

EDITORIAL

KNOCKING OUT ITSELF.

By DANIEL DE LEON

FROM an unexpected source there is just now pouring down upon the people a flood of first class literature which is calculated feelingly to persuade all attentive readers against capitalism as an impossibilism, and in favor of Socialism as the only way out. That source is the Woolen Industry. The statement sounds incredible. Yet, once more, fact is more wondrous than fiction.

It being pretty well settled that the new Congress will direct its attack first upon the Wool Schedule, manufacturers of woolens and wool raisers seem to have organized themselves into an Academy for the free imparting of information. The contents of the literature that does the imparting may be divided into two categories—one, theoretical, on economics; the other, practical, on the technique of the industry.

As to the first part, it is of little value. What is sound therein the Socialist press and other Socialist literature is teaching much better. What is unsound in it does not harm, and is easily disposed of by anybody with elemental powers of reasoning.

It is the second part that is of inestimable value. No one can read through any or those articles, treating upon the “shrinkage” of wool, the “amount of wool available,” the “grease in wool,” the yield of the average sheep, the keep of flocks, the “wastage in wool”, etc., etc., without he does a number of things—

1st. Admit that an accurate knowledge of the technique of the many branches of the industry is a prerequisite to decide whether the Woolen Industry is or is not fleecing the “consumer”;

2nd. That to acquire this knowledge much time and careful investigation are necessary;

3rd. That it is in the interest of private interests to lie about the facts;

4th. That, in so important a matter, a nation may not place reliance upon the

statements of interested parties;

5th. That the only way to mete out justice to both producer and consumer is to eliminate the element of interestedness from the contest; finally

6th. That there is no other way out of the dilemma than the collective ownership and operation of the Woolen Industry—as collective as is the consumption of the output.

And there goes the capitalist system, proved an impossibility by the Woolen Industry itself—and every additional fact that its literature adduces helping only to underscore the point.

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