

Where the Rank and File Stand

Hints of What Members of Congress Will Learn Upon Returning to Their Constituents

Mr. Bryan is receiving letters from every section of the country endorsing his stand in the tariff question. It is impossible to print all of these letters but the following are fair samples:

S. R. Davis, New Orleans, La.—Down here in Louisiana the democracy is restless over the conduct of their representatives and senators in voting for Aldrichism, and if I mistake not you will see them gradually changing and voting more democratic when they hear the protests of the democratic electorate during the pending gubernatorial and senatorial campaign.

B. L. Smith, Pekin, Ill.—You are being denounced by a great many newspapers because of your activity at Washington in general and particularly in reference to the wool schedule. As a humble citizen I desire to express to you my profound appreciation for your efforts in behalf of the common people. Apparently no objection is made to the presence of a paid lobbyist but one who is there from a sense of duty fighting for principle is to be condemned. Strength to your arm.

J. Francis Smith, St. Joseph, Mo.—Keep up the good work. You are no dictator, but an individual who voices the opinion of millions of true democrats. A party of compromises will not last. The country will be for all protection or all for revenue tariff. The democrats who are used by the protectionists are not of the kind you represent. Your kind are not for trade.

Dr. J. D. Motley, Louisville, Mo.—As one of the rank and file I want to commend your courageous stand—the true democratic stand—on the wool question. Millions of us rank and filers, who believe in equal justice for all, with special privileges for none, are thanking God today that you live to intercede for us, when the special interests are seeking advantages that do not rightfully belong to them. I do not believe the rank and file of our party, or the rank and file of any other party, will stand for a tax on their clothes and blankets, especially when they understand that the necessary revenue to run the government, can be raised in much less burdensome ways. Take my own district (the Ninth Missouri) for instance. One hundred per cent are wool consumers, while not one per cent could properly be termed wool producers. Why was it that thirty days prior to final action on the wool question, the ways and means committee favored free wool. Can it be possible that the caucus action was a bid for the wool protected vote? If so it was bargained for at a calamitous price—"sow to the wind and reap the whirlwind." Mr. Underwood's argument for a wool tariff is rotten to the core—a delusion and snare, set to catch the unwary and thoughtless. Sooner or later, sooner I hope, he will realize that not all the gray matter in the democratic party, now shelters under the dome of the capitol, however much may be there, and that it will be disastrous for those under the dome, to attempt to handle the democracy of the na-

tion. The action of the leaders in congress makes our party past a lie, puts us on the defensive and lays us open to just criticism and denunciation by republican protectionists. I know not what course others may take but for myself I squarely repudiate the action of the caucus. Who authorized this congress to retain a tax on wool. Certainly not their constituents. Neither did the last national platform speak in so strange a tongue. Had the democrats made the issue in the last campaign, on the wool question, as now outlined by the leaders in congress, I venture to say their present majority in the house would now be a slim minority. Much strength to your arm, Mr. Bryan. The rank and file of your party are with you, heart and soul, in the great and courageous fight you are making for equal and exact justice for all men.

E. A. Skeels, Mt. Auburn, Vt.—I wish to say that the great common people, as Mr. Bryan calls them, will endorse every word that Mr. Bryan has said to our democratic members in congress at Washington and that if Mr. Underwood succeeds in putting a 20 per cent duty on wool he is playing at once into the hands of the republican party and may mean thereby its defeat next year. The reason we now have a democratic house is because the democrats promised to lower the cost of living and if there was one thing on the whole list that was to be taken into consideration it was to have clothing much cheaper. And it all goes to show that the trusts have a hold on the democratic party as well as the republican. I hope with thousands and hundreds of thousands of democrats throughout our whole country that Mr. Bryan will keep giving them hot shot on the subject. Can it be possible that we as a party shall go before the voters in 1912 without an income tax ratified by several of the states and let the enormous duty of 20 per cent remain on wool when all expected as I have said it to be put on the free list. If Mr. Underwood wishes to raise more revenue let him put a still higher duty on luxuries that the rich import. But let the poor man own his coat at the lowest price possible.

L. G. Moyers, Globe, Ariz.—Herewith I hand you New York exchange for \$6.25 in payment of six subscriptions to The Commoner and one platform text book to be mailed to the writer. I have been a reader of The Commoner since it started and have always admired the consistent stand it has taken on democratic policies. At the present time when our party is being weighed in the balance and the eyes of the country are looking to it for the remedial legislation it looked in vain to the republican party for, it should not be found wanting, but able and willing to meet the responsibilities that are thrust upon it in a manner that will merit and meet the approval of the people who have spoken in no uncertain terms their desire for a change. The doctrine of expediency has no place in the democratic creed, nor can we compromise with special interests to further the individual welfare of any candidate,

but let him rather measure up to the standard set by progressive democracy and we can follow his leadership to merited success. With best wishes for the continued success of The Commoner, may it grow and prosper in the years to come, with added strength to champion the cause of the common people. Yours for democratic harmony and success, with honor.

M. J. Buck, Pittsburg, Pa.—I am glad to see you are consistent on the tariff question. One scarcely recognizes the difference between the democrats and republicans when it comes to the tariff question. When out of office the democrats act as anti-tariff party, when elected to office they seem to be trying to ape the republicans in not being quite sure of what the country demands. In 1875 and 1876 my father prognosticated that tariff would lead to classes and large and powerful corporations which would prove a menace to the country. What right has any class or set of men to have tariff to protect their industries in order to grant them the privilege to exact a duty from the public? This of course is republican doctrine but surely not democratic. All lumber, wool and leather surely should come in free. Likewise bread stuff, meat, etc.

Emile C. Gerane, Jeanette, La.—Your advice on wool "free of entry" to democrat is a good stand for this reason: If the American manufacturers wish to be enabled to export American products from their manufactories on all woolen goods, it is essential that said manufacturers should acquire cheaper raw wool so as to be enabled to meet foreign competition. This would also increase the American products to such extent that it will benefit labor in higher wages. If labor from wool manufactories are benefited, the result will be that the entire American population will be benefited by it.

Joseph J. Culbertson, Ashland, Ohio—Permit me to congratulate you for the great work you are accomplishing by way of educating the people in sound politics. I hope you will in the near future show in The Commoner two tariff tables, one showing the rate of duty in the Payne-Aldrich laws, the other showing the duty as it is in the bill now being put through congress on articles of common use such as tea, coffee, sugar, clothing, including wool and cotton, etc. I am in favor of wool on the free list, but will take half a loaf if I can not get a whole one. Yours in a splendid good cause.

G. E. Nelhousemyer, Genoa, Ohio—I raise sheep and for the last two seasons the price which I have been getting for wool has been very low. This year I got 16c a pound and a few years ago I got around 30c a pound. I can not get as good a suit of clothes for \$15 now as I could a few years ago. Can the high protectionists explain why clothing costs more when the price of wool goes down? If this country is to have reciprocity, then the farmers ought to have as good a thing given them as the manufacturers get.

Edward Callaghan, Charleroi, Pa.—You are not speaking for yourself but for the greatest army of men that ever cast a ballot, or will fire a musket. Your voice is more potent today than it was on that fateful day when you were acclaimed the leader when you gave utterance to words that will never die: "You shall not press down the crown of thorns on the brow of labor. you shall not crucify mankind on a cross of gold." Let us up and at them again. There are brave hearts and willing hands behind what you have to say. Free wool, free hides! Hurrah! Hurrah! for Billy Bryan!

William Hoffman, Bisbee, Ariz.—I want to add my little word of commendation for your stand on the tariff on wool. Your word, as always, rings true to the test of democracy and there is no question but that the rank and file of the party is almost to a man with you. The reduction of the wool tariff in itself will help a little, but the failure to make wool free will hurt the party incalculably. It will cause the protectionists to wink among themselves and it will cause mistrust on the part of the people to democratic pledges in the future. Its effect will be demoralizing to democratic faith. There is no mistaking the verdict of the nation in the congressional elections. The high cost of living was aimed at by the voters through the tariff, and the high cost of woolen clothing and products was a clear-cut issue in the campaign. It is sickening to see democrats so far forget their faith and their obligations to the people as to

pound, excluding the weight of equipment in both cases; which enables the express corporations to pay over fifty per cent in profits to themselves, although rendering no service whatever to the farmers and to points off the rail-ways."

Mr. Lewis has worked out a system of "zones" based on scientific methods, from which a five pound package, for instance, can be sent 196 miles for 11 cents, while the express companies now charge 25 cents and more for like distances; from Calais, Me., to San Francisco, will cost 30 cents for five pounds, and \$2.42 for 50 pounds, as against the express company charges of 85 cents and \$7.50.

With the rural free delivery a part of the express system, an agricultural parcels post will

market the farmers' produce and save them the time and labor of marketing their truck. Rates even lower than those quoted are promised, by having the rural and city carriers assemble the small consignments of the individual shippers and utilize the fast freight service on trunk lines, with passenger trains on the branch roads to hurry the stuff to destination, at the regular fast freight rates. The postoffice will recoup itself by securing carload rates for the assembled shipments, while the small shippers get their advantage over present conditions by having their collect-and-delivery system for practically nothing.

This system is now in vogue in Germany, and shippers, Mr. Lewis shows, pay only double freight rates, less than a tenth of the express rates here.

The food problem, the "high cost of living," according to Mr. Lewis's figures, is largely the result of the want of a proper articulation of our transportation with the rural sources of supply. While prices are often prohibitive to the consumer, crops may be rotting at the place of production, for want of a real express service.

The committee's hearings will be printed.

WHAT ARE THE WILD WAVES SAYING?
ASK PAYNTER OF KENTUCKY—HE KNOWS.