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EDITORIAL

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THE “Official Circular” of the New York Post Office contributes a timely sermon on class-rule.

Under the heading “Attempts to Influence Legislation Prohibited,” the “Official Circular” calls, by order of the Post Office Department, attention to the Executive Order of Jan. 31, 1902, which it proceeds to publish, as follows:

“All officers and employees of the United States of every description, serving in or under any of the Executive Departments, and whether so serving in or out of Washington, are hereby forbidden, either directly or indirectly, individually or through associations, to solicit an increase of pay, or to influence or attempt to influence in their own interest any other legislation whatever, either before Congress or its committees, or in any way save through the heads of the Departments, in or under which they serve, on penalty of dismissal from the Government service.”

He who reads the heading—“Attempts to Influence Legislation Prohibited”—in an official circular issued by a Government Department can draw but one conclusion. The conclusion is that the Government prohibits attempts to influence legislation by anyone whom the Government employs. The Postal Department employs many people in many capacities. Among the people so employed are the railroad magnates with whom contracts are made to carry the mails. An Executive Order, issued in a Republic forbidding the men in its service from influencing legislation in their own interest, by any means whatever, is in itself preposterous. It implies a denial of the suffrage to the employees; it implies a denial of free speech; it implies a denial of the right of peaceful assemblage and petition. Broadly looked upon Executive Order of Jan. 31, 1902, is an arrogation of powers that the letter and spirit of the Constitution deny the Executive.

More closely scanned, the Executive Order is even more iniquitous. Looked at

broadly, it would be free from the stigma of "class legislation." It would smite alike the multimillionaire railroad director "whose daughter marries a foreign Prince and whose son is a fool", and the proletarian girl employe in the bagging department whose wages spell "starvation." Closely scanned, however, it is an Order that smites only the proletarian and leaves free the capitalist element in the Department. The proletarian element may in no wise attempt to influence legislation in their interest; the capitalist element is free "directly or indirectly, individually or through associations" to solicit legislation that shall raise the price, already excessive, paid to them by the Government for operating the mails.

There are no classes in the land? The class struggle is a Socialist invention? The present Government is not a class Government? The President is the President of all the people, dealing square deals all around?

The "Official Circular" of the New York Post Office itself answers the questions. It needs no arguments; it furnishes the crushing facts.

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

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