

DUTIES MAY BE CUT

War Department Investigating Philippine Customs.

TARIFF CHECKS AMERICAN TRADE

Portland Shippers Favor a Reduction of 50 or 75 Per Cent on Taxes on Imports.

The War Department has at last been moved to act on the charges of the merchants of Portland for reduction of the duties on American imports into the Philippines. Word comes from Manila that the Deputy Collector of Customs recently received a letter from Secretary Melicko, asking for a full statement of the duties collected on a number of commodities. The inquiry covers every article on which the Chamber of Commerce has asked for a reduction. What action the War Department will take can only be surmised. However, the Portland business men who are interested in the Philippine trade feel confident that something will be done that will have a tendency to divert the commerce of the islands from Europe to this country.

Pacific Coast Trade. Development in the Philippine Islands is held back by two factors. First in importance is the high charge which the Government collects on American goods imported into the islands. Next is the lack of adequate facilities for shipping. The last named difficulty is easy to remedy, as shippers do not apprehend that there will be any trouble about getting steamers, if there are cargoes to offer. Trade cannot be carried on under any desirable and profitable basis under the Spanish tariff system which the Government retains in the islands. Ad valorem and specific duties, surtaxes and consumption taxes added to duties on dutiable goods, put American goods beyond the reach of the Philippine consumer. Portland has done more than any other city in the United States to effect a reduction of the duties on the Philippine Islands, where last year, W. H. Chapin, Secretary of the Philippine Trading Association, discussed the situation with him. Secretary Wilson was greatly surprised to hear of the high duties charged. He felt sure that the Administration was not conversant with the facts, and that, if it were, it would make changes. The Philippine Chamber of Commerce immediately appealed to the Treasury Department for adjustment of the duties. The communication was referred to the War Department, of which the Chamber of Commerce also demanded a reduction of 50 per cent in the specific duty on alimentary preserves, pork, butchers' products, saucers, garden produce, fruits, pork, lard, bacon, newspapers, wrapping paper, soap, and soap and pickles. In addition, the Chamber of Commerce asked that ad valorem duties be based upon certified invoices of value at the point of shipment, instead of upon arbitrary valuations at Manila, as is now the practice.

For a long time, the War Department paid no attention to the demand of the Portland merchants for a change in the Philippine. So far as could be seen, the situation was completely in the hands of General Otis, the American commander at Manila, who replied to all protests that the duties would be collected as they were, and that there probably would be no revision of the tariffs until government in the Philippines passed into the control of the civil authorities. Next the American Chamber of Commerce at Manila added its weight to the demand for a lowering of the duties, and authorized H. R. Lewis, who was returning to Portland to direct the committee, directing the attention of American commercial organizations to the situation.

Cost of Landing Flour. The Oregonian has time and again called attention to the impossibility of Pacific Coast shippers competing with the Philippines with the present duties in force. Cost of goods here, added to freight rates to Hong Kong, wharfage and other charges at Hong Kong, and freight from Hong Kong to Manila, put the cost of Coast commodities so high that the ordinary Filipino cannot afford to buy them. It is not possible, under existing conditions, to make any profit in the Philippines will prefer it to rice. The Philippine Trading Association shipped, last year, a barrel and a half of Washington flour to Manila to introduce it. These are the charges the Government collected on the flour at Manila:

Five cases of common laundry soap, in large cans of higher grade than those used in the Philippines; it is after the style of Babson and is made in Portland valuation \$10.00. \$20.25
Specific duty, 250 kilos, at \$3.75. 9.38
Ad valorem valuation 11 cents per kilo, or \$22.50, 8 per cent 3.68
Surtax, 10 per cent of specific duty 3.68
Valuations made at Manila are not based upon the actual values of the goods; in fact, bear no relation whatever. A few examples, including dried fruits, are valued at \$1 per kilo as a basis for figuring ad valorem duties. This rule applies regardless of the article or its condition, and the importer is obliged to place the common food products of the Pacific Coast far beyond the reach of the ordinary Filipino. During Spanish rule business is produced and imported from Spain in large quantities. They were passed through the custom-house at a 10 per cent ad valorem duty, valuations being based on the certified invoices. It never was Spain's intention to collect the duties now exacted by the United States, but to use them to exclude the products of other countries.

Tariff Should be Lowered. The Portland merchants who are members of the Philippine Trading Association are unanimously of the opinion that the present duties are a large and productive field for the enlargement of Pacific Coast trade. The reports made by Harry R. Lewis, who went to Manila in their interest, have convinced them of this. An encouraging sign is the receipt by one house of a voluntary order for goods of the same quality as those shipped last May. The merchants are a unit in favor of immediate reduction in the tariff.

There should be an immediate modification of the import duties at Manila," said W. H. Chapin, secretary of the Philippine Trading Association, at a meeting held last night. "We cannot hope for a large amount of trade until the tariffs are adjusted. Portland could do a large business in butter with the islands, if conditions were favorable, but as it is, a little can be done. Butter is today worth 20 cents, gold, a pound, wholesale, in Portland, and 25 cents retail. On account of the duties, this butter is worth 30 cents in the Philippines, but the Manila, if packed in tins and \$12.50 Mexican, or 50 cents, gold, if put up in glass jars. Of course, there are some people in the islands who will buy butter regardless of price, but the great mass of the people whom we wish to reach cannot think of using our butter at these prices. Again, take flour. Good quality wheat worth \$3 a barrel in Portland can make it worth \$4 a barrel, gold, in Manila. To get a foothold in the Philippines we must be enabled to undersell European goods. The present duties are so high that our goods are known, while ours have yet to be introduced. As a consequence, Spanish and English goods are given the preference. The Filipino is a cautious buyer. He never spends his money for an article unless the quality of it has been demonstrated. My opinion is that the Philippines are among our most profitable fields of exploitation. Alaska is not in it with that country. When the political situation is settled, and the tariff adjusted on a new basis, the Pacific Coast will find in the islands a profitable market for many of its products, and, in addition, will import cocoanut oil, fiber cloths, rice, sugar, sheep, hamp, hardwoods and many other commodities."

Good Market for Coast Products. Henry Hahn, of Wadhams & Co., said: "We are not making much progress in general lines in our trade with the Philippines, but we are making progress with regard to commodities produced here. The Philippines ought to afford us a good market for butter, cheese and all natural Pacific Coast products. The Philippines are to do much with products brought here from the East or the Middle West. The through rates which the railroads have granted to the Middle West, by which the American Chamber of Commerce at Manila added its weight to the demand for a lowering of the duties, and authorized H. R. Lewis, who was returning to Portland to direct the committee, directing the attention of American commercial organizations to the situation.

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TO OPEN THE CONFERENCE

BISHOP DUBBS, UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH.

One of Ablest Men in That Denomination—Will Speak at Various Places in Oregon.

Bishop R. Dubbs, D. D., LL. D., senior bishop of the United Evangelical church of the United States, will be in the city today on his way to Hillsboro, where he will open the annual Oregon conference of the United Evangelical church tomorrow. He is regarded as the strongest man in that denomination, and one of the ablest pulpit orators in America. Before his independent branch he has increased upon it his robust individuality. He came to America from Germany when a boy of 15, and entered the conference of the Evangelical Association at the age of 23. He was an editor and editor of the German paper Botshafter when 30 years of age, and when 37 years old was elected and ordained as bishop, in recognition of his qualities of heart and mind. He has just returned from a tour of the West, as bishop he has now served 27 years.

DELEGATES ENTERTAINED. Pleasant Reception at First Presbyterian Church.

The visiting delegates to the convention of the North Pacific Presbyterian Board of Missions were tendered a reception last night at the First Presbyterian Church. About 65 delegates from all over Oregon and Washington are in Portland attending the convention, which begins Wednesday today at 9:30 and continues tomorrow, and there are about 200 more from this city who will sit with them. The principal subject that will come before the Board is that of foreign missions, especially those of Alaska, in which district this section of the country is most interested. The work in other parts of the world is not to be neglected, however, and that among the freedmen of the South and also that in China, Korea and India will receive its proper attention. Miss Helen Clark, a worker among the Navaho Bay Indians, is attending the convention, and will tell of her experiences among the Washington redmen.



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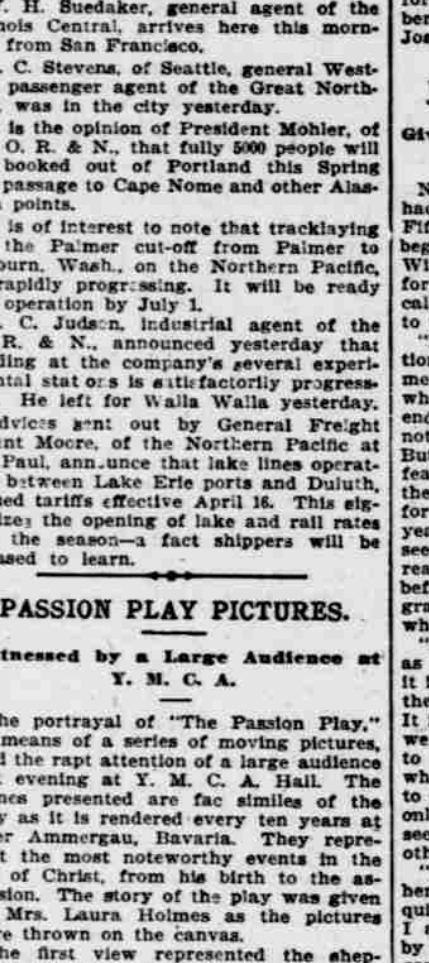
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DAILY METEOROLOGICAL REPORT.

PORTLAND, April 17.—8 P. M.—Maximum temperature, 77; minimum temperature, 49; river reading at 11 A. M., 10.3 feet; change in the last 24 hours, 0.0; total precipitation, 5.7 P. M. to 8 P. M., 0.00; total precipitation from Sept. 1, 1899, 40.23 inches; normal precipitation from Sept. 1, 1899, 40.23 inches; difference, 1.71 inches; total rainfall from Sept. 1, 1899, possible sunshine April 16, 18.34.

Sozodont advertisement for teeth and gums, including product name and benefits.

JOE JEFFERSON'S SPEECH. Given an Extraordinary Reception in New York.

NEW YORK, April 17.—Joseph Jefferson has an extraordinary reception at the Madison Theatre last night when he began his New York season with "Rip Van Winkle." At the conclusion of the performance Mr. Jefferson was repeatedly called back to the curtain and in response to the demands for a speech, made the following remarks:

DUKE D'ARCOS SATISFIED. Through a Mistake He Was Invited to the Chicago Dewey Celebration.

NEW YORK, April 17.—A special to the Herald from Washington says, concerning the unpleasant incident resulting from an invitation to attend the Dewey celebration in Chicago, that the Duke d'Arcos, Spanish minister in Washington, had received from Mayor Harrison a reply to his note of protest.

ASTORIA, Or., April 17.—(To the Editor.)—In the sixth stanza of James Russell Lowell's ode read at the 100th anniversary of the fight at Concord Bridge,...

APRIL 22 IS THE DAY. On which the fastest regular passenger service, Portland to Chicago, ever maintained, will be established.

CHICAGO, April 17.—Panle resigned in a Metropolitan Elevated train last night as the cars shot through a mass of flames. The fire had been fanned out to the elevated structure from a burning frame building at 404 Hermitage avenue. Choosing quickly between blocking the road and stopping the cars, the firemen chose the latter course.

SCHOOL GIRL'S FOOD. A Very Important Question for Growing Girls.

THOS. SCOTT BROOKE REAL ESTATE LOANS. ROOM 16 CONCORD BUILDING.

IRVINGTON. PRICES OF LOTS REDUCED.

Auction Sales Geo. Baker & Co. Tomorrow, Thursday, April 19

Table listing various commodities and their prices: Soap, Flour, Coffee, Tea, etc.

Continuation of the 'TO OPEN THE CONFERENCE' article, discussing the details of the Oregon conference and the role of Bishop Dubbs.

Continuation of the 'DUKE D'ARCOS SATISFIED' article, detailing the diplomatic incident and subsequent events.

Continuation of the 'SCHOOL GIRL'S FOOD' article, discussing nutrition for young girls, and other news items.