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ISSUED QUARTERLY

What would you feel if every week, or every month, some power of the state could call on you for a thousand pounds, and if you failed to pay it could seize on your estates? . . . The five francs, or the five shillings, to the poor are as that thousand pounds would be to you; nay, more, for the seizure of the large sum would be to you at worst a lost superfluity, some luxury, some purchase, some pleasure the less, but to the poor the loss of the little sum may be the loss of bread in health, of medicine in sickness, of the clothing that is decency; the loss of the little sum may be the loss of the one frail plank that stands between poverty and death.

—Ouida.

LABOR AND WAGES

TOM L. JOHNSON'S VIEWS

(A notable letter of Tom L. Johnson in 1893, when Member of Congress, to the Cloak Makers of Cleveland, Ohio.)

I have received your communication asking me to vote against the Wilson tariff bill, unless it is amended by adding to the duty of 45 per cent. ad valorem, which it proposes, an additional duty of 49½ cents per pound.

I shall do nothing of the kind. My objection to the Wilson bill is not that its duties are too low, but that they are too high. I will do all I can to cut its

land, it is true, but they are few as compared with the cloak-users. Would you consider me an honest Representative if I would thus consent to injure the many for the benefit of the few, even though the few in this case were yourselves?

And you ask me to demand, in addition to a monstrous ad valorem duty of 45 per cent., a still more monstrous weight duty of 49½ cents a pound—a weight duty that will make the poorest sewing girl pay as much tax on her cheap shoddy cloak as Mrs. Astor or Mrs. Vanderbilt would be called on to pay on a cloak of the finest velvets and embroideries! Do you really want me to vote to thus put the burden of taxation on the poor while letting the rich escape? Whether you want me to or not, I will not do it.

That, as your employers say, a serviceable cloak can be bought in Berlin at \$1.20 affords no reason in my mind for keeping up the tariff. On the contrary, it is the strongest reason for abolishing it altogether. There are lots of women in this country who would be rejoiced to get cloaks so cheaply; lots of women who must now pinch and strain to get a cloak; lots of women who cannot now afford to buy cloaks, and must wear old or cast-off garments or shiver with cold. Is it not common justice that we should abolish every tax that makes it harder for them to clothe themselves?

No; I will do nothing to keep up duties. I will do everything

I can cut them down. I do not believe in taxing one citizen for the purpose of enriching another citizen. You elected me on my declaration that I was opposed to protection, believing it but a scheme for enabling the few to rob the many, and that I was opposed even to a tariff for revenue, believing

duties down, but I will strenuously oppose putting them up. You ask me to vote to make cloaks artificially dear. How can I do that without making it harder for those who need cloaks to get cloaks? Even if this would benefit you, would it not injure others? There are many cloak makers in Cleve-



HON. TOM L. JOHNSON

that the only just way of raising revenues is by the single tax upon land values. So long as I continue to represent you in Congress I shall act on the principle of equal rights to all and special privileges to none, and whenever I can abolish any of the taxes that are now levied on labor or the products of labor I will do it, and where I cannot abolish I will do my best to reduce. When you get tired of that you can elect some one in my place who suits you better. If you want duties kept up, you may get an honest protectionist who will serve you; you cannot get an honest free trader.

But I believe that you have only to think of the matter to see that in adhering to principle I will be acting for the best interests of all working men and women, yourselves among the number. This demand for protective duties for the benefit of the American working man is the veriest sham. You cannot protect labor by putting import duties on goods. Protection makes it harder for the masses of our people to live. It may increase the profits of favored capitalists; it may build up trusts and create great fortunes, but it cannot raise wages. You know for yourselves that what your employers pay you in wages does not depend on what any tariff may enable them to make, but on what they can get others to take your places for.

You have to stand the competition of the labor market. Why, then, should you try to shut yourselves out from the advantages that the competition of the goods market should give to you? It is not protection that makes wages higher here than in Germany. They were higher here before we had any protection, and in the saturnalia of protection that has reigned here for some years past you have seen wages go down, until the country is now crowded with tramps and hundreds of thousands of men are now supported by charity. What made wages higher than in Germany is the freer access to land, the natural means of all production, and as that is closed up and monopoly sets in wages must decline. What labor needs is not protection, but justice; not legalized restrictions which permit one set of men to tax their fellows, but the free opportunity to all for the exertion of their own powers. The real struggle for the rights of labor and for those fair wages that consist in the full earnings of the laborer is the struggle for freedom and against monopolies and restrictions; and in the effort to cut down protection it is timidly beginning. I shall support the Wilson bill with all my ability and all my strength.

Of all the nonsense talked against the reduction of tariff taxes, the claim that they benefit the workingman is

most transparent. The effect of these taxes is to increase the price of everything that the workingman sells his labor for, since the money he gets is only the medium with which he obtains what is the real object of his labor. Granted, which is only true in a comparatively few cases, that such taxes increase the profits of his employer. Do employers pay larger wages when they get larger profits? I do not, and even philanthropists do not.

Take Mr. Andrew Carnegie, who gives like a prince out of the millions the tariff has enabled him to take from his fellow-citizens. He gives like a prince from his more than princely income, but he does not raise wages unless he has to. Before he started for Jerusalem a few days ago, he utilized the tariff to re-establish the steel-rail pool and pay other manufacturers to shut up their works and throw their men out of employment; then a general cut in wages was made in all his great establishments; and then he announced himself ready to give as much as \$5000 a day to feed the unemployed in Pittsburgh—a place that, if there were any truth in the theory that protection is good for labor, ought to be a very paradise for workingmen. Now, which is best for labor, plenty of charity soup-houses or plenty of employment? There is the question between protection and free trade.

—Hon. Tom L. Johnson, H.R. 1894.

A NOTABLE STATEMENT

I think it will prove impossible for any sincere student of the subject to designate one million persons out of the twenty-nine million now occupied for gain whose industry would be seriously or adversely affected, even if all duties on all foreign imports of like kind were at once removed. Twenty-five million are engaged in arts necessary to the existence of society and which can neither be promoted nor retarded by duties on imports, except so far as the cost of their living is increased by an ill-adjusted or injudicious system of taxation.—*Edicard Atkinson.*

(See table, last page.)

The period of exclusiveness is past. The expansion of our trade and commerce is the pressing problem. Commercial wars are unprofitable. A policy of good will and friendly trade relations will prevent reprisals. Reciprocity treaties are in harmony with the spirit of the times; measures of retaliation are not. If, perchance, some of our tariffs are no longer needed for revenue or to encourage or protect our industries at home, why should they not be employed to extend and promote our markets abroad?

—*President McKinley.*

Buffalo, 1901.

THE VERMIN IN THE DARK

In storied Venice, down whose rippling streets

The stars go hurrying, and the white moon beats,

Stood the great Bell Tower, fronting seas and skies—

Fronting the ages, drawing all men's eyes;

Rooted like Teneriffe, aloft and proud, Taunting the lightning, tearing the flying cloud.

It marked the hours for Venice: all men said

Time cannot reach to bow that lofty head;

Time, that shall touch all else with ruin, must

Forbear to make this shaft confess its dust.

Yet all the while, in secret, without sound,

The fat worms gnawed the timbers underground.

The twisting worm, whose epoch is an hour,

Caverned his way into the mighty tower,

Till suddenly it shook, it swayed, it broke.

It fell in darkening thunder at one stroke.

The strong shaft, with an angel on the crown,

Fell, ruining: a thousand years went down!

And so I fear, my country, not the hand

That shall hurl night and whirlwind on the land;

I fear not Titan traitors who shall rise To stride like Brocken shadows on our skies:

These we can face in open fight, withstand

With reddening rampart and the sworded hand.

I fear the vermin that shall undermine Senate and citadel and school and shrine—

The Worm of Greed, the fatted Worm of Ease,

And all the crawling progeny of these— The vermin that shall honeycomb the towers

And walls of state in unsuspecting hours.

Edict Markham.

Unhampered trade is mutual service.