Introducing the Gentleman from South Carolina

BY JAY LOVESTONE

Unless all the rules of the game of politics as it is played today are thrown overboard, we will soon be treated to a rousing celebration of the great "progressive" victory in the Senate. Many a so-called progressive journal, from "Battling Bob" LaFollette's Magazine in Wisconsin to the dreary organs of the staid old organ of Gompers and Brothers, the American Federationist, will soon greet with acclamation the election of the Democratic Senator, Ellison D. Smith of South Carolina to the Chairmanship of the Interstate Commerce Committee.

Who is this gentleman, Smith? What has he ever done to win the distinguished service cross from the capitalist class?

Senator Smith hails from the textile-baron ridden South Carolina, where thousands of children are exploited and denied the opportunity to receive even the most elementary education.

Senator Smith is a native son of a State where thousands of women employed in the textile mills are subject to the most despicable working conditions, starvation wages, 50 per cent getting less than $12 a week, and long hours destroying their vitality.

Smith Reactionary Nonentity.

This representative of the powerful textile interests of South Carolina in the United States is a reactionary nonentity. He has now been in the Senate for about fourteen years. During this period he has not put over a single measure that smacks even of the palest progressivism. His record in the Senate is distinctly bad. It is marked by many hostile votes to the workingmen and farmers on the major issues confronting the country.

Feb. 27, 1912 while the 62nd Congress was in session, a bill was proposed to investigate the condition of the textile strikers in Lawrence, Mass. Senator Smith dodged voting on this question.

When the final passage of the Eight Hour Law for railway workers was before the Senate, Mr. Smith likewise found it convenient to avoid voting.

In the Sixty-Third Congress Senator Smith joined with the reactionaries to pass the vicious Bacon amendment to the Seaman's Act proposed by Mr. LaFollette, who has now thrust greatness upon him by making him chairman of the most important Senatorial committee. When the Clayton anti-trust act was before the Senate for final disposition, Mr. Smith made it his business to abstain from voting. The gentleman from South Carolina did not even have the courage of his reactionary convictions.

For Child Labor.

But in the Sixty-Fourth Congress Senator Smith picked up sufficient courage to come out openly as an enemy of the working masses. On August 8, 1916, the South Carolina solon, speaking on behalf of the textile magnates whom he served in Washington, spoke and voted against the Federal Child Labor Bill.

In the next Congress Mr. Smith fought against a bill providing for an appropriation to help run the Employment Bureau of the Department of Labor. When the war was on in full swing and a motion was made in the Senate to strike out the "Work or Fight" amendment from the draft bill, Mr. Smith did not take a position.

At the close of 1918 a bill was presented to the Senate to tax those products in interstate commerce which were produced by child labor. The Honorable Smith again came up to the scratch as a loyal servant of the Southern textile interests and made a vigorous fight against the enactment even of this half-hearted attempt at limiting the employment of children.

Against Woman Suffrage.

When the bill to give the vote to women was presented to the 66th Congress, on June 4, 1919, Mr. Smith did his level best to defeat the measure.

And even on the railroad question Senator Smith's record is punctuated with the same straddling weakness, and an occasional open fight against progressive or semi-progressive measures. It is true Senator Smith has not voted for the Esch-Cummins Railway Act. But he waged no real fight against its enactment. What is more, he has on other occasions shown distinct friendship for the railroad interests. When a motion was made in the Senate on Dec. 20, 1919 to extend the period of Federal control of railroads for two years, Senator Smith fought against the measure in order to hasten the government's granting a bonus of hundreds of millions of dollars to the railway corporations for their having allowed the country to use the roads while at war.

Safe and Regular.

The new chairman of the Interstate Commerce Committee which will handle the railway question, one of the most important problems before Congress, is safe and regular. Senator Smith has proved himself a tried and true war horse in the service of the capitalists of this country. When LaFollette and his squad of insurgents voted for Smith they did not help by an iota to repeal the vicious bonus to the multimillionaire railway owners. After it was announced that Smith was elected to this key position in the Senate the railway stocks in the Wall Street market reacted very favorably. The big bankers and manufacturers controlling the arteries of the nation, the railroads, heaved a sigh of relief. LaFollette's campaign of attrition had ended. They could now go down to business and forget about Congressional interference with their dividends. The progressives had the empty victory and the capitalists had the full dividends.

Watch the "Daily Worker" for the first installment of "A Week," the great epic of the Russian revolution by the brilliant young Russian writer, Iury Libedinsky. It will start soon.