

THE WOOL INDUSTRY.

How It has been Ruined by a Protective Tariff.

From The St Louis Republic

Washington, D. C., Jan. 18.—Mr. Hatch of Missouri delivered a speech in the House yesterday on the wool schedule of the Wilson bill. Free wool was being sharply attacked by the Republicans and the Democrats insisted that Mr. Hatch, a representative farmer and farmers' friend, should make an answer.

Mr. Hatch has been very sick for some time past and was not in good voice at the beginning of his speech. Towards the close, however, his old clarion note rang through the hall, and, as usual, he was listened to with profound attention, and his utterances were greeted with applause. His speech was short but pointed. Here is what he said:

I have been a practical wool grower for 24 years. I have had on my farm a flock of pure Southdown sheep since 1869. I sold my first clip in the spring of 1870, and have sold it as unwashed wool to the wool buyers of Hannibal each year since the spring of 1870. Since I have been a member of Congress during the different tariff discussions that have occurred since the Forty-sixth Congress I have been a very close student of all the statistics and all facts and figures that have been presented either to the Committee on Ways and Means, or to this house in regard to the effect of a tariff on wool as it affected the American wool grower. I have not time to go into an elaborate discussion of the subject except to state the unquestioned facts that can be verified by a number of gentlemen upon this floor, who, like I, have been interested every spring in the price of wool.

NO MONEY IN WOOL.

I want it understood that I do not carry a flock of sheep upon my farm with any idea of deriving a profit from the wool clip alone, nor do I believe there is in the State of Illinois or Missouri a farmer to-day certainly not one of a hundred, who carries a flock upon his farm for the profit in the wool clip alone.

Mr. Cannon of Illinois: That is one element of profit

Mr. Hatch: It is the very smallest element of profit in it and it has been made the smallest element in the profit of sheep raising simply because of the action of the Republican party insisting upon a high tariff taxation on wool. (Democratic applause.)

The chief value of a flock of sheep in all the older States is in the market value of high grade mutton for food. Ever since 1870 whenever the tariff taxation has been raised on wool American wool has decreased in price. I will publish in connection with my remarks the figures from a report, giving the price of medium Ohio wool, in currency and gold in Boston, commencing with March, 1866, and ending with December, 1890.

In 1870 the highest price quoted for Ohio medium wool in Boston

was 48 cents in currency and the lowest 45 cents. In 1881 the highest price was 62 cents in currency, and so on. I commenced selling wool in 1870 and I have been gradually getting a lower and lower price for my clip, except in two or three years in the interim, as I will show from this table down to the passage of the McKinley act. I got less for my wool in 1890 than I ever received for it before. I got less in 1891 than ever before, and I sold my wool clip in 1892 for less than I ever got before.

SO MUCH FOR MCKINLEYISM.

In 1893 I sold my wool for the highest price that wool brought in the City of Hannibal at the date I delivered it, because my wool clip was graded as choice, medium wool and I sold for 16 1/2 to 17 cents a pound, the exact figures I have no at hand. The lowest I have ever sold it for—(The time of Mr. Hatch having expired, Mr. Wilson yielded two minutes more.)

Mr. Hatch: The point I want to make is, all American wool, or at least the great bulk of it, is bought by the manufacturers of the United States. They cannot make cloth in competition with the manufacturers of woolen goods of the world without an admixture of certain grades of foreign wool not grown in this country, and the highest the price you make them pay for that foreign wool, the less they will pay the American wool grower. (Democratic applause.)

Sitting right before me now is a wool grower from Texas [Gresham,] who has now 25,000 pounds of wool on hand, the clip of 1893. That he tells me he has been offered only 8 cents a pound for, and that under the operation of the McKinley bill. Put wool on the free list. You cannot make it any cheaper to the American wool grower. You cannot make it lower. There is not a sheep-raiser in the Mississippi Valley today, so far as my personal acquaintance goes, who does not say "Put it on the free list. We do not want any tariff. We have tried a tariff until it has broken up the industry, and now let us try something else."

[CONTINUED ON LOCAL PAGE.]

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