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EDITORIAL

A LESSON ON TAXATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT is announced that the round trip of the Tammany delegation to the Democratic national convention—railroad fare, hotel bills and drinks included—will cost \$150 a man, or, for the whole delegation, \$100,000.

Where is this money to come from?

It can come only out of wealth. Not one single worthy of the delegation has enriched the store of the nation's wealth by one pin-head's worth. Seeing that the amount comes and must needs come from wealth, it follows that the \$100,000 must come out of the pile of wealth produced by Labor.

From this fact it would look as if Labor "paid the piper," and so it does, in the sense that, had Labor not produced and been plundered of the sum, there would be no Tammany excursion to Denver. Nevertheless, no one can be said to pay for a thing if, in the event of the thing not being gotten, the amount of money does not remain in the pockets of the "payer." He who pays for a house \$20,000, has a house which he had not before, but the \$20,000, which he had before, he has no more. It is essential to the idea of "paying" that the money remains in the pockets of the payer if the thing is not gotten. If it is Labor that pays for the Tammany tour, then, in the event of no tour, Labor would have its \$100,000. But would it? No, indeed. Whether the tour comes off or not, Labor has not that \$100,000. This fact leads straight to the question: "Since it is Labor that produced that \$100,000 and yet has it not, where did Labor drop it?" The answer is: "In the shop."

No tax collector collected the amount. The collector of the amount is the Capitalist Class. It collects from the Working Class the bulk of what the Working Class produces, and the engine of collection is Capital.

As with the Tammany \$100,000, so with the many times \$100,000 that are collected as "taxes" proper—these come from the wealth produced by Labor, but

taken away from Labor in the shop—there is where Labor is “taxed”—that is the “tax office” that Labor must seize.

And Tammany forcibly teaches the lesson.

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

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