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EDITORIAL

UP-TO-DATE TWEEDS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE closing hours of the debate in the House on the Army bill, that took place shortly before the close of the session, were worth all the others. The spirits had by that time become so embittered that the contestants began to indulge in “foul blows.” The “foulest” of these was the direct charge hurled at Representative **John A.T. Hull** of Iowa that he was financially interested in an increased Army on account of his connection with a certain lumber improvement company that was started to exploit the Philippine Islands.

This revelation, valuable though it is, is valuable only on account of its precision. Every sane man knows that capitalist legislation is in the interest of capitalists. And if so, why not war legislation? If X-rays could be thrown upon the pockets of our legislators, which of these would fail to reveal a direct or indirect connection between some money-making scheme and the bill in hand, for which the legislator in question was “patriotically” enthusing? None. In so far, the incident brings to light no fact generically different from those generally known; at best, rather at worst, the incident would denote merely an aggravation of what is going on. To invest in war, to put money where it is necessary to wade through carnage to profits, that certainly is an aggravation of that capitalist feature that lies in running legislation for business. But it is an aggravation only. The Hull incident, however, betrays something more than an aggravation; a good deal more.

When the Dingley tariff bill was under discussion, the point was made against it that special interests were favored; that, while the bill proceeded from the principle that “American industry must be protected,” the promoters thereof dropped their “principle” the moment “their own ox was gored;” and the point was beautifully clinched by picking out the clause that favored certain lumber that was floated down the streams from Canada into Maine,—Maine being the State of the father of the bill, Representative Dingley, and lumber his business. The point could not be got away from, but representative Dingley did not “face the music:” he

availed himself of parliamentary manoeuvres to escape uttering a point-blank lie by denying the fact too categorically, and he was too much ashamed to admit the truth of the charge. The conduct of Representative Dingley denotes the era of shame-facedness in capitalist chicanery. The feature of the recent Hull incident marks a new era. It marks the era when shame-facedness is dropped, and utter shamelessness prevails. Upon being charged with connection with a lumber company to which a ruthless war in the Philippine Islands was necessary for success, the gentleman blanched not, but volunteered with utter brazenness the following full information:

“I am the man whose name has been used in connection with that lumber company. During the campaign the company decided to suspend operations, and not invest a dollar if Bryan was elected. But after McKinley was elected it decided to invest every dollar it had.”

Such a brazen acknowledgment certainly marks an era in our history. The capitalist class not only invests money in war, but cares not who knows it.

These are up-to-date Tweeds, asking the working class:

“What are you going to do about it?”

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