

The Santiam News

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THE ULTIMATE CONSUMER

IN THESE DAYS of high cost of living, the side of the ultimate consumer justly figures to a large extent. He is the man who foots the bill. He cannot recoup from anybody else. He must get his value received from other than for financial profit.

From the time that a product leaves the hands of the primary producer, there are numerous charges added, all of which must be paid by the ultimate consumer and which are largely to blame for the high cost of living. In these charges, profits for the middle men, taxes, the tariff and numerous other charges are added as costs, by the retailer who supplies the ultimate consumer and upon this basis of cost the retailer computes his profits. Hence the higher the cost of an article, the greater the profit for the retailer. For this reason, any costs, which may be considered artificial, because they are not necessary in the production nor handling of the article, are an unjust burden upon the consumer. He is paying for something for which no value is returned. He realizes that the so-called "middle man" is a necessity in the economy of business and that he is justly entitled to reasonable remuneration for his work. But when the price of an article is increased abnormally through cornering the market, or through combination of dealers, trusts or tariff protection, the consumer feels that he is being wrongfully held up. Under such conditions, he is being made a victim and is despoiled of his money as if a highwayman had made him stand and deliver.

The tariff system of our general government is a direct aid to the trust organized manufacturers in thus robbing the people. The tariff wall bars the foreign made goods, in whole or in part, and the manufacturers through trust organizations, do the rest.

When we know that tariff beneficiaries have dictated every tariff measure since the beginning of the civil war, if we except the Morrill tariff of the war days, then we have a right to think that the rights of the consumer have been totally neglected. Now that there seems to be some small chance for the man who foots the bills to have an inning, every possible influence should be brought to hold up the hands of those congressmen who are contending for the rights of the under dog.

President Taft's Canadian reciprocity treaty is a move in the right direction. Nevertheless some American farmers along the Canadian border are opposed to the confirmation of the treaty for selfish reasons, it should be confirmed. The treaty will enable Canadian competition which, for a time at least, will serve as a check upon the greed of the trusts. Then reciprocity treaties can be arranged with other nations which, until the government returns to a tariff for revenue basis, will help to maintain a level of prices.

If some other just and equitable method of raising revenue for the government could be devised in lieu of the tariff system, a great many people who now oppose, would favor absolute free trade

with foreign nations. And this change will come before many years elapse.

A financial system which builds up both millionaires and paupers, is not a system which augurs well for the longevity of the nation. When multi-millionaires are created in a few years, as in the case of Carnegie, J. P. Morgan, Rockefeller, and others, there evidently is something wrong with the system. We know that these accumulated millions on the one end, means hundreds of paupers at the reverse end. A system similar to this was the cause of the fall of the Roman republic and it will cause the fall of the American republic, unless changed.

A nation composed of home owners is, necessarily a patriotic one. The home owner has something which is worth contending for. Self interest is the motive behind all human endeavor. It maintains in the defense of one's country as well as in any thing else. When the Japanese-Russian war was in progress, this principle was well illustrated. The Russian had nothing to contend for. If successful, the Russian government guaranteed him nothing but a condition of semi-slavery. On the other hand, the Japanese government was continually increasing the liberties of her people.

What the ultimate consumer desires and what he is entitled to, is to purchase the manufactured product, no matter what it is, at a cost as low as is commensurate with a fair remuneration for all whose labors enter into the production, handling and transportation of the same. Costs attributable to tariff charges, undue manipulation of the market or because of combination of producers, manufacturers, etc., should be guarded against by governments, both state and national. This is due him for the taxes he pays and for the right the government expects in time of war, to demand his services to repel an enemy. And it is necessary, if a patriotism is fostered which will cause men to place all that makes life enjoyable, upon the country's altar.

THE SINGLE TAX

THE NEWS, as it now understands the Single Tax, does not favor that system of collecting a public revenue. While it is true that much personal property is not listed with the assessor, we cannot see that to exempt all personal property from taxation, would help matters materially.

As a matter of fact, only property, which pays or is capable of paying an income, should be taxed. Simply because a man erects a dwelling house on his farm or his city lot in which to reside ought not cause him to pay a penalty. But a building erected for business purposes, or dwelling houses erected for rental purposes, are different. They are supposed to earn an income for the owner; hence are proper subjects for taxation. All kinds of stock kept for profit; and which are increasing in value, notes, mortgages, etc. are all proper sources of taxation. But property in the way of homes, which do not and are not calculated to earn an income, and which necessarily daily depreciate in value, ought to be exempt from taxation.

However, the advocates of the single tax theory purpose to agitate the question before the people of Oregon and it behooves everyone to avail themselves of every opportunity to study the question. We need to study the matter in order to be able to point out its fallacies if they exist. We need to study it, so that if it offers a better system of taxation than we now have, that we can adopt it.

Men who have money, are enthusiasts of the single tax system. They are willing to spend money in exploiting the system. And, so far as the NEWS can see, there is no possible show wherein they can accomplish any selfish purpose, further than a philanthropic one. For this reason, we believe that an unprejudiced study of the question by one and all, will result in profit. It is either good or bad. We cannot afford to base opposition upon ignorance.

The NEWS supposes that the Oregon legislature has lambasted Senator Bourne until it is satisfied. Certain it is that the Senate has been the subject of a great deal of oratory. Yet, we suppose that Bourne will survive the castigation. Senator Bourne's stand for the "Oregon plan" suits a vast majority of the people of Oregon and the attempt, on the part of standpat legislators to belittle him, has not injured him in the eyes of the people. Indeed, if the Senator had had these windy legislators on his payroll, they could have done nothing which would add more to his popularity before the Oregon electorate.

State Senator Bowerman has been industriously writing his political obituary, since the date of the late Portland republican assembly. He should now sign his name "Dennis."

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