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EDITORIAL

## THE TARIFF BILL.

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**T**HE new tariff bill, which it took the clerk of the House over five hours to read on the 19th, and upon which the debate will open to-morrow, the 22d, is a document the purpose of which does not concern the working class. The document affects taxation—an issue that interests Labor as little as the color of the coffin can interest the man who is to be killed and buried therein, Low, or high, or no tariff on iron, or leather, or cotton seed oil, or works of art more than twenty years old are issues that do not affect the law under which wages are regulated in capitalist society. Whatever the tariff be, the share Labor receives of its own product is determined by the supply thereof in the Labor-market. Tariff or no tariff, Labor's share is and remains a declining one—with no prospect of improvement but through the movement to overthrow the Capitalist System. Looked at from this viewpoint, the tariff bill has no place on the tapis of Labor issues.

But there is another angle of vision in the matter. The tariff bill affords several insights into the mechanism of capitalist thought. In this respect the tariff bill deserves some attention by Labor. One of these insights is luminous on the essence of capitalism.

The charge against capitalism and proof that it compels its own overthrow is that it concentrates wealth instead of diffusing it. Capitalism realizes that the charge is a strong one, hence much of the time of its apologists is spent in the attempt to prove the charge false, and that, on the contrary, capitalism is an arch defender of well-being. The tariff bill is eloquent on the truth herein. It contains an inheritance tax provision. According to the provision inheritances are divided into two main categories—one category for inheritances in the direct, or hereditary line of succession; another category for inheritances that are collateral. Were the law of capitalist existence one that tends to diffusion it obviously would promote the latter,

as tending to diffusion, and discourage the former, as tending to the perpetuation of concentration. The inheritance tax provisions propose just the opposite—they propose a tax five times as heavy for collateral inheritances than for direct inheritances up to \$100,000; a tax more than twice as heavy for direct inheritances up to \$500,000; and a tax almost twice as heavy for direct inheritances of more than \$500,000. In other words, true to the spirit of capitalism the capitalist inheritance tax mulcts inheritances that tend to diffuse wealth, and treats kindly inheritances that tend to continue and promote concentration.

Concentration is the law of capitalism. Obedient to this law it needs must move. Deny as it may the fact on this head, capitalism blurts it out unconsciously through the vocal organs of its self-protective laws.

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