Getting Down Rapidly---A 1901 Reminder

An editorial printed in The Commoner December 27, 1901, and entitled "Getting Down Rapidly," will be of general interest just now. Attention to this editorial is directed by Frank B. Starr of Dehesa, Cal., who asks for its reproduction. The editorial follows:

"The New York World, in its issue of November 27, printed under a Washington date a statement which its correspondent attributes to a member of Mr. Roosevelt's cabinet. This cabinet member is reported to have said that "all the leading high protectionists of the country have seen the president's message and all are satisfied with it. Undoubtedly it will strike many readers as a strong reciprocity message, but we understand that if it is subjected to analysis it will be found that the language will be susceptible to an interpretation that will give cheer to every protectionist in the country, who has been fearful that something would be done about reciprocity in the coming congress.'

"It must be admitted by those who have now read the president's message that this cabinet member's statement was an accurate one. Although republican papers very generally commended Mr. McKinley's last speech at Buffalo, wherein he upheld reciprocity, not as merely the 'handmaiden of protection,' but as an essential departure from the protective theory, the same papers did not hesitate to enthusiastically commend Mr. Roosevelt's message, in which, as accurately anticipated by this cabinet member, the supporters of reciprocity obtained no encouragement.

"This same cabinet member is quoted by the World as indulging in some very blunt statements regarding Mr. McKinley's Buffalo speech. This is what this cabinet member said:

" 'We can not get down from President McKinley's position too rapidly. That would be unkind to his memory and impolitic. But we can get down, and we will, and by the end of the Fifty-seventh congress we will be just where we started, with no reciprocity of any consequence and with all of our protection."

"There you have it, blunt and plain. Although Mr. McKinley's last speech was said to outline the future policy of the republican party, here we have a cabinet officer making the frank and candid statement that in the repudiation of Mr. McKinley's position, in deference to his memory, republican leaders will go slow; and yet that position will be repudiated, and in spite of all the commendatory utterances of the republican press concerning the Buffalo speech, 'by the end of the Fifty-seventh congress, we will be just where we started, with no reciprocity of any consequence and with all our protection.' "

Practical Tariff Talks

Cotton stockings are articles of universal wear. The new tariff law lays a heavier tax upon the cheaper grades, and in changing the schedules at the request of the manufacturers the cheaper stockings were increased, while no additional tariff was laid upon those which the wealthier use. There are six grades of hosiery under the law. All valued at not more than $1 a dozen pay a tax of 84 cents a dozen, reducing the combination of ad valorem and specific duties to specific. On this grade the increase is from 67.11 per cent to 88 per cent. Stockings valued at from $1 to $1.50 per dozen are taxed $1.03 per dozen. On this grade the increase is from 58.32 per cent to 76.37 per cent. Stockings valued at from $1.50 to $2 a dozen pay a tax of $1.08 per dozen. On this grade the increase is from 51.41 to 61.81 per cent. On the other three grades, from $2 to $3 per dozen, from $3 to $5, and above $5, no increases were made, although asked for by the manufacturers. The increases as given were precisely those asked for by the manufacturers. It will be noted that the costlier the stocking the smaller the per cent of duty, the last three grades, it may be added, being taxed from 55 per cent for the highest priced to 64 per cent for the lower priced.

These amendments to the schedule were intended to increase the tariff on full-fashioned hosiery. Full-fashioned means the seamed stockings. Eighty-five per cent of the cotton hose manufactured in America is known as the seamless, having but the one seam across the toe, and the old tariff was sufficient to bar out any foreign importations. Having secured an absolute monopoly of this branch of the manufacture, it is aimed now to reach out after the other for the benefit of the few who make that kind. The entire wool, worsted and cashmere industry, the entire fleeced hosiery and silk hosiery industries have been for years in the hands of the American manufacturers, by virtue of the high duties exacted. The only article upon which there was competition for the last twelve years was the full-fashioned hose in cotton and lisle. On the cheaper grades of these, the increase is sufficient to confine the industry very largely to this country. Incidentally, it means that there will be a substantial advance in cotton hosiery prices to the consumer and the disappearance of the 25 cent stocking from the stores.

At the hearing before the house committee having the tariff bill in charge, the National Wholesale Dry Goods Association insisted that the proposed schedule would put the full-fashioned hose industry in America in a trust, because at least 80 per cent of the business, which has been a profitable one, is now controlled by one family of manufacturers, who are represented by the same sales agents. The association representative told the committee that to adopt the schedule proposed would cut down the importation 80 per cent and that this meant a reduction in revenue of over $3,000,000 a year. By granting the request of the manufacturers, therefore, congress sacrificed revenue and presented the manufacturers with the opportunity to absorb this and then some more by making it possible for them to advance prices to the consumers.

The stocking industry employs well-paid workers, the average weekly wages running from $8.50 for women to $30 for men. Most of these operatives come from England and Germany, and a peculiar thing about it is that whenever the American manufacturer increases wages here his foreign competitors must increase the wages there in order to retain them, the supply of operatives being limited in both countries. This maintains the wage balance between the countries. That the tariff granted is excessive is shown by the costs tables submitted to congress by the manufacturers themselves. The tariff, according to the republican model, represents the difference in wages here and abroad. These costs tables show that the total wage cost per dozen in making hosiery in American mills ranges from 79 cents to $1.04 a dozen. The tariff, supposed to represent only the difference, runs from 84 cents to $1.08 per dozen—in short, the whole cost at home.

C. Q. D.

CARNEGIE FUND A MENACE

(From the address delivered at the fourteenth annual meeting of the National Association of State Universities in Boston, by Jacob Gould Schurman, president of the association.)

Benefactors die; universities abide. At least, that has been the case in the past. But in this age of organization, benefactors have learned to perpetuate themselves as corporations. And we now have institutions chartered by acts of congress to disburse for educational purposes the charities of millionaires. The rich philanthropist who objectifies himself in such a benevolent corporation of course names the trustees, and subsequent vacancies in the board are filled by co-optation. This is a new species of corporation, but the two or three already organized hold large funds, which are likely to be greatly augmented in the future. And there is no limit to the number of such corporations except the limit to the number of persons who possess wealth and desire to distribute it in this fashion.

I can not but think that these corporations create a new and dangerous situation for the independent and privately endowed universities. Just in proportion as these are supported by those benevolent corporations is their center of gravity thrown outside themselves. It is no longer a case of a rich man giving his money, going his way (eventually dying), and leaving the university free to manage its own affairs. The purse strings are now controlled by an immortal power, which makes it its business to investigate and supervise and which lays down conditions that the university must accept if it is to receive grants of money. An irresponsible, self-perpetuating board, whose business is to dispense money, necessarily tends to look at every question from the pecuniary point of view; it wants its money's worth; it demands immediate and tangible results. Will not its large powers and enormous influence in relation to the institutions dependent upon it tend to develop in it an attitude of patronage and a habit of meddling?

The very ambition of such a corporation to reform educational abuses is itself a source of danger. Men are not constituted educational reformers by having millions to spend. And, indeed, an irresponsible, self-perpetrating board of this sort may become a real menace to the best interests of the higher education. In the fancied interests of capital, or religion, or of education itself it may galvanize the intellectual life of the institution it undertakes to foster. A board of this kind should be answerable to the public, like the regents of a state university. Or, better still, let the millionaire trust the boards of trustees of colleges and universities and give them outright the capital he intends to devote to educational purposes. I believe that in all cases this plan would be best for educators and best for the public interest.

I make no exception of the Carnegie foundation for the advancement of teaching, to which Mr. Carnegie has given such large endowment for the pensioning of professors in the colleges, technical schools and universities of the United States and Canada. And I certainly speak with no prejudice, as I regard that endowment as the best thing any benefactor has ever done for higher education in America, and I have myself the honor of being one of the trustees. But I look with concern and anxiety on the influence of such corporations on the free and independent life of our institutions of learning and research.

LLOYD GEORGE A LEADER

Springfield, Ill., State Register: Call it what you will, socialism, anarchy or what not, the seed of real liberty and real freedom is being sown in England, and Lloyd George is leader in the sowing. He has conceived and taken hold of in monarchical, regal, Great Britain, a vital, fundamental principle, which yet lacks such bold and fearless application in the national affairs of "the land of the free and the home of the brave." The land question is sending its brilliant, fundamental principles of justice blazing into the dark recesses of oppression, rich idleness and landlordism in a manner which points to wonderful reforms in the not far distant future.

Chicago Tribune: If one man owned all of downtown Chicago and if three men owned New York south of Forty-second street, and if these holdings and others like them were subject to a tax which had not beeen revised since Cromwell's time, which was a tax merely in name, and which operated to make land ownership a weight bearing down on the prosperity and development of the country, Americans would not waste time listening to an opposition which called the proposed remedy socialistic. If 90 per cent of the land in America were owned by less than 10,000 persons something more than the land tax provisions of the Lloyd George budget would be used to restore ownership to the people.

Springfield, Mass., Republican: The most interesting aspect of Mr. Lloyd George's development is that the radical democracy of England has evidently found a formidable leader, and that, however the coming elections may go, whatever even may be the fate of the budget and free trade Mr. Lloyd George will remain to be reckoned with for the next twenty years as a radical force capable in time of seriously modifying the economic and social basis of English life.

BUT THE SPIRIT LIVETH

"Andrew Jackson was a great man," says Senator Aldrich, "but he is dead."

The senator from Rhode Island is mistaken. Andrew Jackson is not dead; but the United States bank is dead.

When Senator Aldrich introduces his bill for the creation of a central bank of issue he will find that Old Hickory is still on guard and will have to be reckoned with.—New York World.