed bill, to show by "convincing" arguments that the bill is detrimental to the interests of the people, that it ought not to pass, and then to withdraw his objection, sit down and—vote for the bill.

By occupation or profession, the lawyers and the farmers have the greatest representation in the Assembly. These two classes furnished two-thirds of the Members of the Assembly this year. The remaining fifty were distributed among all manner of businesses and professions, such as merchants, manufacturers, real estate men, brokers, doctors for horse and human being, dentists and one auctioneer and one undertaker. Workers there were none among the members of the Assembly this year. There was but one who may lay claim to be of the workers and he was a union official—the other Socialist member of the House, my comrade Shiplacoff.

What the working class could expect from this body, thus constituted politically and by their interests in preserving things as they are, with all the rottenness and the evils of to-day, is exactly what the working class got this year.

In these observations it may be proper to mention that, of the one hundred and fifty men constituting the Assembly, probably not more than about twenty-five were active on the floor of the House. The others were mere rubber stamps or so many sticks. To pass a law seventy-six votes are required. To cast votes was the chief function and activity of these rubber stamps. If their votes were not required, they might, to better profit for themselves and for the rest of us, never have existed.

From the viewpoint of the interests of the working class, this year's Legislature was the worst of Legislatures within recent years. From the very beginning it became apparent that because of the shadow and darkness cast by the war clouds, the capitalists of this State, through their tools in Albany, were not only ready but eager to take advantage of the situation and to get through such laws for which they have been yearning for years but did not dare to "put over."

The two great classes of legislation which occupied the attention of the legislators this year were the military laws and the undoing of the labor laws of the State.

Not only were none of the "bloody five" of last year repealed, but the ones which relate to the military training of children up to sixteen years of age and of the children between the ages of sixteen and eighteen were more firmly established. These were made more "efficient" than under the original laws of a year ago. Of course, that was done, as a great many other things were done, in the name of "patriotism."

The general military laws of the State were overhauled in real up-to-date war fashion, for peace times, however. The State Constitution provides that the militia shall consist of not less than ten thousand enlisted men. The military laws of the State up to this year provided that the number of the militia shall be not less than ten thousand, but not more than twenty-one thousand. Now the law provides that the minimum shall be, of course, not less than ten thousand, *but the maximum is left entirely to the will, whim and caprice of the Governor.* There is no longer any limitation to that. He may make that one hundred thousand, or two hundred thousand, or any other number that he chooses. With Governors, such as Mr. Whitman, we may know what to expect.

Until now, men and officers were all required to take the usual constitutional oath. That, too, has been changed. Now the officers, besides being required to swear allegiance to the Constitution and to protect the State of New York against all foreign enemies, must swear more than that. They also, by their oaths, must oblige themselves to protect the State against all DOMESTIC ENEMIES. I am speaking now of the law apply-