

EDITORIAL

## THE DREDGER BILLS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE so-called Statehood Bill, which proposes to enroll Oklahoma and the Indian Territory, New Mexico and Arizona as two new States, has aroused much discussion both in and out of Congress. To the Working Class of the territories concerned, or of the land at large, for that matter, it does not matter a row of pins whether the four territories are taken in as four, as three, as two or as one single State, or whether they, or any one, or sets of them, are wholly left out. The fate of those territories will leave untouched the only question that concerns the workers—the question of their wage slavery. Improved machinery, coupled with concentration of capital, and both in private hands, will continue to lower the value of labor and, through the displacement of hands, to drive still further down the price of labor-power in the labor-market. Statehood, or no Statehood, for the territories does not even remotely come within sight of placing the tools of production within reach of the wage slave—the only thing that concerns him. As far as the Statehood Bill itself is concerned, what it will affect in the main is the complexion of political combinations in Congress. Nevertheless, so intimately are politics and economics connected that the political power of the ruling class can not be touched without tugging at the heartstrings of their purse, quite strongly at the purses of some of them. The Statehood Bill has done so. In doing so it has brought some interesting facts to the surface. In that consists its main merit to the working class; it has acted as a dredger of hidden sentiment.

The choice one among the lot, dredged to the surface by the bill is the true inwardness of the capitalist “Pillars of Law and Order.” Mayor Rose of Milwaukee—a “sanctity of the family,” “sanctity of the law,” etc., etc., upholder—is a large holder of real estate in Phoenix, Arizona. It seems that if Arizona is joined with New Mexico to form one State the taxes of the Arizona dog-in-the-manger

landholders will go up. At least they fear so. Such a prospect endangers the capacity to hold land for a boom, and of course grated on the nerves of “Law and Order.” Mayor Rose, accordingly, hied him from Milwaukee to Arizona, called around him his fellow “Law and Orderites,” together they held an indignation meeting, and, expressing the sentiments of his fellows, Rose, the capitalist chief official of a large city, the paragon of all the virtues that “put Socialism to shame”—Rose declared: “If this bill [the Statehood Bill] passes THE STREETS OF PHOENIX WILL BE DRENCHED IN BLOOD!”

It was not Rose, the capitalist and capitalist politician alone who uttered that sentiment. The sentiment was the joint utterance of the gentleman’s fellow landholders present; they applauded him to the echo. Aye, it was a capitalist cat that leaped out of the bag—a cat that is ever ready to leap out, whether in Arizona or Vermont, Florida or Oregon.

The Statehood Bill should be called the Dredger Bill. It has dredged up a fact, of the value of which the working class may form an opinion by the anxiety of the capitalist to keep that cat in the bag—the fact that there is not a crime at which the “Law and Order” brigade will scruple, nor a risk they will not run, even to the chance of their being hanged, if the slightest danger threatens the fruition of their stolen goods—the fact that the capitalist “Law and Order” brigade ever are disposed to threaten fresh violence in order to protect the fruit of past rapine, their sacrosanct PROPERTY.

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