

Albany, Or., Nov 18th, 1893.

Editors Democrat:

Circumstances have arisen in consequence of which I have concluded to write this article. The passage of the McKinley tariff bill, and the discussion arising therefrom, have caused me to give the question thorough investigation, a thing I never did before, and it has resulted in satisfying me clearly that the views I entertained not a great while since on the tariff were wrong. My researches have caused me to believe beyond a question of doubt that our government has no legal right to tax, directly or indirectly, any individual except for public purposes only. That our government has no legal right to impose a tariff duty for any purpose except for public revenue only, and that, whenever it places a tariff for the sake of protection, it is then unjustly lending the strong arm of the government to build up private fortunes, for the enrichment of a few private individuals. If the government had used the vast millions collected by tariff duties from the consumers of the country, in building government manufactories, owning and operating them for the benefit of the general public of this country, then it might claim the protective tariff was or is for a public purpose, but when class legislation is enacted, and the government taxes the general public to build up private enterprises, it is unjust. The Supreme court of the United States in the case of the Citizens Saving Association vs Topeka, decided that the government has no constitutional right to tax any individual except for a public purpose, and the late eminent Justice Miller in delivering the opinion of the Supreme court in that case said: "To lay with one hand the power of the government on the property of the citizen, and with the other, bestow it upon favored individuals to aid private enterprises and build up private fortunes, is none the less robbery because it is done under the form of law and is called taxation. Beyond a cavil, there can be no taxation except for public purposes." The Supreme court of Iowa lays down the same doctrine in the case of Hanson vs Vernon. Judge Thomas Cooley, formerly of the Supreme court of Michigan in his work on 'Principles of Constitutional Law' uses these words: "Constitutionally a tax can have no other basis than the raising of revenue for public purposes, and whatever governmental exaction has not this basis is tyrannical and unlawful." A tax on imports, therefore, the purpose of which is not to raise revenue, but to discourage and indirectly prohibit some particular import for the benefit of some manufacturer, is not warranted by constitutional principles. As this is the law of the land the tariff monopolists and the combined capital of manufacturers, seek to make it a dead letter by the passage of tariff laws that are both wrong in fact, and unconstitutional in principle. A tariff for revenue is a legal tax. A protective tariff tax is illegal and unjust, and is paid by the consumer, to enrich the pocket of the capitalist and manufacturer. Where protection begins, revenue is diminished, and as protection advances, revenue continues to diminish, and when protection is prohibitive, revenue ceases altogether, and then the consumer is impoverished and the government is not aided. Shall this system, that permits the American manufacturer to form combines and trusts, free from outside competition, be allowed and continued? The millions of men who protected the country in the hour of sore peril, and the descendants of those who established the free government because of unjust taxation, demand that this question be answered. Our soil is free, our men are free, our thought is free, our speech is free, and our trade and commerce should be as free as a tariff for revenue can make it. The tariff should be placed only on the luxuries, and all the common necessities of life should be free and as cheap as possible. I do not believe the tariff protects American labor. American laborers virtually have no protection. The laborers of other countries come here free and underbid our native American laborers, and capital will turn American labor out and employ the cheap labor everytime. There is free trade in labor. Why should American laborers pay a protective tax to the rich man to enable him to hire foreign labor at his own price? The price of labor has been constantly decreasing. Where men in the eastern states, twenty years ago, received \$2.00 per day, they now work for ninety cents and board themselves. In any new country labor is paid better than in old and densely populated countries, and the tariff has nothing to do with it. The great law of supply and demand regulates the price of labor. We have had a protective tariff since 1867. Why is it that the prices paid laborers have been decreasing all the time? Again, it is said that goods are cheaper now than twenty years ago. That's true, but it is not caused by a protective tariff. The cause is, the new patent and methods in machinery. Steel rails under the Bessemer patent can be made and sold many times cheaper than they could have been made and sold twenty years ago. If the protective tariff had made things cheaper in this country, then why is it, they, the tariff men, fear outside competition. The fact is, that free trade England and all other manufacturing countries have kept pace with the improved methods and can make and sell goods cheaper than we can to day simply because they are not taxed on their raw material. I believe the American manufacturer has been protected long enough and his plea for protection is a pretense, and that, as a matter of fact, with our free raw materials and improved methods in manufacturing we can successfully compete with any nation in the world without one cent of protection

and payour labor as good a price as they are paid now. Under the seductive influence of the tariff, every man who has a little capital wants the government to pass class legislation to protect him, that he may grow fat at the expense of the farmer and laborer who are unprotected. The duty on the farmer's corn, wheat and pork, does not protect him any. He exports those and need not fear from importation. The tariff is selfish, operated in the interest of capital and private enterprises, and not in the interest of the government or people. As I have no hesitancy in giving my past political action, I will add here, in brief, that my first vote was of no political significance, being cast at the city election, at my native city, Huntsville, Missouri, in May, 1882. In the November elections of that year I made my first political speech, and that was for the entire democratic ticket, which ticket, I voted at Huntsville, Mo., in Nov. of that year. I located at Heppner, Oregon, in 1883, and was secretary of the Cleveland club at that place, in 1885. The first presidential vote I ever cast was for Grover Cleveland in 1884. I lacked two months of being of age when Hancock ran in 1880, and, being a student in the college at that time, took no part in the campaign of that year. In 1886, I was elected by the democracy of Morrow county as a delegate to the Democratic State Convention and assisted in the nomination and election of Judge R S Strahan, His Excellency, Governor Penoyer, and Hon. G W Webb. In 1888, I stamped Morrow county for Cleveland and the democratic ticket, which ticket, I voted as usual on election day, although, I then had no satisfactory ideas on the tariff. When the returns came in and we heard from the men who had wool in their teeth, it dawned upon me that, perhaps, I had better let politics and the democratic view of the tariff severely alone, but lately I have been giving the subject investigation, and have concluded that the democratic party has been right all the time, and that I was the one that was wrong, therefore, as a man, when he gets on the wrong road, turns about to the right one, so do I with all due regard for the friendship of my republican friends, hasten to adhere to the party of the people and against tariff monopoly. I would rather be with the democratic party on this question and in the minority the balance of my days, than to be with an overwhelming majority party that advocates a high protective tariff. I therefore, stand in my old position straight and plumb on the democratic platform and propose to remain with it, until all class legislation, high protective tariffs, unlawful combinations are banished from the land, and the people once more have a voice in legislation, and instead of legislation being framed at the clamorous cry of capital and protection, that the laws be enacted with an eye to the principle of "equal rights to all and special privileges to none."

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