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EDITORIAL

Trying to Make Labor 'Swarm'

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Those familiar with the way of agriculturists are familiar with the trick played on bees when they are wanted to "swarm." Two old tin kettles are taken, they are banged against each other; the noise thus produced produces the desired effect upon the bees, and the farmer complacently looks to a fresh supply of honey from a new hive as the fruit of the tin-kettle noise. The collection of Puddin' Head Fakirs that calls itself the "Officers of the A.F. of L.," is now trying to play the "swarming" game upon the workingmen, and the tin kettles they use to this end are the capitalist sheets with which they, as a matter of course, are and have periodically been, on intimate terms. Between those fakirs and these sheets the motto is: "You tickle me and I tickle you." The sheets need pennies, the fakirs need pennies. Here is a point of contact. The pennies must of course come out of the workers' pockets. Consequently the Fakirs start sensational reports and these are greedily taken up by the sheets. The process is expected to cause the workers to buy the sheets, and, having been stuffed, to swarm back to the defunct A.F. of L., and thereby chip in their pennies to the support of the Fakirs. But it so happens that in this, as in all other instances of alliances between Fakirs and Capitalists, the Capitalists take their share of profits in cash, the Fakirs theirs in credit. The present instance is one in point.

The Fakirs are at their wits' end for funds. How to get more? The plan is to make believe they are going to sail in for an eight-hour day. Accordingly, they have been claiming a wealth of treasury which is conspicuous by its absence, a strength of membership that is not there, and, with these two falsehoods as nest-eggs, they calculate to play upon the overworked toilers, wheedle them into the A.F. of L. and wheedle them out of their funds. The scheme was perfected; the capitalist sheets were notified and for the last week the old kettles have been thumping fit to make one deaf.

But will the workers swarm?

No. The real eight-hour day would indeed be a boon. But in the first place, it is a boon only if it is to accrue to all the workers by compelling the employment of more hands than are now at work, and thus ease the army of the unemployed. The fact,

however, is that, even where the eight-hour day has been successful it has been a curse rather than a blessing, for the simple reason that the bosses who yielded, quickly introduced machinery or perfected machinery they had, thereby they could produce at a reduced rate of hours more plentifully than before, and thus, so far from employing MORE men, they employed FEWER. The result, as far as the enforced idleness is concerned, was just the reverse of the one bargained for. After eight-hour day "victories" the army of the unemployed grew bigger; only a few profited by the "victory" gained by all, the others had to starve for their pains.

In the second place, even those who kept their jobs made a sad experience. Eight hours with modern machinery is more enervating and wearing work than ten without machinery. These workers found themselves at the end of the eight-hour day more completely prostrated than before.

Finally the workers know from the fate of the miners, the garment workers and other organizations who have been in the clutches of the A.F. of L., that strikes ARE PLAYED AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE PLAYED OUT UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A STRONG INDEPENDENT POLITICAL MOVEMENT OF THE WORKERS FOR THEIR COMPLETE EMANCIPATION. The miners, the garment workers and all others in the large industries are to-day worse off than they were before, and their strikes, being led by "pure and simpledom," have materially aided in their downfall.

The tin kettles may get a little crop of pennies, but the A.F. of L. Fakir leaders surely will not. Their swindle will not deceive enough workers this time to pay even for one day's rum bill of their past and future ex-President.

Bees may be induced to "swarm" forever. Workingmen not. Workingmen are not bees. Workingmen are human beings with the potentiality of thought, and that thought will assert itself some time.

The Fakirs may deceive some people all the time, and all the people some time, but they can't deceive the whole working class all the time.

Labor will not "swarm" this time.

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

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