

EDITORIAL

CONGRESSIONAL GLEANINGS— THE TARIFF BOARD.

By DANIEL DE LEON

OF course the Insurgents want lower tariff in certain things; of course the Stalwarts, with Taft at their head, want a high tariff in these particular things, and all other things in general. It follows that a Tariff Board is objectionable to neither, but it also follows that such a Tariff Board as Taft wants is not to the liking of the Insurgents. In what the proposed Taft Tariff Board is particularly objectionable to the Insurgents at this juncture the name of the Board does not disclose; in fact, the name misleads. The objection is not to the tariff functions of the Board. The objection is to something wholly different. The debates on the Board carefully sought to conceal what it really was that Insurgents and Stalwarts were sparring over. Though the cat never leaped bodily out of the bag, its outlines came out clearly to view when the appropriations were before the House in Committee of the Whole.

What Insurgents and Stalwarts have actually been sparring for in the matter of the Tariff Board is “position”—they have been sparring for position in the pending campaign, and not for position that may give an advantage in point of principle—of that each side is confident in its way—but of position in point of power to compel support. The Stalwart Interests, having Taft on their side, have the appointing power of the members of the Board. Their game has been to secure a large appropriation, to the end of having a large personnel of well paid appointees, whose direct interest would make of them all enthusiastic, above all, generous, campaigners, and whose many connections would insure extensive support. The game of the Insurgent Interests, seeing the Board was inevitable, was to allow an appropriation so small as to make the appointees few, and, as a consequence, their material powers to attract support as slight as the disadvantageous position of

Insurgentism, it being “out,” would allow.

The real issue, with the Tariff Board as foot-ball, was, accordingly, this—on the part of the Stalwarts, to secure a large campaign fund in the guise of an appropriation “to carry out the legislation enacted by Congress”; on the part of the Insurgents, to beat down that campaign fund, seeing they could not altogether withhold the same.

The Insurgents won out—\$250,000 is a paltry figure considering that there is no Interest-Representative whose first interest is not to see to his own and immediate bread-and-butter. The Stalwart campaign coffers are receiving next to nothing from the appropriation for the Tariff Board.

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