

the house by Mr. Voorhees, and by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. Holman)—

Mr. Patterson: And by Roger Q. Mills.

Mr. Bryan: Yes, by Roger Q. Mills, I am informed, and a host of others. Not only did the senators mentioned oppose repeal, but they spoke with emphasis in favor of the justice of an income tax. Senator Sherman said:

The senator from New York and the senator from Massachusetts have led off in declaring against the income tax. They have declared it to be invidious. Well, sir, all taxes are invidious. They say it is inquisitorial. Well, sir, there never was a tax in the world that was not inquisitorial.

The least inquisitorial of all is the income tax. I hope, after full discussion, nobody will vote for striking out the income tax. It seems to me to be one of the plainest propositions in the world. Put before the people of the United States the question whether the property of this country can not stand a tax of \$20,000,000, when the consumption of the people stands a tax of \$300,000,000, and I think they will quickly answer it. The property holders of the country came here and demanded the repeal of the only tax that bears upon their property, when we have to tax everything for the food of the poor, the clothing of the poor, and all classes of our people \$300,000,000.

There never was so just a tax levied as the income tax.

There is no objection that can be urged against the income tax that I can not point to in every tax.

Writers on political economy, as well as our own sentiments of what is just and right, teach us that a man ought to pay taxes according to his income and in no other way.

Could language be stronger or more pertinent to the present discussion? Senator Howe said:

There is not a tax on the books so little felt, so absolutely unfelt in the payment of it, as this income tax by the possessors of the great fortunes upon which it falls. There is not a poor man in this country, not a laborer in this country, but what contributes more than three, more than ten, more than twenty per cent of all his earnings to the treasury of the United States under those very laws against which I am objecting; and now we are invited to increase their contributions, and to release these trifling contributions which we have been receiving from incomes heretofore.

Senator Morton said:

The state taxation in Indiana, and, I undertake to say, of every state in the union, has in it every inquisitorial feature that the income tax has. The income tax is of all others the most equitable, because it is the truest measure that has yet been found of the productive property of the country.

The chamber of commerce, in its anxiety to defeat this tax, has distorted the facts of history, and yet the gentleman from New York says that the rich favor the law. If, sirs, they favor the law, why is it that the opposition to the law comes only from the districts in which the wealthy live? Are the representatives from those districts unwilling to do what their people want done, and is it necessary for the great agricultural districts to come here and force upon the rich districts of the United States a tax which the rich love so much?

The gentleman from New York says that this tax is inquisitorial, that it pries into a man's private business. I sent to New York and obtained from the city chamberlain copies of assessment blanks used. The chamberlain writes:

The matter of assessing personal taxes is arrived at by interrogation of the persons assessed by either of the commissioners, which is a very rigorous cross-examination in reference to the amount of personal property they have, and reductions are only made by an affidavit asking for the same and sworn to before a tax commissioner of this county.

The citizen, after giving in detail his stock in various banks, makes oath that—

The full value of all personal property, exclusive of said bank shares owned by deponent (and not exempt by law from taxation) on the second Monday in January, 189—, did not exceed \$—; that the just debts owing by deponent on said date amounted to \$—, and that no portion of such debts has been deducted from the assessment of any personal property of deponent, other than said bank shares, or has been used as an offset in the adjustment of any assessment for personal property, whether in this or in any other county or state, for the year 189—, or incurred in the purchase of non-taxable property or securities, or for the purpose of evading taxation.

Is the proposed tax any more inquisitorial than that?

In Connecticut the citizen is required to give the number and value of various domestic animals, the number of watches, the value of jewelry, household furniture, library, etc.; also bonds, stocks, money at interest, and money on deposit. Is the proposed tax any more inquisitorial than that?

In Nebraska the citizen is compelled to give the number and value of all domestic animals, watches, diamonds, jewelry, money, credits, etc., and what is true in Nebraska is true generally of all the states. Is an income tax more inquisitorial than those taxes upon personal property? I insist, sirs, that the income tax provided for in this bill is less inquisitorial in its

nature than the taxes which are found in every state in the union.

But they say that the income tax invites perjury; that the man who has a large income will swear falsely, and thus avoid the payment of the tax; and, indeed, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Walker) admitted that his district was full of such people, and he said that our districts were, too. I suppose these constituents whom he accuses of perjury are expected to pat him on the back when he goes home and brag about the compliment he paid them.

If there is a man in my district whose veracity is not worth two cents on the dollar, who will perjure himself to avoid the payment of a just tax imposed by law, I am going to wait until he pleads guilty before I make that charge against him.

They say that we must be careful and not invite perjury. Why, sirs, this government has too much important business on hand to spend its time trying to bolster up the morality of men who can not be trusted to swear to their incomes. And let me suggest that gentlemen who come to this house and tell us that their districts are full of such persons are treading upon dangerous ground. If a man will hold up his hand to heaven and perjure his soul to avoid a two per cent tax due to his government, how can you trust such a man when he goes into court and testifies in a case in which he has a personal interest?

If your districts are full of perjurers, if your districts are full of men who violate with impunity not only the laws, but their oaths, do you not raise a question as to the honesty of the methods by which they have accumulated their fortunes? Instead of abandoning just measures for fear somebody will perjure himself, let them be enacted into law, and then if anyone perjures himself we can treat him like any other felon, and punish him for his perjury.

But, gentlemen say that some people will avoid the tax, and therefore it is unfair to the people who pay. What law is fully obeyed? Why are criminal courts established, except to punish people who violate the laws which society has made? The man who pays his tax need not concern himself about the man who avoids it, unless, perhaps, he is willing to help prosecute the delinquent. The man who makes an honest return and complies with the law pays no more than the rate prescribed, and if the possessors of large fortunes escape by fraud the payment of one-half their income tax, they still contribute far more than they do now to support the federal government, and to that extent relieve from burdens those who now pay more than their share.

The gentleman from New York is especially indignant because incomes under \$4,000 are exempt. Why, sir, this is not a new principle in legislation. The exemption of very small incomes might be justified on the ground that the cost of collection would exceed the amount collected, but it is not necessary to urge this defense. The propriety of making certain exemptions is everywhere recognized. So far as I have been able to investigate, every country which now imposes or has imposed an income tax has exempted small incomes from taxation. Nearly if not all of our states exempt certain kinds of property, or property to a certain amount. If an exemption tends toward socialism, as urged by the gentleman from New York (Mr. Cockran) and the chamber of commerce, is it possible that socialism has taken possession of the states of New York and Connecticut?

I find in the assessment blank used in New York the words "and not exempt by law from taxation," indicating that some property is exempt. The gentleman from New York had better eradicate this evidence of socialism, as he calls it, from the statutes of his own state before he denounces us for following the example set by New York.

I find from the Connecticut assessment blank that farming utensils to the value of \$200, mechanics' tools to the value of \$200, watches and jewelry to the value of \$25, musical instruments to the value of \$25, household furniture to the value of \$500, libraries to the value of \$200, and money on deposit to the amount of \$100 are all exempt from the personal property tax. What a firm hold socialism seems to have gained upon Connecticut!

The gentlemen who are so fearful of socialism when the poor are exempted from an income tax view with indifference those methods of taxation which give the rich a substantial exemption. They weep more because fifteen

millions are to be collected from the incomes of the rich than they do at the collection of three hundred millions upon the goods which the poor consume. And when an attempt is made to equalize these burdens, not fully, but partially only, the people of the south and west are called anarchists.

I deny the accusation, sirs. It is among the people of the south and west, on the prairies and in the mountains, that you find the staunchest supporters of government and the best friends of law and order.

You may not find among these people the great fortunes which are accumulated in cities, nor will you find the dark shadows which these fortunes throw over the community, but you will find those willing to protect the rights of property, even while they demand that property shall bear its share of taxation. You may not find among them so much of wealth, but you will find men who are not only willing to pay their taxes to support the government, but are willing whenever necessary to offer up their lives in its defense.

These people, sirs, whom you call anarchists because they ask that the burden of government shall be equally borne, these people have ever borne the cross on Calvary and saved their country with their blood.

Mr. George K. Holmes, of the census department, in an article recently published in the Political Science Quarterly, gives some tables showing the unequal distribution of property, and says:

Otherwise stated, 91 per cent of the 12,690,152 families of the country own no more than about 29 per cent of the wealth, and 9 per cent of the families own about 71 per cent of the wealth.

Is it unfair or unjust that the burden of taxation shall be equalized between these two classes? Who is it most needs a navy? Is it the farmer who plods along behind the plow upon his farm, or is it the man whose property is situated in some great seaport where it could be reached by an enemy's gun? Who demands a standing army? Is it the poor man as he goes about his work, or is it the capitalist who wants that army to supplement the local government in protecting his property when he enters into contest with his employees? For whom are the great expenses of the federal government incurred? Why, sir, when we ask that this small pittance shall be contributed to the expenses of the federal government, we are asking less than is just rather than more. But the gentleman from New York fears that this amendment will embarrass the bill, and denounces the action of the caucus as treason.

It has never been the policy of the party to control a member's vote upon the merits of a question by a caucus, and the caucus recently held was not to determine how anyone should vote, but simply to decide whether the internal revenue bill should be attached to the tariff bill or brought up subsequently as an independent measure. When a member comes to represent a constituency upon this floor, he is responsible to his conscience and to his constituency and to them alone. But gentlemen will remember that no revenue bill exactly meets the wishes of any one member, and that we are continually compelled to choose between something not wholly desirable and something else less desirable still.

Individual democrats have opposed various tariff schedules, and have opposed them honestly; but the house, in committee of the whole, has agreed upon a certain tariff policy, and the tariff bill as agreed upon leaves a deficit in the revenue. This deficit must be made up, and it must be made up in that way which is most agreeable to a majority of the house. If the pending amendment providing for the income tax is adopted by the house, it then becomes a part of the bill, and upon the final vote we shall be called upon to choose between the present law and a tariff reform measure embodying an income tax. Each one must decide his course for himself.

If any democrat who has advocated tariff reform and denounced the present law is willing to go back to his people and say, "Yes, the McKinley tariff is a crime; its loads are heavy and its oppression great, but I chose to make you bear the injustice still rather than bring you a relief accompanied by a light tax upon incomes," he can settle the matter with those whom he represents. If there be those who are willing to see their fellows oppressed "with burdens grievous to be borne," and yet "touch not the burdens" lest wealth may be displeased, the rest of us can still carry on the work of tariff reform, even if in so doing we must impose a tax which embodies the just principle