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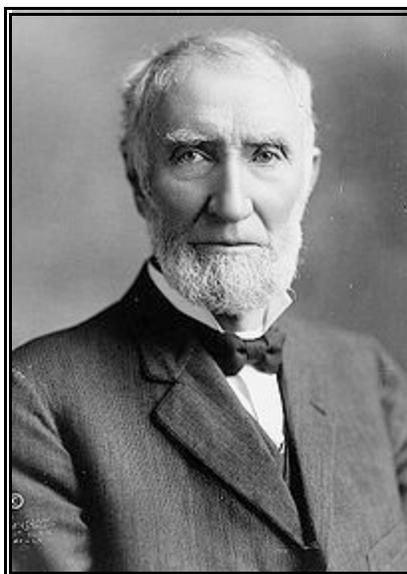
CANNON AND THE FARMER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AT last the *Congressional Record* publishes, in its issue of the 24th, the speech delivered on the 19th by “Uncle Joe” as ex-Speaker Cannon is endearingly called by his admirers.

The speech was against the Canadian Reciprocity bill. It covered a score of points or “heads”; all radiated from “the farmer,” and converged back to “the farmer.” “Uncle Joe” is nothing if not the incarnation of “the farmer,” whose interests are closest to his heart, for whom he speaks first, last and all the time.

Arguing from his premises and towards his objective point—both the same, the farmer,—the ex-Speaker dilated upon the quality of the land in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, “land,” he said, “as good as the sun ever shone upon”



JOSEPH G. CANNON (1836–1926)

and in which, “if a man lives on the homestead for a year and turns over the sod on 30 acres, he takes title in fee”; he then quoted a conversation he recently had with the manager of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad showing that the road was doing a big business carrying, home-seekers, farmers from America, to Canada; he argued further: “when you lose an industrious farmer who understands the science of farming, with his wife and his children, you lose more than money”; and he sought to demonstrate that the Canadian Reciprocity bill would, by opening the markets of the United States to the products of these immigrant farmers into Canada, add to the already sufficiently attractive and superior soil of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba, thereby drawing away from this country a

stream of farmers larger than the large stream of that element to Canada now was.

A strange argument on the part of a lover of the American farmer!

The argument amounts to saying: "The status of the farmer in America is bee-u-ti-ful. But beyond the Canadian frontier the farmer's status is still better. The land in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan is fully as good as it is here in America, if not better in point of natural qualities. To this natural superiority there is added a civic superiority of tremendous importance. Most of our farmers are tenant farmers, and not a few of those who hold title are weighed down by mortgages. Across the border there is the attraction of assured prospect of absolute and unencumbered ownership. All that is needed is to live one year on the homestead and turn over the sod on 30 acres. This should be enough to make the farmer's life a happier one in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba than it is in Illinois, Indiana and Missouri. If the Canadian Reciprocity bill is passed, then the farmer's prosperity would be increased an hundred fold."

One should think that the lover of the farmer would conclude from these allegations: "Therefore, pass the bill, and fill the cornucopia of the farmers wellbeing."

Not so does the farmer-loving Cannon reason. He, on the contrary, positively weeps at the better prospects of the farmer across the border, and braces himself against the improving of the prospects, on the ground that the loss to the country of these farmers is the loss of more than money.

In other words, the love of Mr. Cannon for the farmer is a love for the wool that the Top-Capitalist Class clips from the farmer's body in the shape of money, usually usurious money.

The speech was delivered on April 19; Uncle Joe withheld it from publication five days, devoting the time to pruning it down. Uncle Joe should have pruned it all away.

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