

The Santiam News.

Politically Independent.

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T. L. DUGGER,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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THE TARIFF AND LABOR

IF MORE argument was wanted to establish the fallacy that the protective tariff protected the high wage of the American working man, the 1907 panic supplies it in an intensive form.

Without a particle of change in the tariff schedules we have witnessed the closing down of manufacturing plants of every description, North, South, East and West. All classes of constructive work, especially that of the railroads, has been even more emphatic in its refusal to proceed. And such manufacturing and constructive enterprise as did not close down, made a heavy reduction in wage of employees. During all this business demoralization, the tariff has remained absolutely stable and unchanged. Can our most enthusiastic protective tariff advocates trace any connection between tariff and labor in this era of business stagnation and depression? If the tariff is responsible for the advance in wages of the workingman when manufacturing and constructive enterprises are working overtime, it must, also, be given credit when these same enterprises for lack of demand for their product, or of lack of the necessary cash with which to reward their employes, as well. If credit is claimed on the one hand, blame must be accepted on the other.

Manifestly, the tariff had nothing to do with bringing about the demoralization of productive enterprises; nor did it have the least influence in their development and the consequent high price labor was able to command. A different law—that of supply and demand—was the only ruling factor in both cases. If the field seems to justify, if the demand for the product exists, or can be created, the factory is established. If the freight and passenger traffic exists, or can be created, the new railway line is constructed and not otherwise. Men build these enterprises for the purpose of earning a money profit for themselves and not for any fancied charity for labor; and they pay these laborers for operating these mills and railroads, a wage no greater than the supply of labor compels them to pay. The tariff, or love for the laboring man, has no influence whatever in the matter.

The fact cannot be disputed, then, that the unwritten law of supply and demand, controls the price of labor in every field of industry. If there is two jobs of work for every man, the wage is high, because the man will demand it, and the employer must pay the price demanded, else let the work remain undone. On the other hand, if there are two men for every job, competition between the two will force the price down, and the employer will never fail to take advantage of the cut. This condition is the rule in the labor world, as we have had demonstrated in the short space of a few months. The ordinary laboring man who, three months ago, could command \$2.50 to \$3.00 per day, is now willing to accept a wage of half that amount.

Is the protected manufacturer controlled by this same unwritten law of supply and demand? So far as the markets of the world, outside of the United States, yes; within our own territory, no. Here is where the great beauty and utility of our tariff system is manifested. The foreign-made product, when landed upon our shores, must pay a heavy duty before it can be distributed throughout the markets of the United States for sale. Hence, to the cost of the manufactured product, the tariff costs are added, and which the consumer is required to pay. Our domestic manufacturer places the same product in the markets just about as cheaply as the foreigner. Does he sell his product as cheaply as the foreigner would if there was no tariff duty to pay? Not at all. He simply adds to the price of his produce the amount which the foreigner must pay to enter our markets.

Now, the fact is demonstrated that our manufacturers can produce the product as cheaply as the foreigner can; for we enter the field of the outside world and compete successfully with the foreigner. This is true of our manufacturing industries in every field. They sell their products in the markets of Europe, Asia and Africa in competition

with the European manufacturer, at a profit, of course, or they would not sell the goods. Yet, in our home markets, we, the consumer, must pay for our home-made goods the price of production to which the thrifty Yankee manufacturer never fails to add the amount of tariff his foreign competitor is required to pay when the product is entered into our markets.

For years the people have been clamoring for relief from being compelled to pay this tariff-expanded price for manufactured goods. If the expanded profit was paid to labor, there might be some extenuating excuse for the continuance of the tariff schedule. But this is not the case. The profit goes to swell the inordinate fortunes which are, admittedly, a menace to American institutions. Nor does the government receive the revenue from the tariff which it would receive if the tariff was reduced about one-half. True, with a reduction, the tariff barons' profit would be reduced somewhat; but the government and the consumer would be the gainer.

Will the American voter ever see this question in its true light? When they do see the matter aright, will they have the courage to vote as reason dictates—in their own interests? Republican congressmen of the Speaker Cannon, or Senator Fulton class, will never reduce the tariff schedules; nor would the possible candidates for president, Secretary Taft, Vice-President Fairbanks, or Governor Hughes, all of whom stand pat on the tariff. In other words, they wish the American people to continue paying tribute to the tariff baron.

The duty of the American voter should no longer be in doubt. Every man who stands pat on tariff matters, should be driven from public life. Men who think more of the interests of a handful of manufacturers than they do of the great mass of American consumers, should not be entrusted with the making and execution of our laws.

LET US BE MOVING.

WITH THE closing of this week, Governor Chamberlain has promised that he will lift the financial embargo which has been blocking the channels of business for the past six weeks. With the lifting of the lid, there are now indications that business enterprises will be taken up again. Among the number will be both steam and electric railroad construction, which was interrupted by the wave of financial panic which rolled out from New York. The Southern Pacific promises to resume its interrupted construction enterprise, and the electric lines from Salem south, it is said, will be under way early in the year.

The survey of the Portland-Salem electric line from Salem South crosses the North Santiam about five miles north of the city. A branch connecting this city with that line could be built at about the cost of the ties and rails, and it should be no difficult matter to induce the building of this branch line. If we, Scioans, present the matter to the promoters in its proper light, there is no question of doubt but what the line will be built, possibly within the next year.

In order to make the strongest possible showing, we must be able to show the amount of freight which can be furnished daily, in the way of lumber shipments, the number of cars of stock and other produce, the probable passenger traffic, etc. These statistics should be gathered and, through an authorized committee, presented to the proper officials of both the electric line and the Southern Pacific.

In order to take this matter up properly and officially, some sort of club or development league organization is necessary. If we do not make some effort to help ourselves, it may be a number of years before there is a railroad, built into Scio. Whereas, if we extend assistance in the way of securing right-of-way and depot grounds, it is possible that an electric line, and, probably, the Southern Pacific as well, will land visitors to our 1908 fair within our city limits. The expense for building branch lines, in either case, would be small. No streams to cross, unlevel ground to grade, nor right-of-way to be cleared, would make construction a very simple matter.

Then let us be moving. The greatest drawback to our fair is the transportation question. Let us present the facts to the officials of both systems in their most pleasing and enticing manner. We have the traffic now to justify the building of these branch lines, and, with the building, this traffic would be doubled.

Railroads are constructed for the purpose of earning dividends for the builders. If we but exhibit the amount of business which we have, and the further fact that a line into Scio will get all of the business, the year 1908 will most surely give us the much desired railroad connection.

In another column we publish in full an editorial taken from a late issue of the Morning Oregonian. We commend the sound sense of the article to our readers; also the covert warning given the Republican leaders and especially the congressmen who control the destinies of that party. It really looks as if Mr. Scott was getting himself in position to support the Democratic candidate, next year, providing Roosevelt refuses to run again. It would be paradoxical for the Oregonian to support Mr. Bryan, wouldn't it?

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A Little Nore Folding Of The Hands In Sleep.

Rumor has it, as heretofore, that Mr. Cannon will permit no action in Congress this Winter upon either the parcels post or the postal savings banks. In connection with rumors of this kind there is a thought which the ordinary, plain, non-standpat intellect cannot get rid of. As a piece of pure political strategy would it not be better for the Republican party to go before the country next year with the record of positive achievement rather than with a bare list of some things evaded and others postponed? That is the thought. It is impious, of course, to question the wisdom of a man so old and experienced as Mr. Cannon; and yet one cannot bring with it a certain dignifying of the intellect; a certain aridity of the faculties, which occasionally entail disaster. The whole country eagerly desires both the parcels post and the postal savings banks. One would imagine that an axed-out way to win the favor of the country for the Republican party would be to give it what it wants and is ready to pay for; but Mr. Cannon thinks not, and being in some respects the absolute ruler of the United States he can have his way; while apparently the only method for the people to get their way is to defeat the party to which Mr. Cannon belongs. Did Mr. Cannon ever contemplate the possibility of the catastrophe actually happening next year if he continues his policy of delay and denial?

Mr. Roosevelt heartily commends the postal savings banks; Mr. Bryan agrees with him to all essentials. The Postmaster-General has devised a plan for instituting them which avoids every sound objection. The bankers everywhere favor them, because they will put an end to hoarding and keep the circulation of currency steady. The demand for them among the people is, virtually, unanimous. And yet Mr. Cannon in the exercise of his autocratic power decrees that we cannot have postal savings banks. Why not? Because he does not consider the time "ripe" for them. Will it ever be ripe? Time ripens very slowly in Mr. Cannon's estimation for almost everything that will benefit the people, and very rapidly for most things that benefit the robbers of the people. What does he mean by the time not being ripe? He means, of course, that the postal banks might lose the Republican party some votes in the coming election. Has it ever occurred to him that the denial of the banks may probably cost it a great many more votes?

Whose votes would be lost to the Republican party by the establishment of postal banks? Nobody's, except those of a few timid and superstitious country merchants who know neither their own interest nor that of their customers. This narrow-minded and selfish class objects to the rural mail delivery for the same reason as to the postal savings banks. Their theory is that every thing which adds to the comfort and convenience of the rural dweller injures the country merchant, the farmer must not have mail delivered at his door because it prevents him from traveling ten miles through the mud to Hoggson's Corners and buying five cents worth of tobacco at Hoggson's store. He must not be permitted to lay up his money in a postal savings bank because it prevents his spending it at Hoggson's counter. He must not be permitted to purchase what he wants through the mail because if he did so Hoggson would lose some of his trade. To be sure, some of Hoggson's goods are dearer and matter than those the farmer could buy in the city by mail. His stock is fifty years behind the times; it is shell-worn and fly-specked; but the farmer must buy it all the same. Hoggson has a God-given right to the farmer's money and any postal facilities which would interfere with that right must be forever denied. The rural dweller has been given to the country merchant to pluck. His attempts to escape plucking are wicked; and of course he will forever continue to vote for Mr. Cannon and the party which robs him while he is plucked.

If the postal reforms which Mr. Meyer urges shall fail this Winter, there ought to be no mistake about who is responsible for it. The people should understand thoroughly now that it stands in the way and blocks the advance of civilization. Of the country merchants alone, Mr. Cannon would not be afraid. It is their portentous allies that frighten him. Behind all this open hostility to the postal reforms is the secret and more effective hostility of the express trust. Mr. Cannon does not mention the express trust in giving his reasons for shutting the doors of Congress to the postal savings banks and parcels post, but his silence reveals more than it covers. He does not think it wise for Congress to institute innovations which might result in extraordinary expense, especially as the postal service has never paid for itself. Perhaps it has not, but Mr. Cannon has not had to make up the deficiency. The people who enjoy the benefits have paid the bills and they have paid them willingly. No governmental measure has ever more popular than the rural mail delivery, even though it does create a deficit. No measure would be more popular than the parcels post and the postal savings banks. The people are determined to have them both, and if Mr. Cannon and his party will not grant what is desired, there are other parties and other men. As for the country merchants, it is blank folly for them to set themselves in opposition to what the people want. They may make it inconvenient for farmers to trade in town, but they cannot compel anybody to buy their goods if they render themselves odious, as they seem in a fair way to do, they will lose more than the postal reforms can possibly cost them. Concerning these reforms the case stands thus: For them is the whole country; against them are the less intelligent of the country merchants and the express trust. And so far as Mr. Cannon is concerned, the latter combination seems to be the more weighty and more important.—Oregonian.

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