

EDITORIAL

THE SQUIRREL WHEEL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

BY his decision pronouncing unconstitutional the law recently passed in this State making it a misdemeanor to employ aliens on public works, County Judge Fred L. Downs of Albion will evoke from the Cave-Dwellers element in the Labor Movement a howl long, loud, piteous and profound.

The howl will, undoubtedly, be instigated to a great extent by the capitalist captains of the howling Labor-Lieutenants.

With as little chance for there to be a mistake about it, the identical capitalist captains will pat Judge Downs on the back, and otherwise encourage him.

The howl, the instigating of the same, and the patting jointly constitute a sort of squirrel wheel in which the capitalist class endeavors to keep the workers trotting.

The capitalist needs an overstocked labor-market. If the market is not overstocked he has no pretext to pay low wages, and is put to a number of shifts to reach the same end. These shifts involve more or less expense, fees to constables, and the like to arrest "vagabonds," and force them to work for nothing, being the leading one. In pursuit of his needs, the capitalist promotes immigration. Not that immigration is the cause of overstocking the market, the same being sufficiently overstocked by reason of improved labor-displacing machinery. But immigration tends to draw attention from the nerve that aches, and to draw attention in a direction from which special advantage accrues to the capitalist—the advantage of dividing the workers against one another through racial hatred, accentuated by the seeming circumstance that the immigrant is the cause of low wages. Thus immigration is promoted by the capitalist.

The capitalist's policy in the premises, in turn, sets in motion the A.F. of L.-ic racial prejudice above referred to, hence, also the Socialist partyite policy of anti-immigration.

Through the two, “labor” laws are enacted that in all manner of ways place the immigrant, or alien, at a disadvantage with the native or naturalized workers, and these laws, in turn, afford an opportunity to courts to rekindle the prejudices with adverse decisions that renew the efforts to pass new laws,—and thus, the workers upon whose minds the sight of Socialism has not yet fallen are kept on revolving in a vicious circle.

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