

The Democrat.

FREE TRADE AND THE SHERIFF.

The free trade movement among protected republicans in New England industries and the sheriff for its apostle, but under his object teaching the logical faculty has been developed to an extent that would have seemed incredible not so very long ago. The petition of the New England iron manufacturers is a strong protest against high and discriminating taxes, abounding in free trade logic and facts. They say that "the existing duty upon bituminous coal prohibits to New England the exercise of the right she enjoyed and largely used before the war of importing Canadian coal; and without producing and revenue to the government, puts an extra and unnecessary cost of \$1.50 per ton upon all bituminous coal used in New England."

Men who signed this claim that they are still republicans and protectionists, but it will be noticed that they do not claim that this extra cost is paid by the Canadians for the encouragement of American industry and the support of the American government. On the contrary, they assert that they are paying it themselves, and that though it is a government tax, the government is getting none of it.

They are republicans and protectionists, but they are candid enough to acknowledge in arguing for free trade that they are being ruined by republicanism and protection. "Under the pressure of these duties," they continue, "statistics indicate that during the last ten years the iron and steel industries of New England have shrunk forty per cent. No natural disadvantages have caused this large loss to New England. The obstacles interposed by the tariff laws are solely responsible for it. These obstacles have caused a degradation of American labor in New England."

This is plain enough, but these republican protectionists can be even plainer. They declare that "no increase in the duties upon manufactured iron and steel will aid New England. It is not increased protection from foreign manufacturers, but cheaper raw material she asks for. In her struggles to do her own manufacturing her contest is not with England, but with enormously protected Pennsylvania."

For all of which the Sheriff, and the Sheriff only, is to be thanked. No argument but his would have convinced these protected republicans that high and discriminating taxation on trade is the ruin of trade and the basis of monopoly. Republicans and protectionists in politics they find they are ruined by their politics. They are willing to remain protectionists in political theory, but they want free trade for business practice. They are free traders for revenue only.—St. Louis Republic.

POINTED.

The East Oregonian in its pointed way takes the Seattle Post-Intelligencer to task for its absurdity in saying that the republican senate tariff bill was in its "paramount idea" designed for the relief of poor people who use sugar, and asks the P. I. why, if that party sought to relieve the poor, it did not provide for a reduction also on clothes, blankets, tools, farming utensils, lumber, salt, coal, glass, pottery and many other necessities in which the "poor people" were left without any relief by the senate bill. This knocks out every prop which sustains the P. I.'s argument in favor of the senate tariff bill. But the East Oregonian will excuse us for suggesting that the absurdity of the P. I. bears no comparison to the absurdity of the senate tariff bill's provision on the duty on sugar. It provided for a reduction of about 50 per cent on the several grades of sugar, and then by that party's accustomed juggling it provided that the sugar producers should receive a bonus of one cent a pound for every pound of sugar produced. This bonus was to be paid out of the money in the treasury derived largely from duties paid by these very poor people who use extensively the necessary articles of life enumerated above. After paying the bonus it will be found that the actual reduction made on sugar by the senate tariff bill was not as much as the reduction made by the Mills bill. We challenge denial of this. But the absurdity of the position of the P. I. on the senate tariff bill is the necessary outcome of its attempt to sustain such an absurdity.

We boast of American equality and yet does any order of nobility in the Old World hold more effective power over their people than is exercised by the managers of our trusts and monopolies, our transportation system, and vast aggregated capital? Mere rank and name are of no consequence; it is the substance of power that counts and not its mere glitter and tinsel. We have to-day hundreds of men in the United States richer than any equal number of nobles that could be selected from all Europe and their power is in proportion to their riches.

One of the largest bars of gold ever cast was turned out of the United States Assay Office in Helena, Montana, Wednesday. It weighed 500 pounds and is worth more than \$100,000.

THE MINORITY IN CONGRESS.

The Republican party with a bare majority in the House of Representatives takes a very different view of the rights of a minority from what it held when the Democrats had a majority.

In the last three Congresses the Republican minority in the House repeatedly prevented even the consideration of a bill to reduce the taxes. It resisted at every step measures for the good of the country which had been approved by the people in the general election, for no other apparent reason than that the adoption of such measures might benefit the Democratic party. And it filibustered or broke a quorum whenever such proceedings were necessary to give effect to its caucus decrees.

But now that the situation is reversed the Republican leaders propose to so change the rules of the House as to give them absolute control of legislation. And their organs denounce as "revolutionary" the Democratic purpose to resist any such autocratic exercise of power. The Democrats have no intention of acting as mere obstructionists. But they do not forget that the minority has duties as well as rights. They do not intend to consent to any change in the rules that will deprive them of their right to debate fully every measure brought before the House, nor that will prevent them from defeating, by all constitutional and parliamentary means, legislation which they regard as dangerous or hurtful to the country.

Upon the Republican theory, the Democratic Representatives might as well stay at home or have their dissenting votes registered by an automatic machine against any party measures which the majority may bring forward. The whip crackers are likely to discover that in this country the minority has some rights which the majority is bound to respect.

When our government was established it was declared that all men are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights among which was life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It was then believed that if men had an equal chance, if they were allowed to make and execute their own laws, to levy their own taxes, the frightful inequalities seen in the monarchies and despotisms of the Old World, would entirely disappear. This was the dream of 1776. But in spite of our declarations, in spite of our constitution in spite of universal suffrage, the inequalities exist. We have the kings and princes, the lords and peasants, in fact, if not in name. Monopolists, corporations, capitalists, workers for wages, have taken their place, and we are forced to admit that even universal suffrage cannot clothe and feed the world.

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