

Practical Tariff Talks

When the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill was before the senate Mr. Overman of North Carolina, a democrat, moved an amendment increasing the head tax levied upon aliens coming to America from \$4 to \$10 each. Mr. Overman quoted the statements of republican leaders to the effect that their main object in levying a tariff was to protect American laborers from the competition of pauper labor abroad. He cited the uncontradicted fact that a very large part of the American labor once found in our protected steel mills and in the factories of New England and the middle states has been displaced by foreigners who flocked here for work and underbid those who once held the places. In one big mill town in New England it was found that there were representatives of over twenty different races working in the factories, and that American labor had been practically displaced.

In Massachusetts the last census figures show that 43 per cent of the population is foreign born. In Rhode Island the percentage is 45 per cent. Since then the proportion has undoubtedly largely increased. The government reports show that the average amount of money brought by these emigrants is \$23, showing why they came here. The same records show that a large percentage of these importations of later years, unlike the immigrants from England, Ireland, Sweden, Germany and the more substantial countries of Europe who formed our first immigrants, returned home, when they had secured enough money to do so. A majority of them, investigation has disclosed, come over to work in competition with American labor, live in squalor, save every cent and then return home. On motion of Senator Aldrich the Overman amendment was laid on the table. The vote showed the measure of regard for the American laborer the republican party possesses. As Senator Gore put it in his speech, "it unmasked the hypocrisy of the whole scheme of protection in the name of the American laborer. He is kissed and then betrayed."

According to the report of the 1900 census there were more than 29,000,000 persons engaged in the five principal groups of occupations. Of these groups more than 10,000,000 people were engaged in the agricultural pursuits, 7,000,000 in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits, and the others in domestic, personal and professional service. Of the entire twenty-nine millions, however, only the small number of 243,000 were reported as manufacturers and officers. As there is overwhelming proof that the schedules were arranged in the interest of these manufacturers, this leaves congress in the position of legislating to tax 29,000,000 workers for the benefit of 243,000 persons at the most.

The best claim made for the new tariff law is that its average tax is but 41.26 per cent. The history of the measure shows that its principal schedules were written by the manufacturers and they certainly made the rate of taxation high enough to suit themselves. Mr. Bryan, in a speech made at his home-coming at New York in 1906, succinctly put the attitude of the republican party towards the laborer in these words: "In this country if a man dies he divides his property and gives each heir a share. Why doesn't he do as the republican party does in treating the relation of employer and employe and give his estate to an uncle, ordering him to give to the children what he thinks they need? The republican party has thrown millions into the laps of the employers and has said that thus they have helped the employes. What sublime trust in the employers!"

The millions represented in the yearly tariff tax are practically placed in the hands of 243,000 persons to distribute among the seven millions engaged in manufactures. Who believes that it is distributed honestly and equitably? And who gets what is distributed? What protection is afforded by the law to American workmen against the competition of foreign labor imported by the manufacturers to compete with them at home instead of abroad? No hand is raised to turn back from these shores those thousands who come here to seek liberty and to make themselves a part of the nation by imbibing its spirit, and intelligently taking part

Ask Your Congressman

The time is past for sham battles and in order that a real victory may be won for the people every candidate for congress should be questioned on several particular subjects by the men whose votes he seeks.

Readers of The Commoner everywhere should asked their congressman:

(1) Do you believe: "A platform is a pledge, given by the candidate to the voters, and when ratified at the polls becomes a contract between the official and his constituents. To violate it, in letter or in spirit, is not only undemocratic, but repugnant to the principles of representative government, and constitutes an embezzlement of power."

Answer

(2) Will you vote for a change in the house rules, putting the selection of committees in the hands of party caucuses, each caucus selecting its own committee membership?

Answer

(3) Where do you stand on the tariff question? Do you believe in the principle of protection as interpreted by the republican party or do you favor tariff for revenue only?

Answer

(4) Do you endorse the democratic platform declaration that a private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable?

Answer

(5) Will you do your utmost to make it impossible for a private monopoly to exist?

Answer

(6) Will you favor a bill requiring the publication of all campaign contributions prior to election day?

Answer

(7) Are you opposed to national incorporation—that is, the grant of corporation charters by the federal government instead of by the state government as at present?

Answer

(8) Are you in favor of the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people?

Answer

(9) Are you in favor of the income tax?

Answer

(10) Do you approve the democratic national platform for 1908?

Answer

[Note: It is suggested that voters cut out the above list of questions and send it to the candidate for congress in their district, asking him to fill in the answers and return the same to the voter. The voter may, if he desires, forward the same to The Commoner, and it will be printed in this paper.]

in its government, but it is the protected manufacturers of this country who are responsible for a class of immigrants who come only to take work from American labor, hoard what they get and transport it back again over the seas at the expense of that American labor.

C. Q. D.

WHERE DID HE GET IT?

Former Governor James H. Higgins of Rhode Island has entered the campaign in that state and is asking Senator Nelson W. Aldrich some very embarrassing questions. Mr. Higgins says that Mr. Aldrich's wealth is from ten to fifteen million dollars. While he does not impute dishonesty to Mr. Aldrich he insists that the Rhode Island senator owes it to the people of his state to explain the source of his enormous accumulations. Does not Governor Higgins know that some of it came from rubber?

INFORMATION WANTED

J. P. W. Davis, Stella, Calif.—I desire to ask The Commoner to ascertain for me the whereabouts of John W. Francis who, with myself, in 1857, got of Governor Charles Robinson, then of Kansas, a printing office in Quindaro, Kansas, and started a free state paper called the Kansas Tribune, at Quindaro, Kansas. The information as to his fate, or his present whereabouts, would be thankfully received.

A LETTER FROM BEVERLY

Dear Beveridge and LaFollette,
To relieve me of this strain;
I'll let you name your P. M.'s now,
Since I have heard from Maine.

This western trip of Dear (?) T. R.,
Has given me a pain;
It's getting worse, now every day,
Since I have heard from Maine.

I now conclude the four years more
I wanted, are in vain,
For Teddy's going to "take the cake;"
They baked it up in Maine.

Poor Uncle Joe, I loved him so
And Aldrich must be slain;
I fear I've let them boss too long;
It looks so up in Maine.

I'm sorry now that Gifford's out,
But Ballinger shall not reign;
I guess I made the people sore;
It looks that way in Maine.

And now I think my fort is golf,
I heard a loud refrain;
'Twas wafted here to Beverly
On breezes fresh from Maine.

—SILE SMYTHE.