

The Tariff in Congress.

An agreement of the Conference Committee on the important tariff schedules (p. 727) was reported from Washington on the 27th, but on the 28th reports got out that President Taft was not satisfied with this agreement, and a revised one was reported on the 29th. The completed report was officially presented to the lower house on the 30th by Mr. Payne, who explained that the bill as agreed upon by the Conference Committee provides for a general downward tendency from the present rates of tariff duty, with marked decreases as to the necessities of life, but with some increases on luxuries. The question came to a vote on the 31st, President Taft having meanwhile urged Republicans to vote for it.

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There was an adverse Republican vote, however, of 20, these bolters being Carey of Wisconsin, Davis of Wisconsin, Gronna of North Dakota, Haugen of Iowa, Hubbard of Iowa, Keifer of Ohio, Kendall of Iowa, Lenroot of Wisconsin, Linbergh of Minnesota, Mann of Illinois, Miller of Minnesota, Murdock of Kansas, Nelson of Wisconsin, Nye of Minnesota, Poindexter of Washington, Southwick of New York, Steenerson of Minnesota, Stevens of Minnesota, Volstead of Minnesota, and Woods of Iowa. The Democratic party vote was cast against the report, except that Broussard and Estopinal of Louisiana voted for it. The bill, as reported from the Conference Committee, was adopted by 195 to 183—a majority of 12.

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But in the Senate an obstacle immediately arose. When the conference report came there on the 2nd, an opposition developed which, had the vote been taken then, would have defeated the bill. The strength of this opposition was due to the discovery of "jokers" in the bill, whereby compromises were nullified. The compromise reduction of tariff on boots and shoes, for instance, to offset free hides, was found to apply only to shoes worn in penal institutions. Voting on the bill was therefore deferred, and on the 3d it was formally set for the 5th.

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As the bill passed the House upon the report of the Conference Committee, works of art more than 20 years old, petroleum, and hides go into the free list; timber is reduced from 1 cent to ½ cent a cubic foot; sawed lumber from \$2 a thousand feet to \$1.25; iron ore from 40 cents to 15 cents a ton; pig iron from \$4 to \$2.50 a ton; tin plates from 1½ cents a pound to 1 1-5 cents; steel rails from 7-20 of 1 cent a pound to 7-40 of a cent; and bituminous coal from 67 cents a ton to 45 cents. Wool remains as before, and the

rates on cotton hosiery, shingles, fur clothing, cigars and hops are increased.

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The bill embodies a clause which has not come in for debate. It is known as the maximum and minimum clause, and provides that—

after March 31, 1910, there shall be levied, in addition to the duties prescribed, which are called "the minimum tariff," 25 per cent on the value of all imports (with certain specified exceptions), and that the prescribed duties or "minimum tariff," plus this 25 per cent, shall constitute the "maximum" or "general tariff." Whenever after that date, the President is satisfied that the government of any foreign country does not discriminate against shipments from or to the United States, he may by proclamation admit shipments from that country at the "minimum" tariff. And if the government of any country upon the imports from which the "minimum" tariff is at any time allowed, shall thereafter discriminate against the American trade, then the President may restore the "maximum" as to that country.

This provision is intended to give the President a "club" with which to enter into negotiations for commercial treaties—the rates left to his discretion being those between the "minimum," which are to prevail until March 31, 1910, and the "maximum," which takes effect on that date. It is an expression of the "reciprocity" idea.

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The Cleveland Traction Referendum.

Mayor Johnson lost his fight on the traction referendum (p. 730) on the 3d in Cleveland.

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The principal features of the campaign of last week were the two debates between Homer H. McKeehan against the Schmidt ordinance, and Mayor Johnson for it. The first came off on the 27th, when more than 15,000 people crowded into and around the six-pole tent. W. H. Boyd was chairman, and Mayor Johnson opened and closed. The second debate was on the 28th, before an equally large crowd, and Mr. McKeehan opened and closed. These were the only debates of the campaign, the Chamber of Commerce Committee, the only organized civic body in opposition to the ordinance, having refused to authorize any debates, even that of the chairman of their speakers' committee, Mr. McKeehan. The debates are described as extraordinary, and Mayor Johnson as having done his most effective work at them. It was generally conceded that the opposition lost heavily in these debates. But the corporate interests centering in Cleveland were united against the ordinance, and the influence of the local banks was brought to bear upon every one having financial interests or obligations.