

# Practical Tariff Talks

Reciprocity in politics and legislation exists, even though it has not found expression in a general national policy in trade. When the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill was enacted it provided, through a change in classification for a considerable increase in the cotton goods schedule. President Taft signed this bill, and thus enabled it to become a law without any protest with regard to the cotton schedule. Now that he is a candidate for renomination it is interesting to note that almost all of the cotton manufacturing states have kindly instructed their delegates to the republican national convention to vote for Taft. Notwithstanding the tremendous fight put up for Roosevelt in Massachusetts, which has heretofore entered several vigorous protests against republican rule, he secured the preference vote, and apparently a majority of the delegates. This was possible only through the championship of his cause by the big manufacturing interests, Massachusetts being a leader in the cotton industry.

The cotton goods schedule is another of the absolutely indefensible portions of the present tariff law. No republican who believes in the protective tariff principle as enunciated by his party convention, that the rate should represent the difference in labor cost here and abroad with a reasonable profit to the manufacturer, can defend this schedule for the reason that it is a distinct perversion of that principle. Nor can it be claimed to have been downward revision. Under the Dingley law the duties levied on the goods actually imported amounted to a trifle over 45 per cent. Naturally on those articles where there were no imports, which means the duties were prohibitive, the rate was much higher. If the duties provided for in the present law be applied to the importations of the last year of the Dingley law's operation it will be found they exceed 50 per cent of the value of the goods. Under this new schedule there are more prohibitive duties than ever before, largely on finished cloths like mercerized goods.

The latest census figures on the cotton manufactures printed are those taken in 1905. They show a total yearly production of a little over a billion dollars, of which \$217,000,000 was labor cost. The total labor cost was, therefore, only 21 per cent of the value of the product. On cotton goods alone, the census figures show a total labor cost of 22 per cent. The allegiance of a majority of voters in this country to the republican party has been won by the argument that the protective policy is a good thing for everybody; that the purpose of a tariff is to enable manufacturers to pay American wages and to control the American market by placing such a duty on the foreign manufacturers' products that he can not enter with any large percentage of his output, and that by building up a large wage-earning class a home market for farm products is afforded. A tariff is, therefore, a tax assumed by the majority of the people in order that there may be maintained a high wage standard that will enable everybody to share in the prosperity supposed to be thereby created.

In practice, however, the tariff is a tax forced on the people for the aggrandizement of the manufacturing industries of the country. The proof of this is easily obtainable. What republican, for instance, can assert that the cotton schedule accords with protective doctrine when, instead of representing the difference in labor cost between this and foreign countries, it is more than twice the total labor cost in this country? If the labor cost abroad were but a third of that in this country—it is only 28 per cent less—the difference would be but 15 per cent, whereas the tariff is 50 per cent or more. The serious defect in the protection policy, in actual practice, is that the law makes the manufacturer the tax collector and trusts to his generosity in passing on to the workers the protection which the law is supposed to give them. He is under no bond, and moral propulsion does not appeal to him.

Wages in the cotton goods industry are distressingly small, on a par with those in the wool industry made generally known by the Lawrence strike. The fact is, to make a long story short, the manufacturers do not pay the dif-

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Victory in 1912 is a POSSIBILITY—not a CERTAINTY. Success will depend on whether the democratic party is alive to its opportunities in this campaign. Much will depend on placing good literature into the hands of the voters, old and young alike. The American people can be trusted to settle questions right, but they want the facts, figures, arguments and reasons from authoritative sources.

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—paid for by the reader—has a far more definite value and influence than any publication sent out for free distribution. Every campaign manager recognizes this fact. Hence the importance of assisting in the work of getting good democratic papers into the hands of the voters.

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ference in labor cost they collect by way of tariff, they employ hands they have imported from Europe to man most of their spindles, and wages have not kept pace with the increased cost of living. Census figures show the percentage of labor cost has dropped in twenty-five years from 25 per cent to 22 per cent, and per spindle from \$4.41 in 1890 to \$4.06 in 1905. The manufacturers pocket as much as they can of the tariff, pay whatever wages they can induce men, women and children to work for, and are growing richer every year. Is it any wonder they want to keep in office men who favor them? C. Q. D.

#### MR. TAFT'S MISFORTUNES

Mr. Taft has been peculiarly unfortunate. First the man who "made him," to whose right to be known as his creator, was what admitted, by Mr. Taft himself, changed his mind and proceeded to "unmake" him. His cabinet has brought him no support.

A writer in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch says: "P. C. Knox represents Pennsylvania in the Taft cabinet. The sweeping fashion in which the electorate of Pennsylvania repudiated the administration is one of the sensations of the Taft campaign for re-election.

"Favored Illinois has two places in the cabinet, those filled by Franklin MacVeagh and W. L. Fisher. Next to Pennsylvania's disapproval of the administration that of Illinois is the most emphatic and significant. How much help Charles Nagel, Missouri's representative in the cabinet, was to his chief can be studied in the reports of the Missouri state and district conventions. Indeed, it is said that but for Nagel's interference the steam roller would have

crushed out opposition to the Taft candidates for delegates-at-large.

Secretary G. von Meyer is from Massachusetts. F. H. Hitchcock is also understood to claim that state as his home. The best effort of two cabinet officers in Massachusetts is represented by an even split. New York also has two, H. L. Stimson and G. W. Wickersham. The best New York would do was to choose an anti-Roosevelt delegation which it refused to instruct for Mr. Taft.

As a matter of fact, old "Tama Jim" Wilson has done better than any of them. Perhaps his hold on Iowa explains why he continues to hold his job."

#### BIRDS OF A FEATHER

The Philadelphia Public Ledger, in its issue preceding the Ohio primary, said: "What the independent citizen has to wish for in Ohio is that Roosevelt may be overwhelmed, so that the republicans can proceed as a sane political organization, and that Harmon shall stunningly defeat his Bryanistic opponents, so that in the event of a prolongation of hysteria there will be in the Baltimore convention at least the possibility of a sane nomination."

A "sane nomination" in the Ledger's opinion, would be the nomination of a man upon whom the special interests may rely. The Philadelphia Public Ledger is the most thorough-going standpat newspaper printed in Pennsylvania. Indeed it would be difficult to find a newspaper that could successfully contest with the Public Ledger for standpat honors. When it says that Mr. Harmon's nomination would be "sane" everyone familiar with its record knows what it means.