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EDITORIAL

SETTING THE PACE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WE all know that “every boy can be President,” and the chances for every boy to be a Congressman are about 480 times as great. It will, therefore, behoove every boy to study closely the conduct of the present Congressmen, and to apply the fruits of his observations to his daily life. Apparently, that is; but how about the reality?

The present fifty-eighth Congress, the model and pace-setter for ambitious Young America, is just now preparing to make a rich “grab.” Prolonged by the action of the House itself, the recent special session of Congress ended at noon of Monday, December 7, and instanter, on that same noon of Monday, December 7, commenced the regular session of Congress now going on. For the three seconds between the two taps of gavel which closed one session and opened the other—that same interval which was “constructively” utilized by President Roosevelt to promote Wood and some thirty-six other officers—the members of both houses of Congress sat quietly in their upholstered congressional seats. And now, bolstered up by the law, which says that “mileage shall be paid for each session of Congress,” the House Committee on Appropriations, in response to the unanimous clamor from both houses, is about to report favorably on a clause in the Legislative Appropriation bill, providing for the payment of \$175,000 as indemnification for the “actual individual traveling expenses” incurred by the members while quietly sitting in the aforesaid upholstered seats! The members from nearby States, whose mileage, that is, share of the “grab,” will be comparatively small, may virtuously raise their voice in protest; but not so the more distant men. Their efforts will send the bill through.

Let not Young America miss the lesson and example. Here are men—shining examples, at that—well paid for their work at Washington, and generously paid for their expenses in getting there, making a strenuous attempt to become as

generously paid for expenses which they never incurred nor thought to, and “long-headedly,” “cleverly,” “thriftily,” “industriously,” etc., etc., determined not to incur. Young America, if he follows his pacer, will now also try to receive pay for expenses not incurred by him. The older workers should follow suit. In short, the whole wage working class might try to fall into the habit of drawing revenues for work “done” by them while they were on a perennial vacation. As many of them will soon enjoy a long enforced vacation, the congressional example is timely.

It need not be said that the capitalists, merchants, and railroad directors in this pace-setting Congress would be among the first to discharge any of their employes who might attempt to follow their pace; but that’s only because these employes, being as yet satisfied with a pittance of what they produce, have not yet learned the trick of their pace-setters—to get where they can appropriate “salaries and expenses” unto themselves.

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