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EDITORIAL

A TIMELY QUESTION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE correspondence, recently published in these columns from South Carolina on the extent in which child-labor, white child-labor, at that, is carried on in that State, together with the overwhelming defeat suffered by a bill to prevent children under twelve years from working in the mills, recalls to mind an incident in the debate, held in the Federal Senate on the fourth of this month, when the Rivers and Harbors bill was up.

The term of the Congress was running out. The beneficiaries of that bill, redolent with corruption, were in high state of nervousness. As they justly feared, the bill was talked to death. Among the nervous Senators, who saw their pet scheme dying, was Senator Tillman of South Carolina. While Senator Carter was taking up one fraudulent item after another in the bill, appropriating sums of various magnitude for all sorts of fraudulent purposes, like, for instance, \$5,000 to “deepen the channel” of Mattituck harbor, a “harbor” with from one to two feet of water, Senator Tillman was becoming visibly more and more nervous, until, the “rivers” of South Carolina having been reached, he could contain himself no longer, and broke into frequent interruptions. And well he might:

Upon the Wateree \$20,000 were bestowed; the Congaree received \$5,000 for unstated purposes; the Ashley was remembered with \$25,000; into the Wappoo Cut was dropped \$8,000;—Senator Tillman could stand it no longer; when the last item was mentioned he jumped up to give personal testimony. He observed:

“This is not a river at all; it is merely an arm of the sea running around behind the sea islands. In order to give a means of transportation for the smaller craft, the estuary in the Wappoo Cut has been deepened. I have myself been through that cut in a steamer”—

The Senator got no further; he was confronted with the report that showed the Cut had only two feet of water!

Senator Tillman of South Carolina likes to pose as a farmer. Fact is he is much

more deeply interested in mills located in his State. He also poses as a bright particular cultivator of the white race; the negro's inferiority is a pet subject with him, and likewise the necessity of protecting the whites against "ignorant negro domination." The correspondence, referred to above, showed that illiteracy was growing more rapidly among the white folks of South Carolina than among the negroes, due to child-labor; it showed a steady stunting of the white race there due to child-labor; and it showed that a parson and a physician united in commending this state of things.

Question: "Can it be that the manufacturing Senator Tillman of South Carolina is simultaneously engaged in looting both the Federal Treasury by means of fraudulent appropriations for deepening "Cuts," and in looting the race in South Carolina by means of undermining the health and stunting both the minds and the bodies of the children whom he works in his factory?"

**Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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