

Martial Law for the Rich?



Copyright by International

"There Is Not Going to Be Any Misery

In the State if I can humanly prevent it," declares Minnesota's Governor Olson. Here he is seen chatting with Mr. Roosevelt.

"RIGHT DOWN INTO HELL."

That's where Gov. Floyd B. Olson of Minnesota hopes the present system of government goes—"unless the Federal and State governments act to insure against a recurrence of the present situation."

The tall, lean, wiry, red-haired Executive stood on the steps of his Capitol in St. Paul addressing several hundred members of Minnesota's Bonus Expeditionary force seeking relief legislation. In the midst of his fiery talk he made a threat that startled the country.

"He threatened," says the *St. Paul Dispatch*, "to declare martial law and confiscate wealth unless the Legislature acts to afford relief." Telling of "an immediate need to provide food, clothing and shelter for the unfortunate," he turned his guns on the State Senate, which is largely conservative, in contrast to the House, which the Governor's own Farmer-Labor party controls.

"He stated," adds *The Dispatch*, "that a bill which would permit local communities to take care of their own situation by lifting the tax restrictions and permitting them to issue bonds for relief work 'is being held up, so far as I know,' in the Senate." Then quoting the Governor direct:

"I am making a last appeal to the Legislature. I want to say to the people of the State of Minnesota that if the Legislature, the Senate in particular, does not make ample provision for the sufferers in the State, who through no fault of their own are in that condition, and the Federal Government refuses to aid, as it properly may because of refusal of the State Legislature to handle the situation, and the communities become unable to take care of the people, I shall invoke the powers that I hold, and I shall declare martial law.

"A lot of people, who are now fighting the measure because they happen to possess considerable wealth, will be brought in by provost guard, and be obliged to give up more than they would now.

"As long as I sit in the Governor's chair there is not going to be any misery in the State, if I can humanly prevent it."

WHAT do the Governor's home newspapers think of that?

"Pooh-pooh" is the chorus of reply, with here and there a high note of praise for the Governor.

"This, of course, was mere play-acting of the sort often employed by astute politicians," asserts the *Minneapolis Journal* (Ind. Rep.). The Governor has no power, it adds, to declare martial law for such a purpose.

"It is hardly a compliment to the men and women of the State to suggest that they will have to be aroused to meet their decent obligations by martial law" says the *Minneapolis Tribune* (Rep.).

But the Governor has his supporters. "He threw down the gauntlet to the real enemies of America's millions that are in want," declares the *Roseau Northern Minnesota Leader* (Farmer Labor). Organized wealth, by the taking of unearned profits, it adds, has "brought this country to the verge of ruin." Then:

"The Governor has the backing of a greater percentage of the people than ever. The nation watches every move of this outstanding man, and this challenge of his places him in the front ranks of American statesmanship."

THE
LITERARY
DIGEST

APRIL 29, 1933

p. 8

OldMagazineArticles.com