

EDITORIAL

THE BUSINESS METHODS COMMISSION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THERE is in Congress a bill creating a government business methods Commission. The bill was introduced in the Senate. The son-in-law of the Standard Oil Trust, Senator Aldrich of Rhode Island, is the special sponsor of the idea. Speaking on the bill on last February 21, Senator Aldrich said:

“If I could be permitted to do it, I would undertake to run this government for \$300,000,000 a year less than it is now run for.”

These words, coming from such a source, have a value altogether apart from the objects of the bill itself. The words should dispel the illusion in the mind of “nationalizers” that nationalization would bring relief to those in need of relief.

There is only one class of public officials whose “wages” are right royal—those are the officials who could be dispensed with to advantage; all other officials, without whom the wheels in the machinery of the government can not run, are paid scurvily; in the measure of the necessity of their work the pay rises in scurviness. The capitalist political state is a miniature picture of a capitalist private establishment. In the capitalist factory the work is done from top to bottom by wage earners. They are the colonels, captains, corporals and privates. Above them all is the capitalist field marshal—a pure superfluity, but the actual beneficiary of the labor performed. Similarly in the capitalist political government. The barnacles draw the large pays; the wage earners are plucked.

The government business methods commission, favored by Senator Aldrich, is calculated to sweep from the government some of the sentimentality that still clings to it. The one-time fact of the government being of, by and for the people wore off as fast as the bourgeois ripened, and bourgeois society secreted the proletarian sediment. To-day the government is unmistakably of, by and for the bourgeois class.

Why, think the Aldriches, give better wages to the wage slaves in the government that in the private capitalist's employ? Why keep a larger number of these on the pay roll than a private establishment would keep? Why not make the government's wage slave employes tend, so to speak, a dozen looms as happens in the New England textile mills? No reason for not doing so. If administered on business methods—and why not? did not the country grow powerful and glorious by these methods?—at least \$300,000,000 could be saved a year. It goes without saying that the “saving” is to come out of the wage slave employes' earnings; not a cent is to come out of the figure heads' right royal salaries. On the contrary. Their “wages” will probably be raised. In New York State the proposition already is to raise the Governor's “wages” to \$20,000. And properly so. In a capitalist private mill “savings” are never made out of profits. Why should “savings” be made out of the plums that the governmental figureheads feast on?

As the capitalist treats the wage slaves in his private plant so is he to treat them in the government which represents all these plants. As he treats the government wage slaves in the departments now embraced by the government, so would they be treated in any and all additional departments that may be “nationalized.” The political government never can be the government of the Socialist or Industrial Republic.

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