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EDITORIAL

THE ANTI-SUGAR TRUST BILL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE long expected bill of complaint in the Government's suit to dissolve the Sugar Trust was filed at last in the United States Circuit Court. While the bill is making the unskilful laugh with joy, it can not but make the judicious grieve.

The bill recites a long list of allegations. These are meant to be charges. Yet the charges read more like "points" for an address, or an article, upon "The Natural Development of Business from the Little Country Store to the Large Modern Plant of Industry." Step by step, or "point" by "point," a stage of industrial growth is recorded; and each stage, though the bill does not so specify, suggests some existing law that the respective stage rendered necessary for its protection. Not a "point" is cited the legality of which is not deeply imbedded in the legislation of modern society. Not a "point" is cited the observance of which does not pass current as an evidence of business push and thrift in the individual business concern. Not a "point" is cited, which, if branded with criminality, would not cause any and every business concern to become impossible. In short, the "points" cited in the bill are so many bricks reared one upon the other that go, and have gone, and must perforce go to rear the structure of Private Enterprise, and any one of which bricks, if pulled out, would cause the whole structure to shake, if not to collapse. And yet the bill is in the nature of an indictment; and the indictment is drawn up upon the silent principle that, while any one of the bricks is legitimate, all of them together constitute a tort.

Did we say the bill should make the judicious grieve? Not quite so. The bill is of a nature to cause both the unskilful and the judicious to rejoice—each for a different reason.

The unskilful will rejoice believing the bill will be effective. To them the bill is a

“first step” to disprove Socialism, and to prove that Capitalism has within itself the means to correct its “defects” and “abuses.”

The judicious will rejoice realizing that the bill is, in fact, an indictment of Capitalism. It demonstrates the evils that lie latent in each stage of capitalist development, and which do not come to the surface until the structure is complete, whereupon it is condemned by the very element that sang the praises of its separate parts as veritable ideals of civically virtuous enterprise. The judicious will furthermore rejoice because they know the bill is, in the end and in substance, bound to fail. Not the darning needle of the Reformer, but the sharp scissors of the Revolutionist, is the weapon fit to remove evils that lie in the very woof of a social system.

In the meantime the bill will travel its devious, labyrinthian way, reported and counter-reported in the press of its friends, until they themselves can not tell whether they stand on their feet or their heads. It will then be dropped for some other mare’s-nest.

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