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EDITORIAL

POOR GOMPERS! AGAIN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Gompers article in this month's *American Federationist*, one feature of which was commented upon last week,¹ has another passage that also prompts the exclamation—"Poor Gompers!"

Mr. Robert Hunter having, with the gentleman's characteristic unreliableness, gotten up a "statistical table" in which no Trades Union members are credited to Congress, Gompers answers the point with a list of ten Congressmen—Wm. B. Wilson; W.J. Carey; James T. McDermott; T.D. Nichols; Carl C. Anderson; Isaac R. Sherwood; Arthur P. Murphy; John A. Martin; Wm. D. Jamieson; and Wm. Hughes;—about whom Gompers declares: "The last named holding an honorary card of membership, all the others being members in good standing of the bona fide union of their respective trades."

The Congress Joint Committee on Printing issues an official "Congressional Directory," which, among other things, contains sketches of the members of both Houses. The sketches are written by the sketched themselves: they may be relied upon, however defective otherwise, not to omit any of the beauty-spots that the object of the sketch feels particularly good about. A consultation of the Congressional Directory, 61st Congress, 1st Session, throws detailed light upon the galaxy of Union men whom Gompers's list rescues from oblivion.

Wilson and Nichols, both of Pennsylvania, give their previous occupation as miners; Carey of Wisconsin and McDermott of Illinois give their previous occupation as telegraph operators. The rest give not the remotest inkling of any Trades Union occupation.

Anderson, who describes himself as a bootblack in boyhood, proceeds to tell that he "began a business career," later "in 1904 opened a factory for the manufacture of

¹"Poor Gompers," *Daily People*, June 3, 1910.—R.B.]

underwear, of which he is still owner and manager” in Fostoria, O., and that he “is president of the board of trade, president of the city hospital, and director in a number of manufacturing enterprises.” (Page 68.)

Isaac R. Sherwood, who is very full of his war record, says on the subject of occupation that he “in 1857 bought the Williams County *Gazette*, Bryan, O.” (Page 96.)

Murphy of Missouri “studied law, and was admitted to practice March 4, 1894; has been actually engaged in the practice since that time.” (Page 67.)

Martin of Colorado “is a lawyer by profession.” That is all he says on occupation. (Page 107.)

Jamieson of Iowa gives his occupation as “a newspaper publisher and editor.” (Page 33.)

Finally Hughes, of New Jersey, avowed honorary member “is counsellor at law,” that’s all.

We do not doubt Mr. Gompers’s word that, with the exception of the last one on the list who is an honorary member, all the other nine are “members in good standing of the bona fide union of their respective trades”; and very much are we agreed with Mr. Gompers that “it would tire one’s patience to read, as well as occupy too much space, to record here, the very large number of labor representatives in the various legislatures in the United States.” Indeed, in the words of an old hymn, “tedious and tasteless the hour” would be spent in reciting the long list of these paragons, above all, to recite their records: in the first of the two addresses entitled *Two Pages from Roman History* quite a mob of Gompersitic “Labor representatives” were whipped upon the stage, and pilloried to the post of their own records as betrayers of the working class.

Mr. Robert Hunter is not only a man of bad breaks himself, he also is cause that bad breaks are in others—witness Gompers’s Hunter-provoked break of citing with satisfaction, and truthfulness, besides, as true representatives of Gompersitic unionism a crew like the above, most of whom are, by their own descriptions of themselves, direct exploiters of labor, and all of whom have in Congress been acting as candle-bearers for the high priests of a social system that dooms Labor to the status of merchandise.

Which is why we say: "Poor Gompers!" again.

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