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EDITORIAL

A SIEVE ON PAPER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

JUDGE Peter S. Grosscup of the United States Circuit Court granted last Tuesday in Chicago a temporary injunction against the packing firms generally known as the Meat Trust. It was this identical Judge Grosscup, who, in 1894, joined in granting an injunction against the American Railway Union. He and his associates pronounced the performance of 1894 “a Gatling gun on paper,” and so it was; no doubt in their clubs they are now pronouncing the performance of last Tuesday “a sieve on paper,” and so it will prove, and was meant to be.

Last Tuesday’s injunction assumes to order the meat firms not to do some twenty and odd things. Among the things they are ordered not to do, and as typical of the rest, is to curtail the quantity of meat shipped to the market. In other words, the Court presumes to direct a private concern on the quantity of its output, without, of course, assuming the risk of the loss that might accrue to such concerns from an overstocked market. Among the weak points in the armor of the capitalist theory that the “Captains of Industry” are useful members of society, is the fact that these “Captains” can not, as individuals, be in possession of the fullness of information, that organized society could be, on the statistics of wants. Hence, to a great extent, the panics and crises that convulse a society, the supplying of whose wants is in the keeping of the “Captains.” And, strange tho’ it may seem, that very weakness has been turned into an argument in favor of the “Captains’ of Industry” social system, that the Grosscups are politico-judicial props of. The element of “risk” has been reared into a justification for keeping society over industrial volcanoes. Consequently, the “Captains” have been protected in their full attributes of determining, among other things, the output of their goods.

In view of this, the Grosscup injunction violates its own capitalist premises. Is, then, the injunction “revolutionary”? Bless your heart, no! It is a sieve on paper, carefully

drawn up in such way that the Meat Trust can run through, just the same as the 1894 injunction was a Gatling gun on paper, carefully drawn up in such way that the workingmen, on strike for redress, could be mowed down.

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