

HIGH TARIFF ON COAL OIL

The Rochester (N. Y.) Democrat recently said:

"It is worthy of notice that the two most powerful, wealthy and grasping trusts in this country are the Standard Oil company and the anthracite monopoly; yet there is no important duty on petroleum or hard coal. With these articles on the free list, their output and sale are held in control by trusts, prices are marked up arbitrarily, and the public is powerless to resist the extortion.

"It is conceded that the tariff should be revised, but not from the false standpoint on which Senator LaFollette has planted himself. The free-traders are fond of saying that 'the tariff is the mother of trusts,' but they invariably dodge when requested to account for the existence of trusts which have no tariff protection."

Referring to the Rochester paper's editorial the San Francisco Star makes this interesting comment:

So, there is no import duty on petroleum? It would seem so from careless reading of the Dingley law. But the careful reader, the man who knows before he asserts, will find this joker at the end of paragraph 626:

"Provided, That if there be imported into the United States crude petroleum, or the products of crude petroleum produced in any country which imposes a duty on petroleum or its products exported from the United States, there shall in such cases be levied, paid, and collected a duty upon said crude petroleum or its products so imported equal to the duty imposed by such country."

The effect of that joker is that petroleum has greater protection than almost any other article in the Dingley law. The only noteworthy competitor in the petroleum business is Russia, which has a surplus of petroleum to export. But for that joker in the Dingley law—and it was in the "free trade" Wilson-Gorman law also—Russia could sell petroleum in this country cheaper than it is sold by the Standard Oil company.

The effect of the joker is that Russian oil brought to this country must pay the same tariff tax as American oil exported to Russia—from 100 to 200 per cent. During the past six years some Russian oil has been brought to this country, the tariff duties being 5.4 cents a gallon on crude and 2.34 cents a gallon on refined oil.

By means of the joker that prevents Russian competition, the Standard Oil trust has been able to charge American consumers about two or two and a half cents a gallon more than it could have done if petroleum had been on the free list. Now, if the Rochester Democrat will get a table showing the amount of refined oil used in this country, and will carefully multiply the number of gallons by 2.5 cents, it will see that since the Dingley law went into effect it has made a free gift to the Standard Oil trust of several million dollars.—San Francisco Star.



CONSERVING NATIONAL RESOURCES

On another page will be found the president's speech at the conference called by him to consider the conservation of national resources. It was an epoch making speech. It clearly pointed out the waste that is going on, the danger of exhaustion of our coal, our iron ore and our timber. The subjects considered are of the first importance and the conference is likely to initiate a movement which will bring the executives together on stated occasions and stimulate the various states to act together for the advancement of national reforms and for the advancement also of those reforms which are within the sphere of the state.

The president has performed a distinct service in convening the conference and his speech admirably presents the importance of the questions brought to the attention of the conference.



A COUNTRY MERCHANT'S ANSWER

The following editorial is taken from the Omaha World-Herald:

"A country merchant of Nebraska has written a letter to the 'Prosperity club' boomers of St. Louis, which the World-Herald believes entitled to a wider hearing than those who are at the head of that movement to 'discourage agitation and demagoguery' will be inclined to give it. The letter is from C. A. Lord of Shubert, a dealer in hardware, implements and furniture, and was written in response to a cir-

cular soliciting his support. Mr. Lord thoughtfully sent a carbon copy of his letter to this newspaper, saying: 'On reading your editorial last night, I decided to send you a copy for publication, believing that my experience has been that of most hardware men and merchants, and that they feel much as I do about this question.'

"Mr. Lord's letter is as follows, and we commend it to the careful reading not only of all merchants, but all of the merchants' customers:

"Shubert, Neb., May 11, 1908.—The National Prosperity Association, E. C. Simmons, Chairman, St. Louis, Mo.: Gentlemen—Your circular, explaining the motives of your association, its purposes and intentions, has been noted very carefully by the undersigned. Your purposes may be non-political, as you say, but to a man out here in Nebraska, who remembers the 1896 and 1900 campaigns, your declarations have the same old sulphur smell. Your very first request—to keep hands off of railroad legislation—smacks wonderfully of a 'corporation cormorant' squeal.

"If I order the house of which your chairman is president, to ship me a ten-pound sash weight the charges will be 80 cents. If I should then increase my order to 150 pounds the charges on the whole thing would be 27 cents per hundred, or 41 cents.

"In the face of such conditions, do you think it well to let up on railroad legislation, and 'let well enough alone?'"

"Explain these rates to me and justify them, and I will join your association and immediately become a 'prosperity' shouter. But if you can not do it, I will expect you to take down your sign, and admit that corporation legislation has only begun.

"Why this sickness? Why this 'typhoid fever' you mention as the cause of our recent financial troubles? I have been in business here seven years, and in that time I find that one-half or more of the goods I purchase I am compelled to buy of trusts, without getting the benefit of one bit of competition. A Deering binder, for instance, that I could buy for \$85 then, costs me now \$116.50 in car lots. We made a profit then of \$25 on an investment of \$85. We make a profit now of \$17.50 on an investment of \$116.50. This is true of all goods made and sold by the International Harvester company of America.

"The retailer's competition is sharper that it ever was, but at the same time the trusts have hemmed him in with oppressive exactions, both in the goods he buys and freight rates, until he acts in an automatic manner, which makes us feel; if we do not look, like the old 'Punch and Judy' that first amused us in the long ago. This condition may be good enough for people like Mr. E. C. Simmons, who has made his stake, but it doesn't suit us younger fellows, who have ours to make. We want a Roosevelt or Bryan at the head of our nation's affairs, surrounded by legislators in full sympathy with them, and for this we will contend, prosperity or no prosperity. And if these recent conditions exist yet for another ten years, and temporary prosperity never shows its timid head, we will feel that our fight has been made for the benefit of posterity. If our children are not rich enough to claim the flabby hand of a foreign prince, we want them at least to be free to start in business for themselves in free, competitive America, to win a name and a fortune in honorable business methods. We do not want them to have to cringe and fawn under the iron will of hard-faced trust magnates for a job.

"I believe, gentlemen, you will find these are the sentiments of a majority of the Nebraska hardware merchants.

"Yours for the competitive system from the bottom up, and for a permanent prosperity, such as will benefit not only selfish us, but our children and our children's children. C. A. LORD."

"Mr. Lord has pretty thoroughly exposed the jug-handled kind of 'prosperity' for which the 'Prosperity clubs' are getting ready to shout. It is the same old 'let well enough alone' brand, which pinches the retailer and robs the consumer, while it makes a comparatively few corporation magnates enormously rich. It is the same brand which puts dishonesty and bribery at a premium. It is the same brand which brought on a severe panic, throwing more than a million men out of work, at a time

when the country had and was producing more wealth than ever before in its history. It is the same brand which now, in a time of depression, is raising trust prices on the necessities of life, and is preparing to follow this up with a general increase in freight rates, in violation of both the anti-trust law and the railroad regulation law passed only a little more than a year ago. And the real purpose of the 'Prosperity clubs,' so far as this newspaper is able to judge, is first to hypnotize public opinion into thinking these increased prices and rates are a good thing, and second to help elect Mr. Taft, to the end that there will be no more 'harmful interference' with trust and railroad privileges."



AND WHAT WAS THE SLOGAN?

The following article, which originally appeared in the New Castle (Pa.) Herald, is taken from the Beaver Falls (Pa.) Weekly Review: "The farmers of Lawrence county are having no trouble in getting plenty of men to work this spring. Every morning scores of foreigners and many Americans apply for positions at many of the farms in this vicinity. They are paid only seventy-five cents a week and are glad to work at that. Well-to-do farmers have hired four or five men at this wage and are not doing any work themselves, merely overseeing it. This is the lowest rate of wages paid farm hands in recent years. The employes are given their board, however."

Let us see what was the slogan? Was it "Four years more of the full dinner pail?"

147 IN FORTY DAYS
F. Greenland, Cooperstown, N. D.—
Enclosed find check for \$15.00 in payment of one year's subscription for twenty-five copies of The Commoner to be sent to persons named in enclosed list. These make in all 147 paid up new subscribers. The democrats of this county appreciate the work The Commoner is doing for the people's cause.

DEMOCRATIC STATE CONVENTIONS MINNESOTA

The democratic state convention for Minnesota met at St. Paul May 14. The friends of Governor Johnson were in complete control and elected the following delegates at large: F. G. Winston, Minneapolis; W. S. Hammond, St. James; Frank A. Day, Fairmont; Swan Turnblad, Minneapolis; Daniel A. Lawler, St. Paul; T. D. O'Brien, St. Paul; Martin O'Brien, Crookston; A. C. Weiss, Duluth.

District delegates were chosen as follows: First, L. L. Brown, J. F. Cook; Second, J. C. Wise, Dr. E. A. Fritsche; Third, A. A. Poehler, Julius A. Collier; Fourth, R. T. O'Conner, J. G. Armon; Fifth, E. J. Conroy, John W. Pauly; Sixth, Dr. P. A. Silbert, John Reichert; Seventh, J. Driscoll, R. G. Farrington; Eighth, Martin Hughes, John Dwan; Ninth, C. A. Fullar, H. L. Shirle.

The indorsement of Governor Johnson is in the following words: In Governor John A. Johnson, Minnesota presents to the nation a democratic candidate for president of ability, integrity and honor, a constructive statesman, who holds no brief from any class, one who from early youth has been a wage-earner, whose private life has been of such purity, vigor and earnestness as to win him the love, respect, and confidence of all who know him. In public life he has by his virtue won the admiration of the people of his state and nation, regardless of condition of life, or political faith. We, therefore, instruct our delegates to the national democratic convention to vote as a unit for him, and continue to so vote as long as necessary to secure the nomination of John A. Johnson as the candidate for president.

WYOMING

An Associated Press dispatch under date of Cheyenne, Wyo., May 14, follows: "The democratic state convention today selected delegates to the national convention and instructed for William J. Bryan. Resolutions were adopted favoring the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people; favoring an amendment to the Sherman anti-trust law excepting labor unions from the effect of its provisions, and opposing the forest reserve policy of the present national administration."