

EDITORIAL

“FINE” OR “INVESTMENT.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

AN important link is omitted from the Boston despatch to the effect that a cashier's check for \$20,000 was turned over to Clerk Darling of the United States District Court by Charles F. Choate, counsel of the Barre Wool Combing Company of South Barre, Mass., to pay a fine of \$1,000 each on twenty British subjects which the Company brought to this country to work in its mills in violation of the contract labor law.

The link that is omitted is the amount of money that the Company made, directly and indirectly, through its violation of the law. If the amount were given, then one could judge whether the twenty times \$1,000 was a “fine” or an “investment,” and also what the real size of the fine was, or how profitable the investment.

If the amount paid to the District Court was larger than the difference in the lower wages that the Company paid to its importees; if the amount was larger than that figure and also larger than the amount that the importation enabled the Company to extort from its other employees, then, payment in Court by the Company would be a “fine”; and, then, the actual size of the fine would be known.

If, on the contrary, the amount paid to the District Court of the United States was below the shavings of the Company on its employees, then, the payment in court was not a “fine” at all. Then the \$20,000 was but an ex post facto investment; and the excess of the shavings over the \$20,000 would determine the degree in which the investment was profitable.

It is of considerable interest, and not a matter of mere curiosity, to know whether the Barre Wool Combing Company paid a fine, or whether its cheque registers an investment.

If the Company paid a fine, then what the act tells the wary is that next time the Company will go about its violations of the law in cleverer and more circumspect manner.

If the Company's cheque registers an investment, then the open-eyed and non-gullible will conclude pretty accurately that the Company will next time be willing to pay a "fine" twice as large.

Pity, is it not, that our truthful press agencies go about their business with the laxity that Mark Twain charges the scribes of Mormonism with. Mark Twain points sorrowfully to the circumstance that the Mormon scribes, in transcribing their "revelations," regularly break off just where the "revelation" threatens to be interesting. The Boston press agent breaks off just where the Mormon revelationists did, and do.

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