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EDITORIAL

A MANY-SIDED McCOWAN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

READERS of THE PEOPLE will remember the luminous article from our Washington, D.C., correspondent, when the "arid lands grab" was on the tapis in Congress in the shape of an irrigation bill. They will remember that the scheme was fathered by the Nevada Members of Congress, Stewart and Newlands, and that it was pushed under color of a humanitarian plan to improve simultaneously the condition of the Indian—"the Nation's ward"—, and the workingman—the Nation's Pet. The scheme fell through then, and there, and under that shape. But when did schemers ever abandon a scheme? Surely not so long as there remained a prospect of fastening on somebody's back, and so long as there remained a back that was thought promiseful enough to fasten upon. So with the "arid lands grab." Discomfited in Washington, it now reappears in Arizona, identical in all respects, different only in outward garb.

The Arizona re-incarnation of the game preserves the old feature of "love and affection for the workingman" as a cloak under which to do him and others; the outward garb, however, is not this time the simple and majestic folds of a proposed Federal law. It is plainer tailoring. In order to make up for this deficiency, it is multifarious tailoring. The garb is, first, editorial articles; second, a "Home Savings Bank and Trust Company"; and, third, a "land agency."

The editorial makes out of love and affection for the workingman, be it noted, a thrilling plea for convict labor. "Why," the question is editorially asked, "should men who stole, and killed and forged be allowed to live in the idle luxury of the penitentiary, while honest labor on the outside is not housed and kept half so well? Let the convicts be used to build irrigation dams!" In other words, these humanitarian capitalist schemers, first uphold a social system that drives men, through poverty, to crime and into the penitentiary; thereupon, the capitalist schemers seek to profit by their own wrong-doing. They would utilize the convicts as the cheapest of labor, and thereby throw the workers out of work and into still greater poverty. They, accordingly, pretend to assist the workingmen, by compelling

them to compete in the Labor Market with the cheap Labor of the convicts!—By this process of “protecting the workingmen,” the arid lands grab furnishes the Labor at the capitalists’ own figures.

But Labor is not enough. Money is also needed. The money is to be furnished, not by the capitalists, but by the innocents, including workingmen themselves, who have managed to pinch themselves and save up a few pennies. To this end a “Home Savings Bank” is set up and boomed for all it is worth. So then, there you have your Labor (gotten at the expense of the workers), and there you have your money (wheedled out of the workingmen).

Furnished in this way, as the schemers expect to be, with both Labor and Money free, to set up their merchandise, all that is wanted is some more innocents to invest therein. To this end a “land agency” is set up, and likewise boomed in a way to make peoples’ mouths water.

So complicated a scheme must, one would imagine, be conducted by at least three geniuses in the gentle art of bunco. A great mistake. It is the occasion that makes the man and calls forth the genius. This occasion is equal to itself. It found a genius, who, in his one and own person unites the three departments.

Who is the genius that runs the Savings Bank, needed in this case?—S.M. McCowan, Vice-President!

Who is the talent that administers the “land agency”?—S.M. McCowan, Supt. Indian School!

And who is the journalistic luminary, who, with editorials pithy and pointed, would furnish the Labor almost free, gratis and for nothing, by dumping the convicts into the Labor Market, and thus, “out of love and affection for the working man,” keep them out of jobs?—Why, S.M. McCowan, Editor of the *Phoenix, Arizona, Republican*.

The world should stop spinning on its axle-tree for a few hours at least so as to afford it an opportunity to contemplate well so many-sided a prodigy, in the many-sided art of skinning the workers as this many-sided McCowan.

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

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