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EDITORIAL

REFORM THAT CRIES TO HEAVEN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Socialist is not after reforms—leastwise in a country like ours in which Capitalism and Socialism face each other, with no feudalism between the two demanding reformation. Nevertheless, one thing there is that demands reformation, speedy, quick as possible, and quicker than possible, in the interest of Common sense. That thing is the date for the convening of newly elected Congresses.

As things now stand, a new Congress does not meet, except upon special call, until a year and a month after its election. This is a bizarre arrangement. It is bizarre even if the complexion of the old is not changed by the new body.

This year's political turnover underscores the absurdity of such a state of things; it goes further, it lays the finger upon a positively harmful, upon a dangerous spot in the running of the Nation's governmental machinery.

An election has just been held that changes the political complexion of both branches of Congress—as to the House, a Republican “Standpat” majority of 58 is transformed into a Democratic majority of 60; as to the Senate, 9 perhaps 10 Republican seats are to be occupied by Democrats, and these, together with the “Insurgent” or “Progressive” Republicans, hitherto a small minority, and with whom the Democrats have many points in common, can rule the Upper Chamber. A completer overturn can ill be imagined, within the framework of capitalist government. And yet, unless the President should elect to face a hostile Legislature by summoning the new body, whose term begins on March 4, to a special session, the newly elected Legislature will not convene until the first Monday of December, 1911. Until the 4th of March, that is, full four months after being thrown out, the expelled House of Representatives continues in the full enjoyment and, no doubt, exercise of the powers which a solemn and overwhelming vote of the citizens

stripped it of; until that 4th of March, the Senate, which will be wrenched from the Standpat regime by the State Legislatures in the course of the next two months, will, likewise retain the functions which the suffrage has declared it shall no longer exercise.

This is bad enough. But is not yet all, nor the worst.

From March 4th, the day when the term of the Sixty-second Congress will begin to run, until the first Monday of December 1911, when the Congress is first to meeting in regular session, that is, fully 9 months, the citizens' expressed will remains in a sort of limbo, hung up, in abeyance, struck with paralysis, muzzled, impotent to enforce itself—unless the President elect(s) to summon the Congress in special session. In other words, for fully 9 months the President is empowered to veto the results of a national election. The democratic Sense is scandalized at the fact that the German Kaiser's will can dissolve a Reichstag that does not suit His Majesty. How scandalous the fact that, in a republic, the President's will should have practically the same power during the first nine months of the life of a Congress that is distasteful to his "policies."

Here is matter deserving immediate attention. Reformers and Revolutionists alike have here a common cause, a common ground upon which to act.

In default of an agent of its own in Congress, the Socialist Labor Party commends the above to the attention of the Social Democratic Congressman Victor L. Berger.

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