

EDITORIAL

CONGRESSIONAL GLEANINGS— DOCTORING THE “RECORD.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

ON May 4, Senator Heyburn of Idaho, with the habitual pettiness of his intellect, was consuming the Senate’s time with a long-winded oration on the registry; tiresomely he related how 90 per cent. of the maps that he had franked to his constituents went astray in the mails; and tiresomely he pecked away at the mail service, like a factory boss in a splenetic mood.

The spectacle was curious for the “most august legislative hall of all the world.” The Idaho Senator seemed to think so too, and was proud of it that he should be the center of the spectacle. But not all the Senators shared the Idahoan’s appreciation of the spectacle. One of those who did not was Senator Bulkeley of Connecticut. True enough, parliamentary propriety might have curbed the impatience of the Nutmeg Stater. It was otherwise. When Senator Heyburn’s wind finally gave out, up rose Senator Bulkeley and tersely summarized Heyburn’s performance and Heyburn himself by saying: “The very presence of the Senator from Idaho in this chamber is sufficient cause for merriment.”

The explosion was immediate. Senator Heyburn tore and stormed. He complained of “disrespectful treatment”; he refused to be pacified; such utterances were not “jokes”; Senator Bulkeley disclaimed malice. “That will not do!” roared Heyburn, and he conducted himself as if nothing would satisfy him short of the immediate sacking of the Connecticut man, and his being placed on the “black list,” so to speak.

The scene from beginning to end was a “page of history.” The *Congressional Record* is there to photograph the pages of history, enacted in the two halls of “the most august parliament of all the world.” Nevertheless as a courtplaster {?} on the lacerated feelings of the illustrious senior Senator from Idaho, the Senators, after

the adjournment of the Senate, mark you, agreed “to edit Senator Bulkeley’s speech in such way that the language complained of by Senator Heyburn will not appear in the permanent record in the proceedings of the Senate.” And so it was done. A *Congressional Record* for that date, subsequently issued, appears doctored, mutilated, and, comparing one issue of the *Record* with another, contradictory.

Thorny is the path that the historian of the future will have to tread in his endeavor to reproduce the “Sights of Congress.” The Heyburn episode and its Bulkeley accompaniment are not the only doctored ones in that official document that the historian will have trouble to straighten up.

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