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EDITORIAL

GLEANINGS FROM CONGRESS— IMMIGRATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

NOT the least of the important questions that forced themselves upon the late Congress was the Question of Immigration. On this subject, as on all others, the Question banged Congress on the head. Unable to grapple with, Congress was rolled over by it, finally adopting a course which meant: "Let the ball roll."

Since the great migrations of nations in the early centuries of this era, Immigration has presented itself only to the United States as a problem. Immigration is one of those robustious social-physical facts that mock flags, that mock territorial demarkations, that mock national vanities. Immigration goes crashing through all the cobwebs of "Law"; it even tramples opposing arms under foot. Immigration establishes the fact that the Earth is for Mankind. The material need of subsistence is the Law-maker. Congress has for many a year been confronted with this fact. Fain would it play the dog in the manger; it found itself impotent. Like King Canute, who bade the tide not to touch his feet, and found his bidding unhearkened to, Congress has again and again sought to stem the tide of Immigration, resorted to one silly device after another, as for instance the device of Representative Adams of Pennsylvania to fix an arbitrary number of arrivals from any one country whom it was willing to admit—only to see the flood beat heavier and heavier upon it. In this struggle Congress found itself betrayed in its own camp. Two conflicting interests struggled for mastership. One was the greed to hold for its set alone, the boundless territory of the Nation; the other was its set's need of the immigrant, upon whose backs to ride so it could hold its own, and wage successfully the commercial warfare with the rest of nations. The latter interest, betrayed the former. It played into the hands of Immigration, and helped Immigration to

triumph.

The conflict of these two interests in Congress did not, however, wholly cease. It brought on a tangle. The dog in the manger interest sought for ethical grounds behind which to retreat. Accordingly, this Congress attempted to restrict foreign immigration, the House by keeping out “undesirable” people—criminals, prostitutes, beggars, etc.—the Senate by keeping out illiterates and all those who could not pay a \$5 head tax and show savings of \$50 if a head of a family, \$25 if a single man, and \$15 if a woman—both of them measures the false principle of which only renders their ethical claims ridiculous. Of all countries America’s history is the monumental proof that “beggars, prostitutes and criminals” are the products of conditions. The historical novels of Defoe amply attest the fact that the “beggars, criminals and prostitutes” of England became paragons of industry, chastity and honor when they found themselves in America under conditions that enabled them to lead proper lives; on the other hand, the subsequent history of the land proves that deteriorated conditions here have since raised America to the highest rank as a producer of “beggars, prostitutes and criminals.”

The bourgeois cannot grapple with the subject of Immigration. The sting in that wasp, the fangs in that beast, can be drawn only by the simultaneous overthrow of capitalism. Immigration will flow onward, despite all restrictions. With the overthrow of capitalism Immigration will become an unqualified blessing—a blessing to the land, a blessing to the immigrant.

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

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slpns@slp.org