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EDITORIAL

SUICIDE OR PURITY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THOSE who recognized, and so wrote to this office, the correctness of the passages in the open letter to Homer Folks (*Daily People*, April 28; *Weekly People*, May 8) that “a study of contemporaneous Federal, as well as State and municipal legislation will reveal the secret that our legislators are hard put to it to find jobs for idle constituents”; that the process is a consequence “of increasing insecurity, if not downright inability to earn a living”; and that the process only tends to “spread demoralization,” seeing that “it creates a class of official menials, with their heels giped by the would-be menials left out in the cold” and who escape the mental strain of getting a job only by exchanging the strain for the “fresh mental strain to keep the job”; as well as those who wrote to express the opinion that the statement was an exaggeration;—all of these are urged to read the report of the trial of the Sugar Trust, especially the passages where the Government weighers who saw the frauds perpetrated, are examined and cross examined.

Of these the testimony of Government weigher R.W. Gascoigne is most luminous. It throws light upon the testimony of the other weighers, and by inference upon the whole subject of offices.

Gascoigne testified that the fraudulent practices by which the Company was cheating the Government were well known, and were the general talk for ten years. The Company’s attorneys thought they could now discredit the witness. Gascoigne was asked: “Why did you not report the fact to your superior officers?” The answer came back like a flash knocking the attorney’s plan into a heap: “Do you think I wanted to commit suicide?”

The answer clinched more than the mere question.

Other weighers had reported. Some were cashiered for their pains, others transferred to less desirable places. Those who reported were boobies who did not

know (it is doubtful that they learned even after the experience) that the very cause that drove them to seek the jobs they held, constantly drives thousands of others into the same plight, and that that hideous “First Great Cause” is the hand in the glove of the alleged popular Political Representative, through the machinery of which the “First Great Cause” buttresses itself.

Capitalism breeds the unemployed and general precariousness of a living. Such conditions press upon the Political State for asylum. The pressure is answered by the creation of some jobs, some more jobs, but never enough. Enough jobs would be impossible. The pressure continues. Cause and effect meeting, corruption is bred, and it becomes suicide to be pure.

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