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EDITORIAL

## THE GARDNER BILL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE appeal to Congress, published in another column, against the Gardner anti-immigration bill, and issued and circulated for signatures by the Arbeiter Ring (Workingmen's Circle), a Jewish benevolent organization, contains this sentence:

“Gardner bills do not ‘fill the bill.’ The subject and the occasion call for bills of very different caliber, spirit and purpose.”

A feature of many of the leading propositions that are springing up nowadays is that they grapple with live issues by means of bills that do not “fill the bill.” An instance in point is the Gardner bill which proposes to raise the present small impost of two dollars to a forty dollar mulct upon the immigrant. In other words, the Gardner bill proposes to hamstring immigration as a means to remove what its framer considers the ills of immigration.

Hardly an “ill of immigration,” of the many that are mentioned, is an ill that immigration is actually chargeable with. Hardly an “ill of immigration,” of the scores that one hears lengthy orations upon, but is an ill directly chargeable to domestic institutions. To speak of such ills as “ills of immigration” denotes confusion of thought, and a shallow mind.

Does the immigrant overstock the labor-market?—Were America a little country like Belgium, and were the immigration of the world pouring into such a limited territory, then the outcry might have some color of reason. But it happens that, as the appeal correctly quotes from the 1908 Republican national platform, ours is “a vast domain of 3,000,000 square miles, literally bursting with latent treasure, still awaiting the magic of capital and industry to be converted to the practical uses of mankind.” To the extent that the charge seems true, that the immigrant overstocks the labor-market in such a country, the charge is a

boomerang against those at home, against those responsible for institutions so iniquitous that the bulk of that 3,000,000 patrimony of square miles, together with the latent wealth with which it literally bursts, is virtually wiped from the map, and the Nation reduced to the proportions of a petty and barren corner of the earth

Does the immigrant lower the standard of living?—For the same reason that the charge of the immigrant’s overstocking the labor-market is a boomerang that recoils upon the maker of the charge, the maker of this second charge is by his own charge knocked down. Impossible the lowering of the standard of living in a country with latent wealth enough to raise the standard of the whole world’s living—unless the deed is done by the domestic element itself and against the ambition of the immigrant.

And so throughout the gamut of “ills.”

The country is plagued with ills, indeed, but these call for bills of a caliber, spirit and purpose very different from the caliber of Gardner bills, that are no better than quack treatments; very different from the narrow spirit of dog-in-the-mangerism; very different from the unstatesman-like purpose of the crier of “stop-thief.”

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