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SPEECH

HON. JAMES H. SLATER, DELIVERED AT OREGON CITY, AUGUST 3, 1875.

Phonographically Reported Especially for the ENTERPRISE.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It has been my fortune to address the citizens of this county at various times, and I have always taken great pleasure in doing so, for I have always found many friends to greet me here. I have also found here as sturdy democracy as in any part of the State—men who are as ready to meet the issues of the day, and do battle for Democratic principles, as in any other section of the State—if not always rewarded with the same measure of success. I have always found the same earnestness, the same truthfulness, the same fidelity to their principles.

We are now entering upon a campaign which in my mind is not less important than any through which we have passed. It is true, we have but one candidate in the field—we have but one officer to elect; but it must be borne in mind that the coming campaign is but the precursor of 1876, one in which we have much to do—one in which we hope to accomplish much. As the precursor of that campaign, every one must acknowledge the importance of the coming election for a Representative to Congress.

For fifteen years the people of the United States have been living under the domination of a party whose record is a blotch upon every page of our history during that period.

Its record is made up of acts for which the future historian will search in vain for an apology. Acts which as the future historian shall record them, will blush for shame. As a party it has been false to every trust, has violated every obligation, it has trampled States under foot, it has attempted to destroy the liberties of the people. It will have been a long dark night of oppression and wrong. Our presses have been suppressed, the right of trial by jury has been denied, executions have been ordered without that safeguard of personal liberty and life. The nation has been burdened with the payment of an enormous debt, fraudulent in part of its accumulation. And now we are again to meet in the space of a few months and test the question whether this party is to have a further lease of power in those United States. And the question involved in that contest must be discussed to a large extent in the present campaign. In this campaign, so far as the State of Oregon is concerned, will be marshalled the forces upon either hand to test whether the State shall be given for the Republican party on one side or for the Democratic party on the other. For I apprehend that as national parties are now organized, there is no middle ground—that the contest must be waged on the one hand by the Republican party, and on the other by the Democratic party of the United States.

In this view the present campaign must be looked upon and considered of no ordinary importance to the people of Oregon. Not only are we to elect a President in 1876, but we as a State are to elect a Senator to fill the place now occupied by Hon. James K. Kelly. All these are to be looked upon this election and it is important for every individual who is interested in the welfare of the nation to look well to this matter, to take a deep interest and concern in it, to see that his neighbors are concerned in it, so that when the polls are closed the full vote of the Democratic party of this State will have been cast.

We have placed in the field the name of an honorable gentleman. It is true, he is not as well known, perhaps, to the people of the State as some others may have been; but I can speak for him this much, that he is an honorable man, a man of untarnished reputation and a man of sound Democratic principles. And I believe in electing him we shall secure able representation at Washington.

You will expect me here to-night to glance at some of the measures and principles dividing the great parties of the United States—to hear something of the principles which are put forth in our platform, and here I will say that of all the platforms I have ever seen, I have never met with one more thoroughly Democratic in all its principles enunciated than that put forth by the Salem Convention [Applause]. The only

objection to it is that it so completely covers the ground that there is little left for the speakers who may take the stump.

I shall not attempt to go through with all the propositions in controversy, or which will be more or less discussed in the campaign now approaching, or which may follow the succeeding year.

It is well known that the most important question now agitating the people of the country, that the most important issue that divide political parties in the United States, is the tariff. You have not failed to notice within the past fifteen years the rapid flow of wealth to certain centers of the United States. You have not failed to notice the rapid increase of millions of acres in the United States. You have not failed to notice within the past fifteen years the rapid increase of money monarchs—men who count their possessions not only by millions but by tens of millions. You have not failed to notice that in proportion as this wealth has increased, the hands of the few, relatively, it has departed from the hands of the many. There are causes for this, and those causes may be found in the laws regulating the financial affairs of the Government.

Of course every Government must be supplied with the means to carry on its machinery. All Governments must have means of subsistence. These means are raised by taxation. In the United States we raise them chiefly by taxes called import duties and internal revenue excises. Our revenue for the year 1874 from all sources amounted to \$287,000,000, our expenses for the same period \$287,000,000, leaving an excess of revenue over expenses of \$2,100,000. We will pass back from this point to 1860—a period of fifteen years. We find at that time, under the administration of James Buchanan, the expenses were in round numbers \$60,000,000. But in the meantime an enormous debt has accumulated, upon which we are paying interest. But deducting the amount paid in interest and for revenues, we find upon a simple calculation our expenses for the same period in 1860, costs us in 1874 the sum of \$140,000,000, an increase of two hundred and fifty per cent. Now this vast increase, this difference between \$60,000,000 and \$140,000,000, goes into the pockets of the few. Of these men who are in authority, that is to say, there is now taken from the earnings of the people in one year, about \$81,000,000, more than was taken from the people in 1860. Now the increase in population cannot be over forty-four per cent., while the increase of the expenses is two hundred and fifty per cent. Now the party in power is responsible for this increase. They must answer the why and wherefore of this extravagance. And you must remember, too, that the administration of James Buchanan was charged as an extravagant and corrupt administration, and yet we find that the administration of the present party in power costs us 250 per cent more than it did in 1860, with an increase in population of 45 per cent, whereby to lessen that increase.

From tariffs we receive \$100,000,000 per annum. These tariffs are excisions laid upon foreign goods and merchandise; that is to say, the party who wishes to come into the United States with merchandise is required before he can place them on sale to pay a compensation or price to the Government for the privilege of doing so. The valuable goods, that is those upon which a duty was paid in 1864, amounted to \$145,000,000 while the whole imports were \$950,000,000. Now while we collect \$100,000,000 therewith to run the machinery of the Government, we pay the manner in which these excisions were levied, we pay three or four times that amount to the manufacturers of the United States. If these excisions stopped with the payment of revenue to the Government, there could be no reasonable complaint, because the Government must have funds wherewith to carry on its machinery; but when these duties are so levied that the manufacturer of wool and cotton and iron and steel, as on through the catalogue, can put into their pockets a greater amount than the Government, the people have a right to complain.

We find in our platform a resolution that we are opposed to the protection. Let me invite your attention to some of the workings of this system of protective tariffs. Take for instance the cotton manufacturers of the United States. The importations in 1864 amounted to \$24,900,000 upon which we paid \$9,000,000 duty, or an average of 36 per cent. Now the \$24,000,000 of imported cotton manufactures but a title of the goods that were consumed in the United States—manufactured by the mills in the New England States. These manufacturers could put 36 per cent. upon their productions, so that we paid this large margin, 36 per cent., to the manufacturers there. While we paid the sum of \$9,000,000 upon these foreign manufactures, we probably paid fifty or seventy-five million into the pockets of these manufacturers in New England. The same may be said of the manufacture of iron, and a hundred other articles. Thus you will see that it could not be otherwise than that these people must rapidly accumulate wealth, increase their property, money and bonds. Take the items of iron and steel, things every household must use more or less of in the course of a year in one form or another. If we do we find it? We are paying 31 per

cent. on all this class of imports. Could we ascertain the amount of these goods manufactured and sold in the United States, you would find we put into the pockets of the iron-mongers not less than \$150,000,000 margin in 1874. Do you wonder that we have hard times? Do you wonder that people complain of oppression in these matters? Take the item of sugar, an article of prime necessity. We imported \$92,000,000 in 1874, paying the modest sum of \$34,000,000 taxes upon it in the shape of duties. How much went into the sugar refiners' pockets? I can not tell. It must amount to millions. Nearly all the grades you use here are refined in foreign productions before they are brought into our markets. We are now paying from 2 1/2 to 4 1/2 cents upon refined sugars, and the sugar refiners are putting that into their pockets. You see, in 1874, paying the modest sum of \$34,000,000 taxes upon it in the shape of duties. How much went into the sugar refiners' pockets? I can not tell. 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