

EDITORIAL

AT THE SICK-BED OF FREEDOM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE question is often asked, Is the condition of the American wage-earners improving or deteriorating? The Socialist answers that they are deteriorating. The anti-Socialist says they are improving. Let the Constitution and By-Laws adopted in January of this year by the Association of the Postal Telegraph Employes, an Association of over 3,200 members distributed all over the country, answer the question.

Section II. of the constitution provides for one Director from each District, and that these Directors shall be elected by the respective District Superintendents of the Company.

This country became free upon the principle that its own people, and not the British Crown, should select its Governors. The principle was essential to freedom. If the Crown were allowed to select the Governors of the several colonies, these Governors would be the Crown's creatures, who would do the Crown's bidding, instead of being the Representatives of the people, attending to the people's interests. Thus started this nation. To-day there is found an organization, over 3,000 in number, with interests as hostile to the Company as the interests of the colonies were to the British Crown, and yet they bend the knee and neck to the Crown of the Company, and allow IT to appoint their directors.

Section IX. of the constitution provides that the same may be amended only with the approval of the General Manager.

This country started on its independent career with a population that insisted upon the right to amend its constitution with its own approval, and nobody else's. To-day we see a body of our people, numbering not less than 3,000, meekly assigning to the Crown, which rules them, the right to refuse approval to changes that, in their opinion, may become necessary in their organic law when their

Government becomes destructive of their rights, liberties and pursuit of happiness.

The fourth paragraph of the By-Laws provides that the members shall not join any other organization hostile to the interests of the Company.

The interests of the Company require a roll of employes who are so abject as to be willing to relinquish to the Company the rights mentioned above. Any organization that would enlighten and, thereby, infuse backbone to the Company's employes, would be "hostile to the Company" in the Company's eyes. Without organization masses of men can promote no improvement for their members. This clause of the By-Laws relinquishes the right of organization which was a conquest of the American Revolution, and that clause of the By-Laws lowers the employes to the level of the serfs who belonged to the feudal lords.

Laws, Constitutions, regulations, etc., etc., reflect conditions. The conditions reflected by the Constitution and By-Laws of the Postal Telegraph Employes Association reflect a state of things that denotes DECLINE.

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

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