

EDITORIAL

THE AMENDMENTS FLOOD.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN one of those lucid intervals that come to the Belshazzars, Senator Elihu Root of this State warned the Senate—the proposal to amend the then constitutional process for electing Federal Senators being before that body—that safety lay in keeping the Constitution unchanged, whereas danger, grave danger, lay in the direction of Constitutional amendments. Every amendment, Senator Root argued, and argued correctly, was an invitation for some other amendment, with the ultimate result, that “the Constitution of the fathers would be overthrown.”

Furthermore, before that, the income tax amendment being before the house, and blinded by the blindness that usually blinds the Belshazzars, Senator H.D. Money said: “I am one of those who believe that there never will be another amendment to the Constitution of the United States. . . . and I do not believe this amendment to the Constitution will ever be a part of it.”

Undeterred by the Root warning—the contempt that Revolutions have for warners against themselves is proverbial;—and unaffected by the Money prophecy, proposals for Constitutional amendments have been deluging Congress, and several have already passed. The Constitutional amendment empowering an income tax was passed; upon its heels came the amendment for the popular election of Senators; and just now there are two more proposals powerfully pushing themselves forward before Congress—one to establish uniform laws on the subject of marriage and divorce, and another to extend the suffrage to woman.

And more are coming—and are bound to come until the day when the meaning of Constitutional provision empowering Congress to regulate commerce shall have been grasped. That day no more amendments will be thought of. They will all be superfluous.

The Constitutional provision that empowers Congress to regulate commerce is the leading germ of the Socialist Republic embodied in the Constitution. The clause was an unconscious projection forward, far ahead of the time of its enactment. It projected the day when the political State shall have ceased to be, and the chick which the political State hatched, the Industrial State, will have supplanted it.

When the Social Revolution shall have been accomplished, the commerce clause, now in the Constitution, will stand out as the grain of gold freed from the mass of the other clauses which are but the bourgeois alloy that the grain of gold is now amalgamated with. Until then there will be amendments galore. While seemingly, and supposed to be revolutionary, these essentially reactionary, in that one and all tend to becloud the really revolutionary germ in the Constitution.

There will be but ONE amendment that will be an AMENDMENT—it will be an amendment in the nature of a substitute motion—it will be the amendment enforced by the industrially organized useful occupations of the land—an amendment that will annul all the clauses of the Constitution but one, the Commerce clause, and will be the highest exposition, verifier and enforcer of the clause.

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