UNTITLED EDITORIAL

{SENATOR GOFF AND GOVERNOR HATFIELD.}

By DANIEL DE LEON

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AID the Republican Senator Goff of West Virginia, in his speech opposing
the investigation of the conduct of Gov. Hatfield in steam-rolling the strik-
ing miners with martial law:

“It is the right of self-defence that belongs to a man when driven to the wall.”

Did not the Senator’s excitement betray him into making an unguarded, a
damaging admission?

“Self-defence” is a natural right, too well established to need defending, or to
need defining. It is a right, the exercise of which implies that its exerciser takes the
law in his own hands, no man-made law being available. How does the plea of “self-
defence” in behalf of Gov. Hatfield, comport with the Governor’s claim that he re-
sorted to the law, the statute law, the man-made law?

If Senator Goff is right that the Governor acted in “self-defence,” then the Gov-
ernor was at a par with the “rioting miners,” who also claim to have acted in “self-
defence,” being “driven to the wall.”

The Senator’s explanation may be good, bad, or indifferent; but, whether indif-
ferent, bad, or good, the explanation raises an issue that pre-eminently demands in-
vestigation: Which of the two sides acted in “self-defence,” which of the two sides
was justified to take the law into its own hands?

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