

## Practical Tariff Talks

Defenders of the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill have sought to avoid any responsibility of that law for the high prices now existing by pointing to the greatly increased gold supply. While no one who pretends to any knowledge of political economy would seek to deny that there is a distinct relation between the world's supply of metal money and prices, yet it must also be conceded that when the fluctuation is not the same in all countries there must be a disturbing factor working somewhere. Thus when the price of woollens rise on the London market 6 and 8 per cent, as they did recently, while the advance in this country was 25 per cent, nobody who pretends to any sanity of utterance would contend that the gold supply element was the sole cause. And when he investigated further and discovered that the rise in prices the world over has not been as great as in the United States, he must conclude that some cause local in character must be operating here. The truth is that the history of the tariff shows that high prices always follow the enactment of high tariffs. This is not difficult of explanation; that is what the high tariff was passed for.

This was openly and avowedly the moving causes behind the McKinley and Dingley bills. It was complacently explained, to those who protested vigorously, that the high prices would tempt into manufactures new capital and that the competition that would follow would reduce prices. The argument sounded well, but this could be true only so long as there was perfect freedom. The manufacturers were very quick to see that they were foolish, after having had foreign competition shut out by the tariff, to go ahead and cut one another's throats—that by a combination of capital or trade agreement relative to prices they could hold the price up to the point placed by the tariff. Take a concrete example. Suppose that on carpet costing \$1 a yard a tariff of 75 per cent is placed. This arbitrarily places a price of \$1.80 a yard on that carpet, computing 5 per cent for freight and insurance. That high price was put there by the tariff law itself. Even if that 75 per cent tariff represents the difference in labor cost here and abroad, the law practically fixes that price to the consumer. As labor rarely represents more than 20 per cent of the entire cost in any industry of that character, it is clear that the difference between the actual labor cost and the pretended difference of labor cost in the tariff marks the amount of money presented to the manufacturer. The law hands all over to him, and high protectionists profess to believe that he will hand back the excess in some way, although he never has.

Andrew Carnegie, who was presented with many millions by this method, in his testimony before the ways and means committee (page 5815 of printed record) makes this open confession: "The only justification for a government raising the price to the consumer of any article, because that is what a tariff does—if a tariff did not raise the price it would be of no use—that is only justifiable when you can induce a body of capitalists to risk capital in the experiment of introducing a new industry into a country, which is in its nature temporary. If the experiment has been successful, as it has been in steel, it, in my opinion, vindicates the protective policy which we have pursued; but permanent protection, I think, is an injustice to the consumer; and if, after forty years of trial, the American steel industry does not need a tariff, then I think we should lessen it." Mr. Carnegie himself is a very good measure of the success of the protective policy as applied to steel. He had had enough, and wanted the tariff lowered. His successors, however, have not been beneficiaries so long, and they objected. The steel schedule was lowered in a few items, but on structural steel it was increased and on all other items there was no change.

The tariff can not escape any part of its responsibility for the high prices of manufactured goods. The plea that many schedules were lowered will not suffice because there is plenty of evidence at hand to show that in practically all of the cases where a reduction was made the new rate is also prohibitive and the reduction no greater than the increase in prices abroad. In other words, monopoly is sheltered as strongly as ever behind this tariff

and is left free to do as monopoly always does, raise the price to the highest point the traffic will bear. C. Q. D.

### THE FIGHT ON CANNON

Whether anything is gained for the public interests by the dramatic fight made by the democrats and republican insurgents for the resolution changing the committee on rules will depend upon the character of the men chosen for the new committee. That the six republican members are to be selected by the republican caucus (that caucus being under control of the Cannon forces) does not give great reason for hope along this line. It was, however, a notable fight. The democrats are to be congratulated because they stood shoulder to shoulder in a good cause. The insurgents who voted for the Norris resolution are to be congratulated for having left their party even to this extent. The nine insurgents who stood faithfully with the democrats and voted to oust Speaker Cannon are to be congratulated for having displayed a high form of courage.

Mr. Norris and the other insurgents who deserted the democrats just at the moment when a real victory was at hand made a serious mistake. Even Speaker Cannon, in his speech before the Illinois society, taunted them when he said:

"A resolution was presented declaring the office of speaker vacant. Then what did these men do who have been denouncing my personality, these Simon-pure followers of Senator La-Follette, do then? Only eight of them had the courage of their convictions. The result was that, while I was elected by a majority of twenty-six last March, they refused to turn me out by a majority of thirty-six."

Everyone likes a determined fighter, and men of all parties were bound to show some admiration for the aged speaker who fought his opponents to a standstill, defying them to do their worst. We must not, however, in our willingness to avoid personalities and to show admiration for a striking character, make the mistake of forgetting that Mr. Cannon is the representative of the trust system. That system is oppressing the American people. Because of its exactions men and women, generally, find it difficult to make both ends meet in every day life, while in most of the cities of the country dire poverty prevails because of the greed for gold shown by the gigantic system that is represented in the councils of our nation by Joseph G. Cannon.

It is a pity that a man with his force of character should have given his life to the service of an oppressive trust system. But there he stands the servant of special interests and just as he fought for his masters to the last ditch, so Mr. Norris and other insurgents should have stood with the democrats, fighting for the people. They should have ousted Mr. Cannon from the speaker's chair, choosing as his successor a man who would have co-operated with a new majority in the house of representatives to the end that genuine reform legislation be sent to the senate and, if possible, to the president for approval or rejection.

They failed—failed ignominiously. They have, however, demonstrated for the benefit of the American people that the way to obtain relief from Aldrichism and Cannonism is to drive the republican party from power. They have demonstrated that there is small hope for genuine relief through the election to congress of any man upon whose allegiance the republican party may depend in the hour of party peril.

### THE PERISHING REPUBLIC

It was a wild night at sea, lads, in the house of representatives Thursday night. No, the figure is not mixed. The republican ship was at sea, and the long, low rakish democratic craft, flying the skull and cross-bones, was bearing down upon it. More than that, in the republican ship reposed the "safety of the country," to-wit, Joe Cannon. If you don't believe that Joe represents the safety of the country read the Omaha Bee.

It is plain that the Bee's Washington correspondent was nervous, and excited, and frightened, and mad through and through. It was treason he saw, working out its foul purpose under his very eyes. And he seized his trusty faber and submitted the horrid facts to a threatened universe.

"Guffaws and laughter," we read in the Bee, "were common, the old rebel yell being frequently heard, giving color to the fight."

Think of that! Heartless guffaws and laughter while the republic was perishing! The rebel yell sounding as the gallant ship was sinking,

with Joe Cannon hiding in the hold!

And, "Judge Norris consulted with the democratic leaders"—the owdacious willian, Sam Weller would call him! Had he no sense of shame, cuddling up that way to the rebel yell?

Then it got worse. Listen:

"Fighting for their very existence, the regular republicans invoked the constitution to their aid, citing precedents covering 130 years of parliamentary history. Ribald laughter met the efforts of the leaders and the smell of blood seemed to make the democrats ravenous, and with hoots and shouts, with noisy vociferations and demonstrations the democrats, augmented by the insurgents, pursued their advantage."

Wasn't it awful, Mabel? The republican patriots standing there through the horrendous night, fighting for their very existence, invoking the constitution, even—and being met with ribald laughter, with hoots and shouts, by the ravenous and blood-thirsty rebel democrats!

Little wonder if the Bee correspondent was driven to moralizing as he sat there in the gallery with the awesome scene spread out before him. Nero fiddled, it is said, while Rome burned, but the Bee correspondent, more gentlemanly than Nero, couldn't find it in his heart to fiddle while the republic was perishing. Besides, he didn't have any fiddle, in his heart or elsewhere. So he shuddered—and wrote down his shudders. Thus:

"It was such an exposition of unbridled power that made thoughtful citizens looking on from the gallery shudder for the safety of the country. It was a day of license without regulation."

As we write this, we don't know whether the country eventually perished or not. We fear, however, the worst.—Omaha World-Herald.

### CELEBRATION AT LINCOLN

The Lincoln Bryan club celebrated W. J. Bryan's fiftieth birthday, March 19. A large number of ladies and gentlemen were present. Addresses were delivered by Governor Shallenberger, Frederick Shepherd of Lincoln and T. H. Tibbles, at one time the populist nominee for vice president of the United States. Resolutions were adopted as follows:

"Be it Resolved, That we, the members of the Lincoln Bryan club, meeting here tonight to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of the greatest citizen of the world, William Jennings Bryan, do hereby congratulate him upon his splendid character as a man, upon his magnificent public career, upon his dauntless courage and undying devotion to the cause of the people and good government. We take the greatest pride in our loyalty to him in his battles for the right, and are deeply interested in him because of the great good that he has accomplished. We wish him health and strength in his life of usefulness; we wish him God-speed in future triumphs over the forces of error and wrong that still thwart and threaten the peace and happiness of the republic, and we pledge our loyal support in the coming contests in which arrogance, vile domination, usurpation of power and corrupting influences will yet be driven from the land and in their stead enthroned pure popular government, as taught by the immortal Jefferson and upheld and sustained by the martyred President Lincoln.

"We heartily commend his declaration in favor of county option, which is in accord with the democratic principle of local autonomy, and we hereby endorse all of his public utterances on all of the public questions before this country."

### OPPORTUNITY

Foolish is he who says that at his door I knock but once, a furtive moment stay, Fearing lest he shall hear, then haste away, Glad to escape him—to return no more. Not so, I knock and wait, and o'er and o'er Come back to summon him. Day after day I come to call the idler from his play, Or wake the dreamer with my vain uproar, Out of a thousand, haply, now and then, One, if he hear again and yet again, Will tardy rise and open languidly. The rest, half puzzled, half annoyed, return To play or sleep, nor seek nor wish to learn Who the untimely, clownish guest may be. —William H. Eddy, in Atlantic Monthly.

A lot of congressmen who are complaining about their salaries ought to be thankful that this country does not elect lawmakers on the British system. If it did there would have been a lot of new faces in congress a few weeks after the passage of the infamous Aldrich-Cannon tariff law.