

## Practical Tariff Talks

Mr. Taft appears to rely for tariff revision upon his tariff board. This is a commission selected for the purpose of furnishing congress with accurate information upon which it may base future action. Mr. Taft, however, does not make clear what basis he has for believing that congress will make use of this information. On previous occasions a republican congress has had uncontradicted facts before it relating to pending schedules, and utterly ignored them in fixing the duties. Take the cotton bagging item, for example. Before the ways and means committee at the 1909 hearing the fact was adduced that the manufacture of this necessity of the cotton planter is controlled entirely by three companies that have an agreement among themselves whereby all competition is eliminated between them and prices are fixed. This information was before congress, uncontradicted, but it was ignored.

The rate of duty on this bagging, which is used for covering baled cotton, is six-tenths of a cent a square yard, which is 15 per cent ad valorem. This rate is the same as was contained in the Dingley law. Each year the cotton planters of the country use an average of 105,000,000 square yards, of which amount all but 16,000,000 square yards is made by the three big concerns in America. The total duty collected on this material in 1910 was \$99,000, an insignificant sum when compared with the fact that it is the very instrument by which the bagging trust takes from the cotton planters over a half million dollars a year. To state it in other words by reason of a tariff on cotton bagging the planters are compelled to pay \$616,000 more per year than would otherwise be the case, of which sum the government takes approximately \$100,000 and permits the bagging-trust to collect \$516,000.

A little history of this schedule also gives the interesting information that when it first made its appearance in the list of import duties it was higher than the facts adduced by the ways and means committee of that session, the Forty-eighth congress, justified. The first request was preferred by a man named Marshall who stated that a duty of 15 per cent ad valorem would be sufficient and would furnish all the protection needed for it as an infant industry. Yet the McKinley bill shows a tariff duty of 1.6 cents per square yard, which was then an ad valorem duty of 32 per cent. That industry, under the rates that have prevailed, has developed into an arrogant and burdensome trust. It will be recalled that the original plea for protective duties was that by shutting out the foreign manufacturer the home manufacturers could develop to the point where competition between them would make it of no moment what the duty was, since that competition would fix the price at as low a point as could be possible.

A beautiful little bunco game that was. Behind the tariff wall it was proposed to erect—and which was erected—home industries were to grow and expand, furnishing American labor a living wage and a steady job and the American farmer a home market wherein he could sell high and buy low. The industries did develop, but within a short time after they reached the point where competition between them had a tendency to lower prices, they were combined into trusts, a system under which they could boost prices to the full extent of the tariff barrier reared against the foreigner. The cotton bagging industry is one of these, yet the tariff remains the same. The cotton planter is also at the mercy of the steel trust by reason of a totally unnecessary tariff on cotton ties, the metal bands around bales. These are made principally by the Carnegie and the Pittsburgh steel companies, which fix the price. The 3-10 of a cent duty, figured on the amount used last year, was \$324,000, which represents the excess price paid over what would have been paid if they had been free, as under the Wilson bill. Of this artificial advance in cost, the government got \$1,498 in the shape of revenue upon imports, while the remainder was pocketed by the steel trust. Of what avail will these facts be with the republican senators elected by a campaign fund to which the steel trust was a heavy contributor?

C. Q. D.

### A VIRGINIA PROTEST

To the Editor of the Times-Dispatch.—Sir: Since your paper purports, I believe, to be an organ of the democratic party, albeit apparently greatly enamored of Mr. Taft and his administration and, in like ratio, hostile to Mr. W. J. Bryan, may I ask—in all-round fairness to Mr. Bryan, to the democrats who admire him, and to yourself—that you publish the following speech of Representative W. A. Cullop, of Indiana, June 17, 1911, page 2514, Congressional Record, thus:

"Mr. Chairman: It has been with a great deal of pleasure during this debate that we have listened to the great solicitude expressed by the membership of the republican party in this house for that great commoner in the democratic party, William J. Bryan. Let me say to our republican friends that whenever and wherever the democratic party gathers around the council table for conference, his seat will be, in the future, as it has been in the past, at the head of the table. (Applause on the democratic side.) He has not only converted to his policies 7,500,000 democrats who follow him as their idol, but, from the tone of this debate, it seems that he has converted the leaders of the republican party as well. (Applause on the democratic side.)"

And the following from the speech of Hon. Robert B. Macon, Arkansas, delivered June 16, page 2472, Congressional Record of June 24, 1911:

"We all know that he is not an angel, but we know that he has been one of the greatest apostles that ever went forth to proclaim justice and right between man and man. (Applause on the democratic side.) Mr. Chairman, I ask in all sincerity, who has done more in this age of the world's progress for the betterment of the condition of our splendid country than Mr. Bryan? Mr. Roosevelt's popularity is but a reflection from the popularity of Mr. Bryan, for all of his progressive ideas were first possessed and proclaimed by Bryan. (Applause on the democratic side.)"

"The legislation that has been enacted at this session of congress, of which so many members have boasted, and which has received the unstinted applause of the American people, was first advocated by Mr. Bryan (Applause from democratic side.) For sixteen years he has gone forth preaching the doctrine of righteousness and justice between man and man, and proclaiming against special privileges of any kind, until the minds of the people have become so crystallized upon the subjects he has been advocating that they have sent us here as their representatives to put into law the declarations of that great and good man. (Applause on the democratic side.)"

Now, respectfully calling your attention especially to the applause by which these utterances were greeted and punctuated by the so large body of representative democrats, I would fain commend to your careful and cheerful consideration the whole of the speech from which the foregoing excerpts are taken, as a curative for the incessant nightmare under which you seem to labor regarding Mr. Bryan. Really, your state of mind concerning him seems pitiful; that is, from a democratic viewpoint, since his nomination by the democratic party would be quite as impossible as would be his nomination by the republican party. Respectfully,

J. THOMPSON BROWN,  
Arrington, Va.

### IN PENNSYLVANIA

A Lancaster dispatch to the Philadelphia North American says: There's great discussion going on throughout the rural districts on the subject of locusts' visit this year of 1911, in view of the fact that "their seventeen years are not yet up;" but it must be remembered this is not only a rapid age, but one of insurgency, and these locusts, having renounced the leadership of the old gang, do not intend to wait for any length of time to assert themselves.

Some of the participants in the many arguments base their reasons on superstition, and none of them takes any stock in the reasoning of the state scientists, who pretend to be able to prove that the locusts of 1902 are no kin to these of 1911. The word epoch was being used rather promiscuously in one of the recent discussions, and a fellow who was rather extravagant in its use was "called" to define it, which he did as follows: "An epoch is an age of development and is approximately seventeen years. For instance, it will be about seventeen years on March 4, 1913, since William J. Bryan came upon the scene of political action with his

radical ideas, to be rebuked by the American people, however, at a cost that staggered Paul Kruger. Whether Taft's successor shall be La Follette, Clark, Cummins, Wilson, Clapp, Harmon, Root, Folk, Tom Marshall or a dark horse, he will have been elected by the American people on a platform fashioned after the ideas of the selfsame Bryan."

### WATCH IT GROW

Mr. Bryan has given instructions that every new subscriber shall receive The Commoner for a period of two years (which will carry it beyond the presidential election of 1912) for the sum of one dollar. Every Commoner reader is asked to secure at least one new subscriber. Many will be able to secure more than one. Everyone, however, may render some aid in this work.

The following named readers have sent in five or more subscribers:

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