

tory, of course, as all ramrods have, but as no one was in position to narrate that history I am trying to invest it with a breathless interest, as it were, by imagining that it fell from the rifle of that nameless Spaniard who won renown by falling before the Rough Riders' unerring aim.

As our boat steamed out of the harbor for Kingston a fellow passenger pointed out the place where Captain Hobson sunk the Merrimac and the corner of the fort from which an American gunner knocked the flag staff by a shot fired six miles away.

Kingston is slowly recovering from the earthquake but the destruction of property must have been considerable.

The weather is mild and it is hard to realize that this is winter. A happy and prosperous New Year to the readers of The Commoner.

W. J. BRYAN.

TELL IT TO THE INTERESTS

The Wall Street Journal says: "It is to the interest of our politicians to persuade people that most of the evils they suffer from can be cured by legislation. It would never do to tell the farmer the truth—that he and not the legislature possesses the remedy for most of the evils from which he suffers. Probably the politician does not know any better. The representatives of a people are not ordinarily very much wiser than the people they represent."

The farmer is not so simple as the editor of the Wall Street Journal may think he is. But why not address these remarks to the representatives of special interests? Why not remind these gentlemen that if they are content with an honest livelihood they could get along without special legislation? The simple truth is that we have a lot of measures framed in the interest of the trust system which need to be defeated and we have a lot of legislation that was enacted for the use and benefit of special interests that needs to be revised. The people are awaking to the fact that they must display some interest in the details of the government under which they live if they would have it preserved in the form in which the fathers laid it.

FREE RAW MATERIAL

Gravelton, Missouri.—To the Editor of The Commoner: Your paper of August 13, has a wrong statement. It says: "Free hides has brought us cheaper leather, harness, and shoes." That is false. Free hides will do nothing but enrich the manufacturers more and more. They will sell us the products as high as ever and the difference in the first cost and the selling price therefore will be greater than ever, and enrich the manufacturer more than ever before. We do not want free hides nearly as much as we want free shoes and free harness. Then you speak for free wool, but we do not want that either. We want free clothing. Nothing but the free manufactured articles will ever make prices lower to the consumer. We can not trust the manufacturers. We have tried that too long already.

L. M. WAGNER.

If the manufacturers have not reduced prices it simply means that they were not charging all that the former tariff permitted them to charge and it does not prove that "free harness, boots and shoes" would not lower prices. And again if free hides has not brought us cheaper leather, harness and shoes, it has at least made it possible for the manufacturer to give the consumers the reduction. The next move, therefore, is not to abolish free hides, but to remove the tariff on the manufactured products, thus forcing the manufacturer to give to the consumer the reduced price, even as the manufacturer has obtained relief through free raw material. Another advantage in having free raw material is that it removes the scales from the eyes of many voters that are now blinded. With free hides the cattle men are no longer fooled by the tariff and they can be counted on to help get free wool and cheaper clothing. With free wool the sheep raisers are no longer fooled by the tariff, and they can be counted on to help maintain free hides, and to revise the tariff on the manufactured products.

A tax on the raw material was made an excuse for higher duties on the manufactured product. When we make it possible by free raw material for the manufacturer to reduce the price to the consumer, then we are in a position to demand other relief for the consumer.

Strong Blows for the Income Tax

Two strong blows were struck recently for the income tax. One was by Governor Fort of New Jersey, the other by Senator Borah of Idaho.

GOVERNOR FORT'S MESSAGE

In a special message to the New Jersey legislature Governor John Franklin Fort quoted the following from a message of Governor Hughes of New York, in which message Governor Hughes attacked the income tax:

"To place the borrowing capacity of the state and of its governmental agencies at the mercy of the federal taxing power would be an impairment of the essential rights of the state. In order that a market may be provided for state bonds and for municipal bonds and that thus means may be afforded for state and local administration, such securities from time to time are excepted from taxation. In this way lower rates of interest are paid than otherwise would be possible. To permit such securities to be the subject of federal taxation is to place such limitations upon the borrowing power of the state as to make the performance of the functions of local government a matter of federal grace."

On this point Governor Fort said:

"Neither of these suggestions seems to me to have any force. If the patriotism of our citizens and the interest of our financial institutions who take and hold state and municipal securities is at so low an ebb as to cause such a tax to affect the value of state or municipal securities, we are indeed in an unfortunate condition in the republic. No one can believe that such a condition exists."

"As to the claim that the federal government might injure the states as such by taxing state bonds under an income tax, there are two satisfactory answers: First, congress is representative of the states and elected by the citizens and the remedy is in the hands of the people of the states. Second, no congress could be elected that would lay any tax with the view of destroying the power or integrity of the states."

"I am not inclined to accept the statement that the supreme court of the United States might construe the words 'from whatever source derived' as found in the pending amendment as justifying the taxing of the securities of any other taxing power. There is no express provision in the federal constitution at present prohibiting the congress from imposing an income tax upon the securities of a state. Yet in the Pollock case the court held, speaking through Chief Justice Fuller, as follows:

"As the states can not tax the powers, the operations or the property of the United States, so it has been held that the United States has no power under the constitution to tax either the instrumentalities or the property of a state. A municipal corporation is the representative of the state and one of the instrumentalities of the state government. It was long ago determined that the property and revenues of municipal corporations are not subjects of federal taxation."

"The supreme court of the United States has up to this time been the sure reliance not only of the nation, but of the states. The future may be safely rested there. Inability to impose an income tax if the necessities of the government required it would amount to a national calamity."

"An income tax is the most just and equitable tax that can be levied. It imposes the exactions of government upon the citizen in proportion to his ability to bear them and upon the basis of the wealth, which, under the laws of the country, he has been able to accumulate. Men should contribute to the needs of the state as God has prospered them."

"It is evident that the burden of general taxes is not proportionately borne by all upon whom the burden rests. The citizen of moderate holdings, real or personal, does not attempt to escape the prompt discharge of this obligation. This can not be said of those who are essentially rich and whose holdings are large."

"It has been said with some semblance of certainty that over eighty per cent of all the vested wealth of this country is owned and controlled by 3,000 estates, corporations and individuals. The casual observer is convinced that the burden of tax-paying is borne very largely and out of all due proportion by the citizens of moderate means."

"The United States should possess the unquestioned power to tax incomes. It may not

be necessary to use the power but if emergency should arise which requires it the right to tax should exist. Congress practically unanimously adopted and submitted this proposed amendment."

SENATOR BORAH'S SPEECH

Following is an Associated Press dispatch:

Washington, February 10.—Senator William E. Borah, of Idaho, took occasion in the senate today to attack the position of those who oppose acceptance by the several states of the proposed amendment to the constitution of the United States which would permit the levying of a tax on incomes without apportionment between the states. Incidentally, the senator paid his respects to Governor Hughes of New York, including him by inference among those who profess to be in favor of an income tax but oppose practical measures which would permit its enforcement. His allusion was, of course, to Governor Hughes' annual message to the New York state legislature, urging defeat of the proposed amendment on the ground that its language might be so construed as to authorize congress to tax incomes derived from state and municipal bonds.

Senator Borah pictured the mind of the public as in a state of suspicion and discontent toward the government, and declared that the people could not much longer be withheld from radical action if taxation were continued in protection of wealth and in exemption of incomes which sustain luxury and breed idleness and idiocy."

The senator said in substance: "The history of the income tax since 1894 has not been one which any citizen could recite with pride. For a hundred years a rule of construction as established by the men who helped to write the constitution had received the approval of an undivided court time and time again. During this period there sat upon the bench of the supreme court some of the greatest lawyers of that or any other period of this or any other country. During this period the wealth of this country had not become so domineering, so powerful so determined to have its own way. During this period, therefore, we had under the constitution the right to impose a part of the tax upon wealth and a part upon consumption, and we did so."

"In 1894 and 1895 these precedents were overturned, this constitution received an interpretation unknown to its makers. In the face of two most powerful dissenting opinions, to which two other judges assented, the humiliating and astounding doctrine was announced that the makers of the republic had hedged wealth about so that the taxing powers of the government could not reach it even in time of war; that the founders of a government based upon equality and justice had made it impossible to divide the burdens of government between consumption and a large class of gathered wealth. Last session of this body we were called upon to ratify and declare by express act our assent to that interpretation. Under the rule of the majority we did so. We submitted this proposed amendment to remedy this supposed hideous defect in the fundamental law."

"Now the scheme and plan is to defeat the amendment. Having as a law making body solemnly accepted this construction of the constitution, thereby making it impracticable again to appeal to the court, if this amendment can be defeated this, the government of the people, for the people, and by the people, will stand alone among all the civilized nations of the earth shorn of the power to tax that form of wealth best able to bear the burdens of government."

"That is the scheme and plan, and such men as the great governor of New York is giving them great aid and comfort. Men say with great fervor of patriotism, 'I am in favor of this power being given to the government to be used at least in time of war,' and straightway proceed to help defeat the amendment. If those who are the real enemies of this measure would come into the open its friends could deal with them far more successfully."

"Mr. President, no one ever saw this country in just the condition it is today. Never since this government was launched has there been such a restless spirit among the great mass of people, such ugly questioning, such persistent inquiry. No part of the government seems to escape challenge or criticism, and it is fast becoming popular to scoff at the constitution