

## A Congressman Gets Pointers From a Cobbler

The Ventura (California) Democrat prints the following:

O. H. Hedges makes his bread, possibly butter, and occasional hunk of pie, by the manipulation of leather in the capacity of a cobbler.

Leather is the product of green hides, and the duty on hides gets pretty close to the product of his toil, affecting his purse according to the ratio of the duty imposed.

He carried his grievance to Congressman S. C. Smith who, under date of July 6, replies as follows:

Mr. O. H. Hedges, Ventura, Cal.—Dear Sir: I am pleased to have your note of the 30th, again referring to the subject of the duty on hides. I have been industriously trying to learn from some one what effect the repeal of the hide duty will have on the hide supply. You speak of a certain tannery going out of business because it was unable to obtain green hides. I wish that you would write me again telling me why they can get more hides under free trade than under present conditions.

Yours very truly,  
S. C. SMITH.

The following is Mr. Hedges' reply:

Ventura, Cal., July 15, 1909.—Hon. S. C. Smith, Washington, D. C. Dear Sir: Yours of the 6th inst. at hand, asking me to tell you why more hides could be procured under free trade than under the present conditions.

Now, don't you think that a rather big order to give a common cobbler, who is not supposed to know anything but to mend old soles, and vote her-straight? Especially, as it comes from one who is supposed to know all these things, that he may intelligently transact the business of his employers? But I am going to take for granted that you honestly wish to know what people of my class are thinking of these things and try to answer you.

It is a fact that 80 per cent of the hides of the United States go into the packing houses on the backs of the cattle.

Now, anyone controlling 80 per cent of any commodity can control price of same. But packing trusts are not an open market for hides; they tan most of their own hides, and only sell to the tanneries with which they have a gentlemanly agreement. Then where are independent tanneries going to get hides?

They can not have them shipped from South and Central America, or Mexico, because the duty added to the freight makes them too expensive. Take off the duty and for a short time, until the trusts could get themselves in a position to control the world supply of hides, the independents could have hides shipped in, and compete with the trusts.

The tariff simply restricts the supply by creating a false condition, thereby making it more easy for the powers that be to control that supply.

Leather has advanced from 38 cents to 57 cents per pound since 1895. Do you realize what that means? It means that I am paying to the trusts a tribute of 19 cents on every pound that I use. I use about one hundred pounds per month; that means \$19 every month, or \$228 per year, for one poor cobbler. A hundred thousand of us pay the enormous sum of \$22,800,000 accrued tribute every year. Did you ever hear of any of that being divided with tannery employes?

The tariff is a farce, so far as helping any one but the trusts is concerned. It helps the trusts, because it restricts the supply of all commodities, while the demand is ever increasing, thereby allowing large combinations to control the available supply, and charge all the traffic will bear.

Even supposing it resulted in increased wages for the working man, is it right to tax eighty million people dollars that a few thousand may gain cents? But it does not increase wages. With the trusts and corporations owning most of the jobs, and 38 per cent of the workmen continually out of a job, competing with their fellow working men for their job, is any sane corporation manager going to pay any higher wages than he has to?

But you say the American working man does receive a higher wage than those of most other countries. So he does; but why?

The history of the world shows that when the standard of living for the working man was reduced to three meals of rice a day, that three meals of rice was about all that he received.

The United States being a new and undevel-

oped country up to a few years ago, and plenty of jobs to be had in the development, also plenty of opportunity, the American working man being more prosperous because of these reasons than the working men of other countries set his standard of living higher, and demanded a wage that would support that standard.

The powers that be do not dare to reduce that standard to three meals of rice a day, at one blow. If they did, they would have a revolution on their hands. But they advance wages one per cent to fool the worker, and then advance the cost of living five per cent. About how many advances like that will it take to gain the desired result? That is, to reduce the worker to just enough to keep himself, and allow him to reproduce himself?

Now, my dear sir, just a few more words in an endeavor to jar you out of a rut in which our law makers have long run. By education and association you all have become so trained to think of and for property interests, that you all seem to think that one who has no property is not worthy of being legislated in behalf of.

Now, if you consider that twenty per cent of the people own eighty per cent of the property, you will find that as long as you only consider property interests, you are representing really only a small per cent of the people. Surely, he who has the greatest need should get the most attention. Or, do you all believe that "to him that hath" should be given, and to him who hath should be taken away even the little which he has? Well, that is the way our laws are being framed today.

But I am not one who accuses you all of dishonesty; but rather that most of you are honest in purpose. However, your education and associations are such that you are really in touch with but the one class, who represent property interests. And your sympathies and tastes naturally being with that class, you do not get in touch with the great masses who need you, and badly; and so you have really no opportunity to study their needs, or to find out what is really best for them.

I do not apply this to you personally, but to most members of our legislative bodies.

Thanking you for your kindly hearing, I am  
Very truly yours,  
O. H. HEDGES.

## Some Texas Opinions

In all seriousness, what is the difference between Aldrich, the republican senator, and Bailey, who claims to be a democrat? Aldrich voted for the tariff schedule that was most helpful to his constituents, and professes to be a high tariff man, while Bailey voted for the same kind of a tariff because it helps his constituents, but claims to be opposed to a high tariff on general principles. One is as much republican as the other.—Palestine Herald.

### SENATOR BAILEY'S FORT WORTH SPEECH

The major motif of the Fort Worth deliverance, if we may use a term somewhat technical to the language of music, is essentially different from that of the speech Senator Bailey made at Dallas or anywhere else during the present tour of explanation. In his latest allocution Senator Bailey endeavors to make himself the defender of the national as well as of the state democracy. That he does it with some skill we shall admit, the more eagerly for having been impelled so often of late to complain of the kindergarten quality of Senator Bailey's arguments, though all will testify that our criticisms in this respect have been tempered with a full understanding of Senator Bailey's predicament. Yet, while admitting the skill with which Senator Bailey endeavors to make his own course the test of orthodox democracy with respect to the tariff, we nevertheless believe the enterprise is too difficult even for one of his sophisticated skill. For instance, if the votes he cast are dumb but infallible witnesses of democracy, what an unpardonable heretic is his colleague, Senator Culberson! The weakness of Senator Bailey's position is suggested by his effort to prove himself a better tariff reformer than those progressive republicans. Proof of that contention would not be without force; but when he offers in evidence only those instances in which he voted for lower duties than the progressive republicans would assent to, and ignores those instances in which he was on the side of Senator

Aldrich rather than on the side of Senator Cummins, can it be said that he proves his proposition? Even his partisans, we think, could not concede more to his argument than that he proved himself to be as much of a tariff reformer as the progressive republicans are, and they, as Senator Bailey remarked, avow themselves to be protectionists. He did, indeed, as he says, vote for rates lower than the Dingley rates, and Senator Aldrich did the same thing with very little less frequency; but Senator Bailey in most cases voted against the lowest rates proposed, and often despite the fact that his party had positively pledged him to the contrary course. Senator Bailey's excuse for this is that the rate for which he voted, when his alternative was a choice of the lower or the lowest rate, constitutes but a small percentage of the article's value. He defends his vote on hides, for example, with the plea that the duty he supported was only 15 per cent of their value. We shall not say that he subjects his democracy to a percentage test, but since the values of commodities fluctuate constantly and widely, thus varying the percentage of protection, he gives his democracy rather a precarious status.

So much relates only to the effort of Senator Bailey to prove that his own course with respect to the Aldrich bill marks the historic position of democracy on the tariff, and this effort, as we have remarked, is the major motif of his Fort Worth deliverance. In its minor motif it is, with some conspicuous exceptions, substantially the same speech that Senator Bailey had delivered at Dallas and Houston, and since we offered some criticisms of that speech it would be rather supererogatory to consider the detailed arguments with which he excuses his repeated violations of the Denver platform. Most cheerfully we shall admit that this part of his Fort Worth speech is devoid of some of those absurd propositions which gave limited luster to his Dallas and Houston deliverances. Senator Bailey assures us he was besought by no one interested in the lumber industry in Texas to vote for a duty on that commodity. That proves nothing. Southern lumbermen were in Washington during the formative stages of the tariff bill, and Texas lumbermen were, too; and so far as the general observer could see they were as clamorous as any others for protection. If they did not lobby with him, may it not have been that they were sensible of other considerations which impelled them to think that work superfluous? No one, so far as the News knows, has charged that Senator Bailey was improperly influenced; therefore the fact that he should defend himself from an imputation which he himself infers from the mere mention of a name illuminates the evil of allowing public servants to enter the service of large corporations.

Senator Bailey's speech shows unmistakably the refining influences of criticism. He eliminated some of the more grotesque absurdities, though, since it is the keystone of his defense, he must try to make us believe that although the trusts can collect from the people any fine they are made to pay the sheriff, there is some mysterious circumstance of the tariff which prevents them from reimbursing themselves for the duty they are made to pay the tax collector. Senator Bailey's latest deliverance, while more specious, is not less sophistical than those from which it is evolved.—Dallas News.

### REPLYING TO BRYAN

Senator Bailey has spoken again. This time it is in Fort Worth and in reply to Mr. Bryan's El Paso speech. And there is nothing sincere or sound in his last speech any more than in his first. All of them indicate clearly to citizens who understand contemporary politics that Senator Bailey thinks himself strong enough not only to vote with the republicans in congress whenever the interests need his vote, but to preach republican doctrine in the banner democratic state of Texas and endeavor to pass it off as good democratic doctrine. Why? Undeniably in order to give aid and comfort to the republicans or to completely disrupt the democratic party.—Houston (Texas) Chronicle.

### ELECTION RETURNS

When this edition of The Commoner went to press the election returns were not sufficiently complete to give an accurate idea of the results in general.

If the republican state convention of Nebraska had declared for the bank guarantee would republican judges have felt sure of its unconstitutionality? Or did a republican national victory settle that question?