

AN OBEDIENT SERVANT OF SPECIAL INTERESTS

The fact that it seems to be generally agreed that there will be no tariff revision at this session of congress should provide food for those republicans who, having no ax to grind, are chiefly concerned in the public welfare. Why are we not to have tariff revision? Is it because public interests or public sentiment does not demand it? There is abundant testimony, even for one who does not take the democratic view of the tariff question, to show that public interests demand tariff revision, while the very earnest and renewed appeals made by republicans all over the country in favor of revision of the tariff ought to convince even those who are usually non-observing that such revision would be clearly in line with present day public sentiment.

The republican party must certainly be a well disciplined organization else the stand-patters of this period would not advance a proposition which, we make bold to say, is controverted not only by the opinion of the rank and file of republicans but has been publicly repudiated by some of the most distinguished republican statesmen and editors.

In this day the trusts find in the tariff larger shelter than they ever before enjoyed, and the American public feels more keenly than at any other time in history the impositions due to an enormously high protective tariff. Even the men who framed the present tariff law had no idea that the American people would long tamely submit to those rates, and we have it on the authority of Senator Dolliver of Iowa that Mr. Dingley explained that many of the rates in his tariff bill were purposely placed high in order that they might be used in bringing about reciprocity with other countries. But now republican leaders refuse to make any serious moves in behalf of reciprocity, and at the same time they insist upon maintaining the exorbitant rates.

In 1888 John Sherman, then a member of the United States senate, said: "Whenever this free competition is evaded or avoided by combination of individuals or corporations the duty should be reduced and foreign competition promptly invited."

In 1891 Senator Plumb of Kansas objected to the McKinley tariff bill because, as he said: "There are dozens of lines of manufactures cov-

ered by the terms of this bill, which are controlled by trusts," and Senator Plumb added that the best way "to start out trying to reduce the exactions of trusts" was to "cut down the shelter behind which trusts are created."

Several years ago the Iowa republican convention and the Idaho republican convention adopted in their platforms planks demanding "any modification of the tariff schedules that may be required to prevent their affording shelter to monopoly." Even in Connecticut a republican convention held several years ago declared "if in any schedule import duties are found that have been notoriously perverted from their true purpose to the inordinate enrichment of corporations, monopolistic in fact or in tendency, we look to a republican congress to apply in its wisdom the needed corrective without impairing the principle of protection."

The late Governor Mount of Indiana in a public speech delivered in 1899 expressed similar views. Former Senator Washburn gave out in 1899 a number of newspaper interviews in which he said that republicans who had the welfare of their party and their country at heart must call a halt upon their party's tendency to connect itself with trusts and must insist that the tariff shelter enjoyed by the trusts be destroyed.

The Chicago Record-Herald, the Minneapolis Journal, the New York Commercial Advertiser, the Portland Oregonian, the Hartford Courant, the Dubuque (Iowa) Times, the Philadelphia Ledger, the St. Paul Pioneer-Press, the Rockford (Ill.) Republican, the Keokuk (Iowa) Gate City, the Indianapolis News and the Chicago Tribune—all republican papers—long ago and repeatedly demanded the removal of tariff duties from commodities controlled by trusts.

In 1901 Representative Babcock of Wisconsin who still holds his seat in congress, delivered a number of public speeches and gave out a number of newspaper interviews in all of which he said that the consumer must be protected; that it was impossible to defend a tariff policy which simply inures to the benefit of those who may secure the control of a commodity, and that the interests of the party as well as the interests of the public demanded the destruction of the shelter which the trusts find in the tariff.

The Chicago Tribune went so far as to say

that the most of the fortune amassed by Andrew Carnegie "came out of the pockets of his countrymen through the operation of unequal laws," and that Mr. Carnegie should never forget that he made his money "through the undue favoritism of the government of the United States."

Such opinions as these were long ago and repeatedly expressed by republican statesmen and republican editors. It is true that "wise men change their views," but will any one seriously contend that in the light of present day conditions the views of these gentlemen have been changed? Would any of them care to explicitly repudiate the sentiments they expressed as hereinbefore outlined? We know they would not. We know that the conditions against which they indignantly protested ten, fifteen and twenty years ago have so multiplied that they have become well nigh unbearable; we know that the sentiment, even among the rank and file of the republican party, is so pronouncedly in favor of tariff revision that a number of republican politicians who have never been charged with an undue disregard for their own political fortunes have made bold to demand tariff revision, at least to the extent of destroying the shelter which the trusts find in the republican tariff law. Yet in the face of these facts we are told that there is no probability whatever that there will be tariff revision. What is the explanation? It is that the rank and file of the republican party have lost all control over their organization; that the special interests which republican party leaders have so long and so faithfully served have secured such perfect control over the party that no amount of publicly expressed indignation can disturb that control. It means that the republican party is wedded to its idols. It means that the republican party is so thoroughly the servant of special interests that it will maintain undisturbed that system to which Theodore Roosevelt referred as "harmful in theory and vicious in practice." It means that with respect to the shelter which the trusts find in the tariff, as with respect to all other great privileges enjoyed by special interests within the law, and without the law, the thing we call plutocracy is the ever unyielding master, and the thing we call the republican party is the ever obedient servant.

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