

TRUSTS UNDER TARIFF.

A Flood of Light Let In Upon a Misapplied Complaint.

Something of the Connection Between Trusts and a Protective Tariff.

Aiming to Kill Competition at Home—Outrageous Prices Exacted from Consumers.

[From the New York Times.] The organ of the American Iron and Steel Association, the *Bulletin*, complains that trusts and similar combinations are "offensively referred to" in the President's message "as if they were particularly a product of" our tariff system, and points out that trusts are to be found in industries "with which our protective policy has nothing to do." It also asserts that they flourish "in free-trade England," the purpose of its remarks being to induce the reader to infer that not even the remotest connection exists between trusts and the tariff in this country.

The *Bulletin* speaks of "trusts and combinations." There are combinations which are not trusts, but whose control of the market is as complete as it would be if they had been organized upon the plan of the Standard Oil monopoly. We do not know that actual trusts have been formed in any of the iron and steel industries, but it is notorious that many of those industries have been and are controlled by combinations of manufacturers which are as effective, so far as production and prices are concerned, as trusts could be. Any reference to "combinations" which does not hold them up as blessings to mankind must be "offensive" to the organ of the Iron and Steel Association. Now let us see whether there are any trusts or combinations in industries which enjoy the protection afforded by high duties.

Lead.—The average ad valorem rate of duty paid last year was 59.27 per cent. on the ore, 68.97 on pigs and bars, and 60.82 on sheets. When the National Lead Trust was organized last fall, the *Tribune* said: "The present price of lead is about as high as it can be to maintain its standing in the markets as against the imported article, and the aim of the syndicate will be to keep up this price." The price is now much higher.

Sugar.—The average duty last year was 82.04 per cent., and on two-thirds of the quantity imported it was more than 84 per cent. The dutied paid exceeded \$56,000,000. The refiners appear to have succeeded in putting their trust on a firm foundation. The St. Louis refinery was absorbed last week. The organization will be capitalized, it is said, at \$50,000,000. As to the effect on prices we refer again to the *Tribune*, a thick-and-thin protection organ. The 5th inst., it said: "Since it (the Sugar Trust) became a fixed fact cut loaf has gone up to 7½ cents a pound, granulated to 6½, and the soft sugars have all advanced."

Rubber shoes—Full accounts of the formation of a trust by the rubber manufacturers of the country have been published. The industry is said to represent an investment of \$50,000,000, and an annual trade of \$100,000,000. The duty on rubber shoes is 25 per cent. Our erratic contemporary, the *Sun*, complains loudly that "it is well-nigh impossible to procure for love or money in the open market a pair of sound, substantial, honest, staying rubber overshoes," and says that some one can get rich by making good overshoes and selling them at a reasonable price. We venture to remind the *Sun* that competition has virtually been killed in this business. The quality, quantity, and price are, we presume, fixed by the trust. The tariff assists the trust in maintaining the prices on good goods.

Envelopes—The makers of envelopes in the United States have made a compact trust and prices are to be raised. The duty on envelopes is 25 per cent.

School-slates.—The manufacturers have formed a combination which controls the business, and this combination has raised prices 17 per cent. since May last. The duty is 30 per cent.

Paper bags—The trust formed in the bag-making industry controls the price of grocers' bags and the large flour sacks used in the West. It is stated that these flour bags are made of manila rope stock and jute butts. The duty on untarred manila rope averaged last year 32.89 per cent., on manila it was 21.06, on jute butts 19.13, and on the manufactured bags it appears to have been 35 per cent.

Linseed oil—The Western manufacturers have formed a pool or trust to control the Western market. The average duty paid last year on imported oil was 54.79 per cent.

Paving pitch—The pitch used in roofing and paving is said to be controlled in this country by a pool or combination, at the head of which are Widener and Elkins, the Philadelphia speculators who are applying the trust system to gas-works and street-railways in several large cities. "Not a pound of roofing pitch," said the Chicago *Tribune* in September last, "not a yard of felt roofing paper, and not a gallon of paving pitch can be obtained in this country unless Widener and Elkins raise their fingers and give permission for its sale." The duty on the pitch of coal tar is 20 per cent. and that upon roofing felt is the same.

Salt—How much progress toward the formation of a salt combination has been made we do not know. A meeting was held in September, and it was reported then that the arrangement for a union of sixty-three companies had been completed. The average duty on imported salt last year was 39.30 per cent.

Cordage—There are less than thirty cordage mills in the country, and for years they were controlled by a pool which limited production and fixed prices. This pool was broken last spring and a new one, representing two-thirds of the productive capacity, was formed in the summer. The new pool is said to control the supply of imported manila and similar raw material. The average ad valorem rates of duty last year were as follows: Manila, 21.06; jute, 20; sisal, 14.80; tarred cables and cordage, 30.13; untarred manila cordage, 32.89; other untarred cordage, 30.08.

Steel—In October the crucible and open-hearth manufacturers of steel formed a combination to regulate and maintain prices. The Bessemer manufacturers also formed a similar association or pool. The steel-rail makers met November 15, and

"it was agreed," said the *Tribune* at the time, "to leave the matter of output and details to the Board of Control. Prices are to be maintained at current rates." The rate paid last year on steel rails was 81.33 per cent. Steel in all its forms is heavily protected.

The trusts or combinations mentioned above have been formed in industries of which the *Bulletin* cannot say that "our protective policy has had nothing to do" with them. But the list is far from complete. It relates only to some of the combinations whose formation has recently been reported by the press. The maintenance of these industries of monopolies in the home market is favored by the tariff wall. It is the aim of those who make these combinations to kill competition at home, and to exact from consumers a price almost high enough to invite competition from abroad—to make them pay to protected home manufacturers almost as great a tax as they must pay to the Government when they buy the same kind of goods from foreign manufacturers. By thus combining to the people's injury they invite a reduction of the tariff rates which enable them to form monopolies.

WOES OF THE FARMERS.

As Related by Senator L. D. Whitney, of Bureau County, Illinois.

How Corporate Greed, High Interest, and the Tariff Are Ruining Agriculture.

[From the Chicago Herald.]

The chief feature in the programme of the Henry County Farmers' Institute was Senator Whiting's speech on "The Decline of Agricultural Prosperity—Its Cause and Cure." In regard to the attraction which the subject had for the Henry County farmers, it may well be said that Mr. Whiting's speech was last, but not least, on the programme. The hall was crowded to its utmost capacity, and for once since the proceedings opened the staid old farmers preponderated in numbers over the ladies. Senator Whiting was received with applause, but his appearance evidently excited as much surprise as approval. As has been stated, Henry County is strongly Republican, and the talk that "Senator Whiting is going to deliver a free trade speech" had been the topic of conversation for days. Mr. Whiting's speech was anything but a free trade oration, though he gave the farmers some useful hints in that direction. He spoke calmly and collectedly, without manuscript. Unquestionably his remarks, impressively and deliberately as they were delivered, were the result of deep meditation. He said in substance:

I know of no pursuit, profession, or calling, that should fix prices to suit themselves. If we farmers should fix the prices of our products as we see fit we would be as bad as others. Competition should rule, not the individual and corporation. Farmers are slow to move. They would not move at all if they did not see some impending peril. I should endeavor to show you why the farmers should move, should organize. In speaking of the farmers' property I want particularly to refer to village centers like Galva. I want these villages to feel that if the farmer does something to elevate himself in standing or in morals, the villagers have some interest in it. Their prosperity, not in a measure, but in general, depends upon it.

National prosperity has poured over the length and breadth of the land a golden shower. It has blessed every branch of labor and exertion except the agricultural interest. Statisticians tell us that the wealth of the nation has increased from \$16,000,000,000 in 1830 to \$729,650,000, or three and one-half times as much as our total products of iron and steel—and this, too, after our enormous home demand had been filled.

If, therefore, it were true that a protective tariff were needed to support our iron furnaces—which we utterly deny, for we made iron long before we ever had a tariff—yet to secure a trade worth \$200,000,000 we are jeopardizing one worth \$700,000,000. The loss of that foreign trade for our agricultural products not only determines the fact whether we shall make anything on what we sell at home of such products, but would of itself entail, if lost or but one year, greater injury to American industry than the destruction of three times the capital invested in all our iron and steel works as it stood in 1880. Yet this system is called "protection," and, we are told, is kept up to enable iron men to pay "good wages."

Farmers have their workmen to pay also, and grubbing potatoes is just as honorable as grubbing iron ore, and a far higher degree of intelligence is required. It is time for agriculturists to quit being made the tools of the other classes, and to demand that taxes not needed to support the Government shall not be transferred by the Government to favored industries. What the Government does not need to maintain public peace, order, and security, should remain in the taxpayers' pockets. Reduce the tariff.

of the United States is gorged, the Government does not know what to do with the money. There is a sort of statesman who advocates the abolition of taxes on whisky and tobacco. I say, let us farmers stand together and have removed the taxes from the necessities of life. Cheap whisky and tobacco do not rob us of money from our wants and troubles. Though part of the farmers may use tobacco and some of them may be addicted to strong drink, I claim that nearly every one of them is willing to pay what for his whisky and tobacco and have cheaper sugar, clothing and lumber. It is not necessary that one take to chewing tobacco in order to help the United States of America. I tell you there is great effort being made, not alone by those who eschew tobacco and by those who advocate prohibition, to have reform in these matters. Several States have passed laws to teach the children in the schools the effects of tobacco and whisky. There is a tendency that the rising generation shall be an improvement upon the present one.

Here Senator Whiting drifted off into a philippic against the use of tobacco and whisky, and closed by saying the people did not want any back-sliding in legislation touching these matters. That was the sense of at least every farmers' meeting recently held throughout the Northwest. In lowering the taxes the necessities of life should be unburdened instead of whisky and tobacco. The speech was tame and again interrupted by vociferous applause. It was a fitting and impressive close of the convention of the Henry County Farmers' Institute.

A WORD TO FARMERS.

It Is Time for Agriculturists to Quit Being Made the Tools of Other Classes.

[From the Tennessee Farmer.]

In 1880 the aggregate value of the iron and steel manufactured in the United States was \$296,000,000, but as this included the pig-iron twice, first as a separate product and again in the bar-iron or steel into which it went, its value of \$89,000,000 is twice given. A more correct estimate, when the report is free from duplications, would place the aggregate at about \$200,000,000. During the year ending June 30, 1881, the export of American agriculture to foreign nations was of the value of \$729,650,000, or three and one-half times as much as our total products of iron and steel—and this, too, after our enormous home demand had been filled. If, therefore, it were true that a protective tariff were needed to support our iron furnaces—which we utterly deny, for we made iron long before we ever had a tariff—yet to secure a trade worth \$200,000,000 we are jeopardizing one worth \$700,000,000. The loss of that foreign trade for our agricultural products not only determines the fact whether we shall make anything on what we sell at home of such products, but would of itself entail, if lost or but one year, greater injury to American industry than the destruction of three times the capital invested in all our iron and steel works as it stood in 1880. Yet this system is called "protection," and, we are told, is kept up to enable iron men to pay "good wages."

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FARMERS AND THE TARIFF.

An Appeal Against the Protection of Monopolists and the Ruin of Agriculture.

[Washington special.]

The farmers and delegates to the Nebraska Farmers' Alliance meeting have sent in a strongly worded petition to Congress asking for a removal of the duty on iron, lumber, sugar, wool, salt, and wooden goods. In the document, which is indorsed by the National Farmers' Alliance and State grangers of Illinois, Indiana and Pennsylvania, the husbandmen point out that the statistics of Illinois show that from 1880 to 1886 eighty-seven of the richest agricultural districts of that State suffered an actual loss in population, and that \$50,000,000 was lost on corn in the past five years, thus proving that the farmers worked without earning even a day's wages. Under the present system the petitioners urge that farms are passing to mortgagors, and farmers are being reduced to the condition of the unhappy tenantry of Ireland. The existing state of affairs, they claim, is due mainly to the protective tariff system now prevailing, which taxes the farmers of the nation for the aggrandizement of manufacturers on the plea of protecting American labor, while white labor is left free to come from all parts of the world. In concluding, the petitioners urge that farms are passing to mortgagors, and farmers are being reduced to the condition of the unhappy tenantry of Ireland. The existing state of affairs, they claim, is due mainly to the protective tariff system now prevailing, which taxes the farmers of the nation for the aggrandizement of manufacturers on the plea of protecting American labor, while white labor is left free to come from all parts of the world. In concluding, the petitioners urge that farms are passing to mortgagors, and farmers are being reduced to the condition of the unhappy tenantry of Ireland. 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