

The Santiam News

Politically Independent

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IS PROTECTION JUST?

IN ALL THE DECISIONS of the protective tariff, by congress, the question of justice does not appear to figure in the least. Expediency seems to maintain in the minds of, at least, a majority of the members.

The theory of protection, as applied to the tariff question, is either right or it is wrong. If right, then it should be extended to cover all classes of society. Manifestly the man who operates a loom is as justly entitled to direct benefit from protection as is the owner of the loom; the laborer who plows the land which grows the wheat as the owner thereof; the sheep herder as the flock master, or the laborer who mines the ore as the steel manufacturer. If any are entitled to protection, all are. No other conclusion, if based upon justice, can be reached.

On the other hand, if the theory is wrong; if it is unjust to tax all citizens for the benefit of a part of them or, in other words, take money from the pockets of the many and give it to the few, then the theory of a tariff for protection should be abandoned.

Until some other means of raising revenue is provided, the government must derive much of its financial support from duties on imports. Of course, any duty whatever upon an imported article together with the freight on the same, is a protection to the domestic manufacturer of the same article of goods. Yet, if the government laid the tariff with the sole view of raising revenue no one would be seriously wronged because of this degree of protection.

The primary cause or reason for any tariff at all, is the providing of revenue for the government. But every tariff measure since the Civil war, has been arranged with a view of admitting the smallest amount of foreign made goods, without totally excluding them. For this reason, foreign made goods do not form a competing factor in our markets to any appreciable extent. Therefore, our home manufacturers are enabled to advance prices to the full or nearly the full amount of the duty laid on the article.

To illustrate: It is very seldom that a suit of clothes made of English manufacture is found in our market, especially of the ordinary grades. It is said that about four pounds of wool is required for the cloth in a suit. Supposing wool, after being scoured is worth 50 cents per pound, the 40 per cent. wool duty adds 80 cents, making the cost of wool \$2.80. If the cloth is worth, say \$1.25 to \$1.50 per yard, we must add another 60 per cent.—manufacturers duty—which will bring the cost of the cloth in the suit to, at least, \$10. After being converted into a ready-made suit, the consumer pays about \$20 to \$25 for it and yet the government does not receive a penny in the transaction, while the manufacturer and dealer together have received, at least, \$10 above the cost and a reasonable profit on the suit. If the tariff should be reduced to a revenue producing basis, the consumer would save fully one-third the cost of the suit.

However, tariff beneficiaries have been enjoying the rake off for so many years, that they look up-

on protection as a vested right and that they will suffer a great wrong if they are forced to sell to the American consumer as cheaply as they do to the foreigner. The fact that 100,000 of these beneficiaries can afford to go to London for the privilege of witnessing the coronation fetes and to pay as high as \$600 for a single window from which to see the events, is an evidence that money comes easy to these people.

The American people, that is to say the common people—the consumers, are becoming aroused to the injustice of the whole protective system. They know that they are being continually robbed for the benefit of a favored class. And it may be regarded as a certainty of the near future, that the protective system must be abandoned. If the tariff schedules shall be gradually reduced, the long suffering consumer will be satisfied. But he must know that the iniquitous system is in course of extinction. The congressman, who does not stand for reformation in this regard, may as well prepare his valedictory address; for he will soon have to deliver it.

It is a shame that the republican party must bear the burden of foisting this unjust system upon the American people; for there are democratic congressmen, who are equally blamable. When the democrats had full control of the government, they refused to correct the injustice. The Wilson bill was so inequitable that President Cleveland refused to attach his signature thereto.

So, while the republican party must stand sponsor for the protective system, the democratic party is not wholly blameless.

As a matter of fact, tariff beneficiaries care very little which party has control of the government, providing their interests are taken care of. These people participate in politics for purely commercial reasons. They are patriots simply when patriotism can be used as a commercial asset. The only safety for the people is to stand, politically, for their own interests. They—the people—have been grafted long enough by a class of people which, to say the least, are not credible to the nation. If progressives of both parties will simply forget partisanship long enough to elect a congress and president, which will be true to the people's interests, the problem will soon be solved. But congress must be dominated by patriots—men who believe in the principle of "The greatest good for the greatest number of the people," in order to reach this result. They must, individually, forget that they are representing, simply a congressional district, but that they are standing for an entire nation.

No one should lightly criticize the democratic tariff of 20 per cent on raw wool. A reduction by one-half, it is indisputably a revision downward. This is at any rate keeping the republican pledge, however it may be with the democratic. Moreover, the excuse of democratic leaders for retaining any tariff at all on raw wool, is that it is necessary for revenue purposes. Of the validity of this excuse we confess our incompetency to judge—considering the excuse by itself. We know that national revenues are necessary. We know that the obligations of previous congresses must be provided for, in so far as they cannot be constitutionally repudiated. We know that national revenues must be raised largely by tariffs on imports, until the constitution is amended in that respect. We know that the constitution cannot be thus amended in time for the present congress to abolish duties on imports. We do not know, however, whether duties on raw wool are really necessary for revenue purposes. Neither does any one else know. All of us therefore should be considerate toward those democratic leaders in congress upon whom the responsibility, both official and political, for guessing right on that question happens to rest. If, then, the necessity for relying upon a tariff on wool for revenue purposes were one of good guessmanship alone, we should be for standing by the congressman who have the political and official responsibility. But there is reason to fear that the revenue necessity is not the controlling purpose.—The Public.

Oregon's dairy product is increasing with each year; not, perhaps, in the number of cows, but in the milking value. Some of our farmer dairy men, not all, have learned that it costs no more to keep a cow which yields 40 pounds of milk daily, than one which yields but 20, and in just the ratio that this fact is being learned, does the paying value of the dairy herd increase. One of our subscribers states that he is selling his unprofitable cows to the butcher and, consequently, he finds the average milk flow, both in quantity and quality increasing. An individual record, quantity and test, of each cow should be kept. In other words, the dairyman ought to get acquainted with each cow.

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