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EDITORIAL

LO, A CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THERE is a certain error abroad, a superstition, it may be called, among the people, at large, the workers, in particular. It is the belief that the American Woolen Company, the concern that is charged with responsibility for what is called "the indefensible Schedule K" is a greedy, grasping Trust which skins its employes in the mills, and then turns around and skins them all over again, along with other consumers. This is all wrong. The American Woolen Company is a charitable concern.

In order to make this clear to all "unprejudiced minds," Mr. William M. Wood, the President of the Company, got up a complimentary dinner to himself, and having invited himself to deliver an address on the occasion, graciously consented and spoke; and, thereupon, dug deep into his own pockets to publish his defense in a neat paper-covered booklet, which he distributes charitably free, gratis and for nothing, entitled "A Defense of Schedule K."

Mr. Wood's defense is conclusive.

Mr. Wood starts by denying that the American Woolen Company is a Trust. And he proves his point by declaring that "the American Woolen Company is simply a large corporation."—What the difference is between a "Trust" and a "large corporation," large enough to throttle competition, to dictate legislation suitable to itself, and to keep its employes in terror, these are trifles that can interest only the "ignorant or dishonest men" for whom Mr. Wood has even less use than they for him.

Mr. Wood proves to the satisfaction of all "intelligent and honest men" that the American Woolen Company, so far from being greedy, grasping and bloated, is a modest concern, verging on the poor-house, having to content itself with only 5 or 10 per cent.—What the principal is of the thirty-odd concerns, which Mr. Wood states "had been readjusted or gone into bankruptcy" and then organized the Company,

and upon which the 10 per cent. are paid—that Mr. Wood wisely leaves unstated. That's nobody's concern. Moreover the law does not require of man or woman any self-incriminating confession.

Mr. Wood declares that, so far from throttling competition, “the American Woolen Company lives in constant competition and thrives by Competition.” And he proves the claim to all but the “ignorant and dishonest” by stating that “indeed, it was the very exigency of the severe struggle which they [the above referred to thirty-odd concerns out of whose ashes the Phoenix of the present Company arose] had endured that forced them to combine in self-protection.”

Mr. Wood finally takes up the question of wages and satisfactorily, to all “who know what they are talking about,” he disproves all charges of the Company's exploiting its workers:—

He points out that “the wages in American woolen mills are more than twice the wages in England and three times the wages in Germany or France.”—Only people “who know not what they are talking about” go into such fine distinctions as the tremendous difference between the productivity of American labor and English, German or French labor, to say nothing of the difference in the cost of living.

He points out that the Company “with its command of capital” can “go elsewhere and build our factories wherever labor is cheaper, but the American work-people can not do this. They can not go to Europe or Germany or France or Japan. They have got to live here and find work here.” And again turning his back upon the people “who know not what they are talking about” he declines to stoop to explain how it comes that the “prosperous” American work-people can't afford trips to England or Germany or France or Japan.

As a final argument Mr. Wood demonstrates that the real purpose of the American Woolen Company is not so much to turn out woolen goods, as to turn out “prosperous workingmen, able to live in decent comfort and send their children to school.”

It is proven. The American Woolen Company is a charitable religious-concern with Mr. William M. Wood as a leader in “prayer and praise.”

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