

## Steel Trust Tries to Scare Underwood

We are under obligation to our valued contemporary, the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, for the most perfect illustration of the stand-pat courage which has come recently under our view.

On the first page of a recent issue appeared a special telegram from Birmingham, Ala., the "home town" of Chairman Underwood, of the ways and means committee of the house of representatives. The dispatch relates the action of the steel trust in suspending work on the Corey plant in order to affect the course of pending tariff legislation. It does not mince matters: it lays bare a whole ugly affair and calls a spade a spade. We beg to present a few extracts in support of this:

"In the action of the steel corporation in suspending work on the Corey plant is seen a direct effort to force Congressman Underwood to recede from his position. Underwood's home is in Birmingham. The steel corporation is by far the most powerful factor in the industrial life of the Birmingham district.

"Already there is talk of further application of the thumbscrews by the steel corporation.

"It is a heavy club that hangs over the head of Mr. Underwood. \* \* \* But so far he has shown no signs of weakening."

Any paper which publishes such a revelation as this of the slungshot and sandbag policy of the steel interests renders a distinct public service. We turned to our contemporary's editorial page upon finishing the dispatch with the certainty that so important an article would be accompanied by editorial comment.

It was.

But what the comment was the average American reader would grow gray attempting to guess. Instead of denouncing the United States Steel Corporation for action so fitly characterized as "application of the thumbscrews" to Mr. Underwood's home town in order to control his course as a public official, regardless of right, justice and the normal operation of economic laws, the Globe-Democrat declares that "nobody has a right to be surprised at the action of the steel mills in the Birmingham district," and it says of the democratic majority in the house: "They will keep right on in their work of destruction unless halted by the republican senate or president." It therefore advocates the abandonment of the policies which that majority were elected to carry out, that the steel magnates may be placated and work on the Corey plant may be resumed. We recall no parallel in modern times to this state of mind on the part of our contemporary; but it is very much like that of a certain king of old, whose enemy sent messengers to him to say: "Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine," whereupon the king replied: "My Lord, O King, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have."

The citizen with red blood in his arteries, iron in the corpuscles of the said red blood, and the Declaration of Independence in his country's past, will know how to answer the challenge of the steel trust. He will not take counsel of cowardice—nor of the Globe-Democrat.—St. Louis Republic.

### TRYING TO BLUFF UNDERWOOD

By discontinuing work on a new plant at Corey, near Birmingham, the American Steel and Wire company, an allied company of the United States Steel Corporation, has served notice on Oscar W. Underwood, democratic chairman of the ways and means committee of the house of representatives from the Birmingham district and upon the people of that district, that Underwood would better represent it than the people of Alabama and this republic in tariff making. Anyway, that is how the company's action is construed in Birmingham and that is a fair interpretation. The Birmingham News, in the article reproduced in the State, has said about all that is necessary in common sense and common decency to say.

Meanwhile, a declaration by the American Steel and Wire company, or the United States Steel Corporation, that it does not intend to do business in the United States unless the congress shall remain in partnership with it by exacting a tribute from the American farmers in the form of higher prices for products than the farmers would be asked to pay English or German manufacturers should be of value at this time. If the congress of the United States is to be run as one of the subsidiary corporations of United States steel, the sooner the American

people know it the better for their safety. If the American farmers are not receiving through tariffs extraordinary prices for their products, it is for them to say whether tariffs shall be enacted that extraordinary profits be paid to American manufacturers. If after half a century of "protection" the steel and wire industry is still an "infant" and the American labor engaged in it cannot be supported except at the expense of the American consumers, it is time to inquire seriously whether or not the attempt to maintain manufacturing industries in this country is worth while.

Of course, the steel industry in the United States will not die. Under absolute free trade, which nobody is thinking about at this time, the steel making would go on and everybody is perfectly aware that the free-listing of certain steel products used by farmers would not destroy the steel and wire manufacturing industry. The capitalists who own the steel and wire plants are not mollycoddles and they are not going to surrender the American field to the foreigners. Even if it were true that tariff changes would cause considerable readjustment, American laborers have learned the lesson from more than one experience that high tariffs are not proof against panics and the shutting down of mills, however they may make and maintain millionaires in and out of panic periods.

Every sign points to the discontinuance of the construction of the Corey plant as a bluff, but, granting that it is not a bluff, no argument is to be drawn from it that should affect the course of the democratic party. The United States Steel Corporation and J. Pierpont Morgan are in themselves important, but not so important that the sun and moon should stand still in Ajalon.—Columbia (S. C.) State.

### AS PRIVILEGE FIGHTS

Suggestion of what the legislator who sets out to fight privilege has to contend against is furnished in the bulldozing campaign against Congressman Underwood undertaken by the United States Steel Corporation.

Underwood represents the Birmingham, Alabama, district, in congress. Birmingham is to the south what Pittsburg is to the east, or Gary is to the central states. It is the heart of the steel industry. Tens of thousands of men find employment in the steel mills there and in towns nearby. Moreover, Birmingham promises to become more and more a steel city.

Underwood, by virtue of the rule of seniority, became chairman of the ways and means committee of the house at the beginning of the present extra session of congress. He is a man of wide education, is well poised and conservative, and a sterling democrat. The ways and means committee is the author of all tariff legislation, and Underwood, as chairman, has more to say authoritatively about the tariff than any other man in the lower branch of congress.

True to the principles of his party, and to the promises made by it in the last election, Underwood's committee drafted a farmer's free list bill. Among the other manufactured products which this bill puts upon the free list are several articles made by the steel trust and its subsidiary companies—hooped steel, barbed wire fencing, wire rope, staples and other products of iron.

Immediately upon the introduction of the bill, the American Steel and Wire company, which has a \$3,000,000 plant in course of erection at Corey, in Underwood's district, ordered all work stopped and took the pains to announce that the reason for this action was the bill as reported by Representative Underwood's committee. In Birmingham the steel trust shut down nine of the twenty-five blast furnaces and soon will bank the fires in all the others.

We long ago became accustomed to the cries of calamity as raised by the railroads and protected manufacturers. "The Blank railroad today ordered 2,000 men laid off, assigning as the reason the fear of Bryan's election." "The Blank and Blank steel mill was shut down today. Officers explain that the general fear of democratic success at the polls, has caused a wholesale cancellation of orders." "The Double Blank railroad has stopped all construction work in this state and says that if unfavorable legislation now pending goes through there will not be built another mile of track and grass will grow in the streets of a good many cities." Whatever its form, the cry of "wolf" is a familiar one.

It is a variation of this appeal to fear and

this intimidation, which the steel trust is using against Representative Underwood. It warns him without saying a word that for the free list bill to go through in its present form will cost him his seat in congress. It will tell its thousands of idle workmen that it is Underwood who has put them out of their jobs, and idle men not being amenable to reason they will bring to bear upon Underwood tremendous pressure in effort to make him more favorable to the steel trust. It will be worth while watching the outcome of the steel trust's course, for it is going to test the temper of Underwood's manhood as, perhaps, it has never been tested before. To persist in the course he has set out upon will be to commit political suicide; to change his course will make him untrue to his party, to the country, and to himself. His manhood is on trial and with it his party.—Dubuque (Iowa) Telegraph-Herald.

### FREE LIST MEANS SAVING OF \$300,000,000 A YEAR

Special to the New York World: Washington, April 20.—It is expected that the farmers' free list bill will save consumers more than \$300,000,000 annually. The consumption, measured by the net supply, in values, of the articles on the free list runs as follows:

Salt, \$9,540,824.  
Agricultural implements, \$90,637,110.  
Bagging for cotton, sacks, burlaps, etc., \$26,031,644.  
Cotton ties, hoop or band iron, \$12,639,953.  
Leather, boots and shoes, harness and saddles, \$493,005,263.  
Barbed and other fence wire, wire rods, etc., \$113,027,205.  
Fresh and preserved meats, \$614,895,219.  
Flour and grits, cereals and bread, \$665,041,533.  
Lumber, laths and shingles, \$699,599,293.  
Sewing machines and parts thereof, \$8,497,460.

If the free list bill becomes a law and prices settle down in time, as some of the advocates of the measure believe they will, the consumers may save the following sums:

On salt, \$4,862,005.  
Agricultural implements, \$13,876,541.  
Bagging, sacks, etc., \$6,992,099.  
Cotton ties, \$2,017,336.  
Leather, boots and shoes, etc., \$37,483,788.  
Barbed wire, etc., \$32,861,066.  
Fresh and preserved meats, \$133,493,752.  
Flour, grit, etc., \$18,355,146.  
Lumber, laths, etc., \$59,955,659.  
Sewing machines, \$2,549,239.

### BEGGING THE QUESTION

The Fairmont (W. Va.) Times prints a somewhat lengthy editorial, of which the following extract is a sample:

"The Commoner finds objection to the leadership of Senator Martin because it says he cannot make a speech. If that is the only objection many people will agree that Senator Martin is probably not badly disqualified for his job. Thomas Jefferson laid the foundations for the greatest political party this country has had, but he didn't make speeches. There is no record, we believe, of Benjamin Franklin excelling as a speechmaker. Even George Washington, who had a rather lively connection with leadership in his day, wouldn't have shone on the hustings. Coming down to a later period in the history of the country, General Grant, who was considerable of a man in his way, never made speeches."

The Times begs the question. The Commoner's objection to Mr. Martin is not "that he cannot make a speech," but that his record in the senate shows that he is an Aldrich democrat and therefore not qualified as a leader of a party that professes to be willing to serve the people.

If the progressive democrats are as much in earnest as the progressive republicans they will, two years hence, retire a number of Senator Martin's supporters whose terms expire then. A cartoonist might, with propriety, represent them in the attitude of the gladiators who, addressed the emperor, thus: "Those who are about to die salute you."

The Richmond Times-Dispatch says that the democrats of the senate who voted against Mr. Martin have expressed approval of his course since the election. He has not done any voting yet on the tariff, and he only put two of the seventeen who voted against him on the committee, while he approved seven of the twenty-one who voted for him.