

of prices is from the "Commoner and Glassworker" of October 21, 1899:

"From an average price of about \$1 50 per box for single and \$2 per box for double strength in 1893, the value of glass has quite, if not more than doubled.

* * * The low price of glass was due to a low tariff, combined with the low cost of unwrought material, and reduction in cost of labor, with a poor consumptive demand. * * *

"Since the existence of the American Glass Co., the greatest advance in price has taken place. This company has managed its affairs without change practically since its formation, and has done it so well as to not only control the product, but to fix the price at the highest possible notch.

"The profits during the last three years have been enormous. The pool is said to have made \$700,000 in 1896, \$1,750,000 in 1897, \$2,100,000 in 1898, and still larger profits are anticipated for 1899."

Prices Carefully Adjusted to Tariff.

In no other industry perhaps are prices adjusted to the cost of imported goods with such precision. The cost of laying down imported glass at interior points being greater than at seaboard, on account of freight, the prices at interior points are held enough higher to cover this difference. Thus customers at Pittsburg, in the shadow of the factories, must pay 14 cents per box more for ordinary window glass than the customer at Boston, and 20 cents more than the Pacific Coast customer. The country is divided into six districts, and the prices for each are determined by the cost of imported glass in each district after the duty is paid. Prices for the Pacific coast are lowest of all because the cost of transportation from Belgium is the lowest in comparison with the cost of transportation on domestic plates.

Since 1861 the duty on window glass has changed but slightly—except that it was reduced about 30 per cent under the Wilson bill. The duty now as under the McKinley and previcus bills varies from about 1 3-8 to 3 cents per pound and averages about 2 cents. This is generally equivalent to between 80 and 100 per cent and often exceeds 100 per cent. From 1860 to 1890 prices in this country declined an average of 8 per cent, although foreign prices declined 54 per cent from 1867 to 1890. Our prices are now higher than in 1890 or in 1860, for ordinary sizes. This one fact, taken in connection with free natural gas and unrivalled opportunities for production and in view of the great progress made in most other industries, ought to be sufficient to condemn the whole protection theory. No other industry has enjoyed so much protection for so long a period and no other important manufacturing industry has made so much progress backwards.

From 1880 to 1890 we imported each year about 30 per cent of our total consumption of window glass. Since 1890 the percentage of imported glass has been somewhat less. It is now about 12 per cent—our consumption amounting to about 5,000,000 boxes.

This trust, like many others, does not possess a complete monopoly. It is said to "hold the umbrella" under which new factories outside the "trust" have been built and made great profits. It is really the tariff which holds the umbrella. The "trust" and the outsiders are both secure in their excessive profits under it for a considerable time, until the number of outsiders gets too large. All that time the consumer will be forced to pay high prices and competition will not lower them because the combined power of the manufacturers' trust and the labor union is able to restrict production to only part of the year. Up to a certain point it is profitable for the "trust" to pursue this policy; and, even when that point is reached the margin of profit afforded by the tariff is so great that the trust can make new terms with the outsiders, many of whom, according to the "Commoner and Glassworker," have been attracted to the business by the prospect of such a sale of their plants to the trust.

The Labor Trust.

The workers in the window glass industry—that is the skilled workers—are amongst the few who derive any special benefit from protection, but it is entirely owing to their compact organization, through which they compel the manufacturers to divide the tariff spoils with the workers. They understand clearly that they can obtain no benefit from tariffs without such an organization. They harbor no delusions on this point. Their official organ, the "Commoner and Glassworker" of October 21, 1899, ridicules "the bluff that unorganized labor used to get about the benefit to be derived by it from a high protective tariff." They laugh at the foolish laborers who vote for protection and who expect the protected manufacturers to voluntarily share their tariff profits with their employees. The tariff is a "hold-up game" and only those who will play at hold-up can hope to come out ahead of the game. They know that the plate glass workers who have no organization, get less than one-fourth the wages paid to highly organized window glass workers, although the work in each industry is about equally hard and hazardous.

The Window Glass Workers Association—"L. A. 300, K. of L."—has always worked with the manufacturers against lower and for higher duties. But it does not stop here. In 1885 it secured the passage of the alien-contract labor law which its lawyers drew up. It may be mentioned, incidentally, that the

union itself has been a most flagrant violator of its own law. In 1889 its officers were indicted for importing 48 Englishmen under contract, but the case was dropped by the court through the influence of M. S. Quay.

This union then laid a tax of \$300 per head on imported workers who wished to work in this country. Since 1894 this tax has been \$500, which sum must now be paid to "L. A. 300" before a foreigner can enter any factory here.

The union has most stringent apprenticeship rules and in this way restricts the number of window glass workers in the country. At present there are enough workers to operate only about 2200 out of 2600 or 2700 pots now ready to operate. Thus the "Commoner and Glassworker" of October 21, says:

"In consequence of there not being skilled workmen sufficient to fill all the places, there is but little likelihood of any more glass being produced during the blast of 1898-'99."

The agreement which the union makes with manufacturers provides that no one shall be employed who is not a member of "L. A. 300," and who has not his clearance card. There are no non-union factories. Blowers are not allowed to make more than 48 full boxes of single strength glass per week, although many would be glad to blow much more. The union agrees with the manufacturers as to what wages will be paid each season and when and what furnaces shall operate. They tried this year to get the manufacturers to agree to fix a minimum price below which glass should not be sold.

The window glass factories are supposed to remain idle from May 30th to September 15th. But during the last three years the most of the factories have, by arrangement with the others, remained closed until November or December. This year the union asked for a 5 per cent advance in wages. The manufacturers were willing to grant this advance but did not wish to open the mills until the surplus of 800,000 boxes had been greatly reduced. Hence they offered an advance of 4 per cent. After a delay of six weeks a "compromise" of 6 per cent was arranged with an agreement that fires were not to be put in until the surplus was reduced to 300,000 boxes—which will be about December 1. The union organ is congratulating the members on having received a greater advance than was asked for, and adds, perhaps ironically, that "if such dispatch is to characterize the trust the workers are gainers along with the general trade."

The evil effect of this system upon the workers is evident. Only a few are permitted to learn the business and but a small portion of these make good skillful operators. Hence the Belgian blowers, who are the pick of many who learn the business, are far superior to ours.