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EDITORIAL

IN THE LEMON SQUEEZER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE American working class is in the lemon squeezer, and the worst of it is, it doesn't even realize it.

Pity the American Gas Institute did not give out free tickets to workmen to attend its fifth annual meeting in this city. The lemon squeezer squeaked quite audibly there.

One of the squeaks was the report of a certain firm of sewer and water-main contractors. They told how they had changed from hand to pneumatic caulking for their joints. They told how this had been done at a great saving of "labor cost." The various processes and details of the profitable change were outlined, leading up to and triumphantly ending with the most important item of all:

"A foreman, not 'one of the gang,' was placed in entire charge of the caulking, and given to understand that his job depended on his ability to push the men and reduce the time per joint."

Such is the story of industry all over the country to-day, and not only here, but all over the world. Not content with the lion's share of labor's product he already grabs as "his own," the employer is pushing labor on to create ever more wealth to be grabbed. This good friend of labor, who tells us that without him there would be no jobs, sees to it that even with him there are enough jobless men to scare every one else into submission. Then he puts the screws on, speeds up the pace. And one of his most powerful means of doing this is, as the American Gas Institute heard, to hire one man as foreman and "give him to understand" that "his job depends on his ability to push" the other men.

Instead of lightening up, the pressure is growing ever severer. The workers are

caught in the lemon squeezer, their juice is dripping down into the employer's bucket labeled "Profits." How long will they stand it?

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