

Practical Tariff Talks

Nowhere else than in the wool schedule is the sordid greediness of the manufacturers better illustrated. If it were not for the larcenous character of the transaction, the investigator might smile at the ingenuity displayed in its making. The ability that the combination of wool growers and manufacturers displayed in securing such uniformly high rates attracted the cupidity of others, who do not make woolen goods. Thus it will be seen that makers of cottons, silks and furs, not content with their own rates have sought shelter, as Senator Dolliver put it, "among the slippery provisions of the wool tariff." These articles find a place there through the insertion of a proviso that if garments or cloths made of these fabrics contain any wool, "composed wholly or in part of wool," as the schedule reads, they take the high rates of the wool tariff.

It has even been sought, by an ingenious reasoning, to levy the wool tariff on furniture because it was found that the tapestry covering was chiefly silk and that the silk contained wool filling, and therefore, this proviso applied. The case was in court at last reports, the appraisers computing the tax on the weight of the furniture multiplied by the 44 cents a pound and 50 per cent ad valorem provided for wool. Senator Dolliver, who made an exposure of the iniquities of this schedule which no one attempted to answer, called attention to the fact that this paragraph also transferred rubber boots with wool lining bodily from the 35 per cent protection of the rubber schedule to the woolen cloth paragraph; or, as he put it, "we see the fine vaudeville sketch of a pair of rubber boots being solemnly weighed at the custom houses of the United States and assessed at 44 cents a pound and 60 per cent ad valorem as wearing apparel composed wholly or in part of wool." This puts the tax on rubber boots so high that none are imported, and the manufacture is controlled by a Boston concern which carries in its advertising of securities for sale that it controls the business in this country.

The same absurdity is applied to rubber scrap. A Boston man thought he had discovered that this scrap was on the free list. He consulted a lawyer and was told that it hadn't been forgotten by the tariff-makers and that he must pay 10 per cent tariff on it. This lawyer thought it came under the catch-all, or basket clause, for "wastes not otherwise provided for." The man imported \$400 worth, and was astounded to find that the tariff bill presented to him was \$1,600. The appraisers pointed out to him that this rubber scrap, containing a trace of wool that had been fused into it by heat, came under the clause relating to wastes composed wholly or in part of wool, and must pay 44 cents a pound and an ad valorem of 50 per cent. By hiring a shrewd lawyer he got permission to send the stuff back and thus he recovered, under the drawback clause, all of the duty he paid, less 1 per cent.

As eminent an authority as S. S. Dale, editor of the Textile World Record, is on record as condemning this fraud and concealment. The duty quoted above is known as a compensatory duty, and the theory of it is that as the wool manufacturer must buy much of his supply abroad and as what he buys here is artificially raised in price by the tariff he should be repaid specifically for the excess in price, the ad valorem being added to protect what he manufactures against foreign competition. If this were limited and fixed at what he actually pays as excess, it could be defended by a protectionist, but it is actually more than that. Mr. Dale said in answer to a question why the wool duty should be applied to any fabric that was composed largely of cotton, but had a little wool in it: "There is none. The object of a compensatory duty is to compensate the manufacturer for the increase in the cost of manufacture resulting from the duty on wool. To allow this 4 to 1 (an arbitrarily fixed proportion of the weight of grease wool to scoured wool) compensatory duty on the weight of the cotton in the cloth is a self-evident absurdity. In effect it is to give the manufacturer a large amount of concealed protection which he does not need. Take a sample of cotton warp cashmere that I have had analyzed. The total duty is equivalent to 108.3 per cent ad valorem, consisting under the law of a compensatory duty of 58.3 per cent and a

protective duty of 50 per cent. The duty on the wool actually used in the goods amounts to only 36.7 per cent, so that the actual protection is increased from 50 per cent to 71.6 per cent." The same is true of all wool mixed goods.

C. Q. D.

AMERICAN EMBASSIES

The house committee on foreign affairs recommended, for passage, a bill appropriating half a million dollars annually for the building by the United States of its own embassy buildings abroad.

Frederick Townsend Martin, president of the association, denounced the practice of sending wealthy men as ambassadors to foreign countries. "This thing of sending rich men as our ambassadors is gradually merging the system from one of democracy into one of snobbishness," he declared. "Our embassies are notorious for their exclusiveness and their inaccessibility to the traveling American. The United States should establish suitable embassies and be democratic abroad as well as at home."

The house, however, defeated the measure. Nevertheless it was certainly a meritorious plan. In a letter written in 1906 from Austria-Hungary, Mr. Bryan touched upon this point. In this letter Mr. Bryan said:

"I have been intending for some time to speak of the matter of permanent buildings for our embassies, and Vienna is a case in point. Our ambassador at Vienna, Mr. Francis, has had difficulty in finding a suitable place for the embassy. I discussed the subject during my former visit abroad, and my observations on this trip have still further strengthened the opinion that our country owes it to itself as well as its representatives to purchase or erect at each of the foreign capitals a permanent embassy building. At present each new ambassador or minister must begin his official career with a house-hunting expedition, and the local landlords, knowing this, are quick to take advantage of the situation. At one place an American ambassador was recently asked to pay double what his predecessor had paid, and as he was not willing to do this, he is still living at a hotel. There are not many suitable buildings from which to select, and our representative is at the mercy of those who control the limited supply. Diplomatic requirements are such that the embassy must be centrally located and sufficiently commodious to enable the ambassador or minister to return the courtesies which he receives. Small apartments are numerous, and there are a few palaces which can be rented, but the former are not large enough and the latter much larger than necessary. Our government ought to own a building conveniently located and suitable for the offices and home of the ambassador. It must either do this or choose between two systems both of which are bad, viz., compel the representative to spend more than his salary for house rent or continually increase the salary of diplomatic representatives to keep pace with the growing rent in the capitals of the world. To throw the burden upon the government's representative is undemocratic; to risk constantly increasing rent is false economy. It is not in harmony with our theory of government to have an important branch of the public service open to rich men only, and that is the case under the present system. No poor man can afford to accept an appointment as an American minister or ambassador to any of the principal countries of Europe, and as the years go by, the expense of a diplomatic residence will become greater as the value of urban property increases. While the telegraph and the cable have somewhat decreased the responsibility of the foreign representative by bringing him into closer contact with the home government, still much depends upon the ability, the sagacity and the discretion of those whom we send abroad. Our government ought to be in a position to select from the whole citizen body those most competent for the work to be entrusted to them, and it goes without saying that efficiency in the public service is not measured by the amount of money which an official has either inherited or accumulated.

"There is another argument in favor of the building of permanent embassy buildings which ought to have weight with our people. If diplomatic representatives are chosen only from those who are able to spend more than their official incomes, it naturally follows that some will be richer than others and that the establishments maintained will differ in expensiveness. In fact, experience has shown that a new representative is sometimes embarrassed by the

lavish expenditures of a preceding one. The standing of our nation abroad demands that our ambassadors and ministers shall live in a style in keeping with our ideas, and extravagance is as offensive as parsimony. By owning its own embassy buildings, our government can regulate the standard of living and entertainment of those who represent it at foreign courts. There is no doubt that our nation must ultimately come to this plan, and the sooner it adopts it, the better."

THE "FULL DINNER PAIL"

Even the horses are disgusted with the republican party "full dinner pail." A reader of The Commoner sends the following full dinner pail dispatch printed in a republican newspaper:

Burlington, Vt., February 15.—A sidelight on the poverty of the people in the country districts is given in the stories of a couple of men placed in the county jail here yesterday. They are Frank Foster and Edgar Foster of Essex, and the arrest was made on a larceny charge. The Foster brothers' crime consisted of stealing corn-stalks for their starving horse. Frank said it was a toss up whether they would be arrested for cruelty to animals or stealing. They knew they were bound to be taken anyhow and gave their poor old horse all the advantage that could be gained from the situation. The Fosters are also charged with shooting deer out of season and if they are proved guilty of this charge it will be because they were forced to beg, poach or starve. A woman from a mountain town was here the other day asking for assistance. She said that her husband had fed all the straw in the beds to their worthless horse and the children had to sleep on the floor. The authorities are looking for the man.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THE ONE THEY HAVE?

In an interview with a Macon, Ga., newspaper Major J. F. Hanson, president of the Central of Georgia Railway company and formerly national committeeman of the republican party from Georgia, said that the corporations of the United States should organize a political party of their own and fight for their rights.

What's the matter with the one they have? Is the republican party in such bad repute that the special interests must look around for some more serviceable organization?

The Mystery

"Tain't me," says the farmer,
"Who's getting the stuff."
"Tain't me," says the packer;
"I just get enough
To pay a small profit,
As fair as can be."
And all of them chorus
Together, "Tain't me."

"Tain't me," says the tanner,
"Who gets the high price
For high shoes and low ones,
For slippers and ties."
"Tain't me," says the rancher,
"I live and that's all."
"Tain't me," says the dealer;
"My profits are small."

"Tain't me," says the canner;
"My margin's the same."
"Tain't me," says the huckster,
"Who's bracin' the game."
"Tain't me," says the gardener;
"I'm poor all th' time."
"Tain't me," says the grocer;
"I ain't seen a dime."

It's surely a puzzle
To know where it goes;
No maker or seller
Or any of those
Partake of high prices,
So they all agree;
And I'm a consumer,
I'm certain "Tain't me."

—J. W. Foley in New York Times.

All new and renewal subscribers to The Commoner during the month of May will receive a year's subscription to the national farm paper, the American Homestead, without additional charge. Give your friends an opportunity to join you in accepting this offer.