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EDITORIAL

FRAUDULENT ARITHMETIC.

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THE Ship Subsidy bill is again up before Congress. As a matter of course, Senator **Chauncey M. Depew** again took the floor in its behalf. Senator Depew is nothing if not statistical and arithmetical. In the course of his speech he said:

“If we had on the ocean an adequate merchant marine it is difficult to picture the benefit to American labor which would accrue from the employment of our \$500,000,000 of trade balance in our industries among our people.”

Now, such arithmetic is simply fraudulent. It is fraudulent to claim that the turning of sums of money—\$500,000,000 or \$500—to “us” means that even a penny, let alone the bulk thereof, would fall into the pockets of the workingman. It is in this as in all other similar matters.

Improved machinery saves labor, but it is an established fact that it has not saved labor to the workers; it increases production, but it is equally established that it has not added to the hoard of the toilers.

An increased per capita of circulating medium, no doubt, increases the quantity of money, but equally doubtless is the fact that such increase is never found in the worker’s purse.

A lowered tariff reduces the price of goods, that’s certain; but equally certain it is that the difference between the higher and the lower price is not to be found in the worker’s possession.

Improved machinery, increased per capitas of circulating medium, lower tariffs, etc., etc., can not accrue to the worker’s benefit for the simple reason that, under the capitalist system of production, the share of the worker depends upon none of these. Under the capitalist system of production, Labor is a merchandise, and, as

merchandise, its price depends upon the supply thereof and the demand for it. Under the capitalist system, the share of Labor is its wages, and “wages” stand for the market price of Labor in the Labor market. It follows that, under the capitalist system, the price of Labor, that is “wages,” declines, because, owing to privately owned machinery, improved machinery and methods of production, the supply ever rises. It follows—and that is the experience noted on all sides—that whatever “improvement” is made, the benefit falls exclusively upon the capitalist class, Labor ever comes out at the little end of the horn.

And so with the Ship Subsidy “advantages.” Granted, for the sake of argument{,} that indeed that \$500,000,000 would come to “us,” the “us” would not be the Working Class. The workers would continue with their noses to the grindstone. The difference would be visible only in an increased number of American heiresses purchasing ducal coronets; an increased number of dilapidated Blenheim palaces being “restored”; an increased number of broken down marquises of Castellane set on their feet; last, not least, a swollen corruption fund would be at the disposal of the capitalist class to bribe Legislatures with, to furnish gunpowder and bullets to militias to keep the workers in terrorized condition, and to hush up Tunnel and other Depewesque horrors.

The “benefit to American labor” that is “difficult to picture” can come from nothing that the Depew class will ever grant: it can come only from the overthrow of the capitalist class and its capitalist system, and the raising of the Socialist Republic, where, the land and the machinery with which to work, being the property of the people, Labor will cease to be a merchandise. And that boon is solely in the hands of the Working Class, to be bestowed upon itself, whenever it shall so please, by none but itself.

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

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