

EDITORIAL

## TIGHT-ROPING IN POLITICS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**W**HY should the Valentine incident be “regarded with grave concern by the advisers of the Administration”?

Robert G. Valentine, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, issued last February an order prohibiting the use of religious insignia or garb by employes of the Indian service in general assembly exercises or in schoolrooms at the Indian schools maintained by the Government.

The order is strictly in keeping with the spirit and the letter, the letter and the spirit of the law.

Church and State are expressly separated by the Constitution and Federal laws. In keeping with the Constitution and the law, no moneys are to be granted for sectarian school and other purposes. Seeing that no moneys are to be granted by the Federal Government for sectarian purposes, the schoolrooms at the Indian schools, maintained by the Government, must preserve a non-sectarian appearance, hence sectarian insignia or garb by Government employes at such schools must be excluded. It follows from all this—

1. If any Government employe at the Indian schools maintained by the Government uses sectarian insignia or garb he violates the law: his conduct runs foul of Law and Constitution, which keeps Church and State apart—the former a matter of private concern, the latter a matter of public interest: his conduct tends to inject into matters of public concern the rancorous spirit of sectarian bigotry that has deluged the earth in blood, a calamity that Constitution and Law seek to safeguard the country against;

2. The order of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs forbidding such a dangerous violation of the Constitution and Law was legitimate, was praiseworthy. It is the part of the good citizen to keep the political and civic atmosphere pure—free from

the miasma bred of the sectarian spirit; it is the duty of the citizen, clad with office, to perform the function.

Why then should Commissioner Valentine's order be "regarded with grave concern by the advisers of the administration"?

Have Jewish prelates kicked? No.

Have Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, or any other Protestant prelates kicked? No.

Has any sectarian denomination kicked! Yes. Which? The Roman Catholic.

Why do the advisers of the administration regard the Commissioner's order "with grave concern"?

The answer is obvious. The advisers of the administration are afraid that, if the Commissioner's order is sustained, the administration will forfeit the deliverable vote of the Roman Catholic political and business machine which is ambushed behind religion; and that, if the Commissioner's order is not sustained, then the administration will forfeit the deliverable vote of the other sectarian political and business machines, likewise in ambush behind religion.

The plight of the "advisers of the administration" is truly distressful—yet not a bit more distressful than serves it—and all other political tight-rope dancers—right.

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