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## REDUCE THE TAXES

Take Off the Burdens of Taxa-  
tion and Increase Exports.

SPEECH OF HON. R. Q. MILLS.

Delivered in the House of Representa-  
tives, April 17.

A War Tax Continued in Time of Peace.  
Result of a Trick Played by Monopolists.  
Their Promises Violated—Labor Cost of  
Production Lower in America Than in  
England—Complete and Convincing  
Facts and Figures.

Mr. Chairman: Our late civil war made it  
necessary that the burdens of taxation should  
be laid heavily in all directions authorized  
by the constitution. The duties on imports  
were raised from an average on dutiable  
goods of 18.84 per cent. in 1861 to an average  
of 40.29 per cent. during the five years from  
1862 to 1866 inclusive. This was recognized  
at the time as an exceptionally heavy bur-  
den. It was stated by the distinguished  
gentleman who then presented to the house  
the bill so largely increasing the duties that  
it was demanded by the exigencies of war  
and must cease on the return of peace. He  
said: "This is intended as a war measure, a  
temporary measure, and we must as such  
give it our support."

After congress had so largely increased the  
duties on imports, and thus bestowed most  
liberal and generous bounties on our man-  
ufacturers, a light internal revenue tax was  
imposed on the products of domestic man-  
ufacture to help the government meet the  
heavy demands of war. The internal tax  
was but a tithe of the heavy burden imposed  
on the people by the increased duties on for-  
eign goods. It brought to the treasury in  
1866 \$127,000,000—a sum which was less than  
5 per cent. upon the value of the manufac-  
tured product of that year. It was thought  
not to be unreasonable to require this small  
contribution from those whose bounty con-  
gress had increased from 18 to 40 per cent. in  
the price of their products.

THE WEALTHY EXEMPTED.  
But, Mr. Chairman, that tax is gone. It  
could not be retained. It was a tax on  
wealth. As soon as the war was ended the  
complaint was made that this tax was a war  
tax, and it was repealed. Congress imposed  
a tax on incomes, too, to help the government  
to meet the expenditures of war. It brought  
to the treasury in 1866 \$72,000,000. The  
official reports showed that 460,170 persons  
out of the whole population had incomes  
above the exemption, and they had \$707,000,  
000 of net annual income, while the balance  
of the people had nothing beyond what was  
required for annual support. Yet scarcely  
had the war ended until this tax was declared  
to be exceedingly odious, iniquitous and  
oppressive, and congress was asked to repeal  
it, and it is gone.

Besides these there were taxes on the re-  
ceipts of railroad companies, taxes on insur-  
ance companies, taxes on express companies,  
taxes on bank capital, bank deposits and  
bank checks, but they are gone. Congress  
lent a willing ear to the demands of wealthy  
corporations and individuals, and took all  
the burden from them, but the war taxes on  
clothing, like the poor, we have always with  
us. Other taxes were given up when our in-  
terest debt of more than \$2,000,000,000 was  
starving us in the face and demanding from  
the government more than \$120,000,000 an-  
nually to meet its interest.

With these facts before their eyes they  
made haste to roll all the burdens of taxation  
off the shoulders of the wealthy and lay them  
upon the shoulders of those who could only  
pay as they procured the means by their  
daily toil. Could not that \$127,000,000 con-  
tributed by the manufacturers from the rich  
bounties which the government had given  
have been retained until the war debt was  
paid? Could not the \$72,000,000 from in-  
comes have been held for a few years longer?  
Could not the tax on the receipts of the  
wealthy corporations have been continued  
for one decade?

Was the tax of 3 per cent. on a wool hat  
paid by the manufacturer more oppressive  
than the tax of 73 per cent. on both paid by  
the consumer? Was the tax of 3 per cent. on  
women's and children's clothing paid by the  
manufacturer more oppressive than the tax  
of 82 per cent. on both foreign and domestic  
goods of the same kind paid by the consumer?  
Was a tax of 3 per cent. on railroad com-  
panies, express and telegraph companies, more  
oppressive than an 88 per cent. tax on  
woolen shawls? Was a 3 per cent. tax on  
incomes more oppressive than an 80 per cent.  
tax on a woolen shirt?

The party then in power certainly thought  
so, for the taxes on wealth are gone, but the  
war tax on clothing, on food, on the imple-  
ments of labor still remain with us, and the  
war against our prosperity, our labor and  
our commerce is still being vigorously prose-  
cuted—a war that, is exhausting in its de-  
structive invasions on labor, whether it is  
employed in agriculture, manufactures, com-  
merce or mining.

The gentlemen who represent the minority  
of the committee on ways and means boast  
that they have reduced taxation \$300,000,000.  
They point with pride to the splendid column  
which they have erected, but that column  
has no stone in it to tell of their devotion to  
the masses who live by daily toil. In 1883  
they finished this magnificent shaft, which  
they have been for years erecting, and  
crowned it with the last stone by repealing  
the internal tax on playing cards and put-  
ting a 20 per cent. tax on the Bible.

## HOW THE TAX FALLS ON THE POOR.

This is one of the vicious results of the war  
tariff. The taxes, both for public and pri-  
vate purposes, are paid by labor. They are  
assessed on labor. Now, let us see how it  
benefits labor, as it is claimed to do. Sup-  
pose a laborer who is earning \$1 a day by  
his work finds a suit of woolen clothes that  
he can buy for \$10 without the tariff tax,  
then the suit of clothes can be procured for  
ten days' work; but the manufacturer comes  
to congress and says: "I must be protected  
against the man buying this cheap suit of  
clothes," and congress protects him by put-  
ting a duty of 100 per cent., or \$10 more.  
Now it will require the laborer to work  
twenty days to get his suit of clothes. Now  
tell me if ten days of his labor have not been  
annihilated? Has he not been required to  
work twice as long under the tariff as he  
would have done without to obtain his suit  
of clothes?

But it is said that the tariff helps the  
laborer by doubling his pay, because it  
builds up manufactures everywhere. But if  
that is true, the tariff at the same time that  
it doubles the value of the manufacturer's  
product ought to double the value of the  
laborer's pay; but the tariff takes his money  
and puts it in the pockets of the manufac-  
turer and pays him in promises which he  
never redeems.

There are woolen goods, as we have shown  
in the report of the committee, bearing du-  
ties from 100 to 180 per cent., but I have  
taken 100 per cent. for the greater ease of  
illustrating the effect. The benefits of the  
tariff all go one way. They go from the  
consumer to the manufacturer, but not from  
the manufacturer to the consumer. Suppose  
that the tax on the 60,000,000 of consumers  
amounts to \$10 per head, then it is a tax of  
\$600,000,000; if it is only \$5 per head, it is  
\$300,000,000 taken out of the pockets of the  
consumer and put into the pockets of the  
manufacturer. The tax on the 400,000,000  
of goods imported goes into the public treas-  
ury; the tax levied on domestic manufactures,  
by raising their price, goes into the pockets  
of the manufacturers.

The greatest evil that is inflicted by it is in  
the destruction of the values of our exports.  
Remember that the great body of our ex-  
ports are agricultural products. It has been  
so through our whole history. From 75 to  
over 80 per cent. of the exports of this coun-  
try year by year are agricultural products.  
Cotton is first, then breadstuffs, pork, beef,  
butter, cheese, lard. These are the things  
that keep up our foreign trade, and when you  
put on or keep on such duties as we have now  
—war duties which were regarded as so enor-  
mous even in the very midst of hostilities  
that they were declared to be temporary—  
when you put on or retain those duties, they  
limit and prohibit importation, and that lim-  
its or prohibits exportation. It takes two to  
make a trade.

We are the great agricultural country of  
the world, and we have been feeding the  
people of Europe, and the people of Europe  
have got to give us in exchange the products  
of their labor in their shops; and when we  
put on excessive duties for the purpose of  
prohibiting the importation of their goods,  
as a necessary result we put an excessive  
duty upon the exportation of our own agri-  
cultural products. And what does that do?  
It throws our surplus products upon our own  
markets at home, which become glutted and  
over supplied, and prices go down. So it  
is with the people of Europe who are man-  
ufacturing and producing things that we  
can not produce, but which we want. Their  
products are thrown upon their home mar-  
kets, which are glutted and over supplied,  
and their prices likewise go down. And when-  
ever, from any cause, prices start up in  
Europe, our tariff being levied mainly by  
specific duties upon quantity, not upon value,  
the tariff goes down, and then we see large  
importation and, as a result, large exportation.

Then we see a rise in agricultural products;  
then we see the circulation of money all  
through the whole of our industrial system;  
we see our people going to work, our man-  
ufactories starting up, and prosperity in every  
part of the land. Witness the history of  
1880. After the long depression, lasting  
from 1873 to 1880, prices suddenly rose in  
Europe. The prices of all the products which  
they export to us began to rise in the latter  
part of the year. What was the result? As  
prices rose there the tariff went down, the  
obstructions became lower, and the imports  
came in.

Our imports increased about \$200,000,000  
in one year. What was the result of that?  
Our exports increased largely. The prices of  
wheat, of cotton, of corn, of all the products  
that we export went up; not only the prices  
of that which was exported, but also the  
prices of that which was consumed at home.  
We exported in 1880 \$685,000,000 worth of  
agricultural products, and in 1881 \$73,000,000.  
During last year we exported only \$523,000,  
000 worth of agricultural products. About  
15 per cent. of our agricultural products have  
to seek a foreign market, and in 1881 the pro-  
portion rose to 20 per cent.

## HOW THE FARMERS ARE WRONGED.

But when we see the prices of agricultural  
products in 1881, when we exported \$730,  
000,000 worth of agricultural products, and  
then compare them with 1887, when the ex-  
port of agricultural products fell to \$523,  
000,000, we can form some estimate of the  
great loss to our farmers by stopping exportation.  
In 1881 wheat was worth \$1.19 per  
bushel; it is now sixty-eight cents. In 1881  
corn was worth sixty-three cents per bushel;  
it is now forty-four cents. The exports of  
our agricultural products have fallen dur-  
ing the last year far below those of 1881, and  
the prices have correspondingly fallen.

If the prices of 1881 obtained today the  
wheat crop of 1887 would be increased over  
its present value \$232,000,000, and if by ex-  
portation to foreign markets we could have  
each year since 1881 realized the price of that  
year, the wheat growers would have realized  
on their annual crop since then \$1,000,000,000  
more than they did. In the low prices of  
corn since then they have lost double that.  
Some part of the low prices is to be attributed

to large crops, but by far the greater cause  
is the restriction of the market for the sale  
of farm products.

The tariff robs the farmer on one side by  
increasing the price of what he buys; it robs  
him on the other by decreasing the price of  
what he sells.

But it is insisted that if we lower the duties  
and let foreign goods be imported, it will  
stop our manufactures—that it will turn our  
people out of employment or reduce their  
wages. It will do nothing of the sort. What  
will we import and what did we import when  
prices rose and the duties fell in 1880? We  
imported more of the same articles which we  
were importing before the prices rose. We  
will import more of the things we cannot  
produce or which can be produced cheaper  
in other countries than at home. If we look  
to our table of imports in 1880, we will see  
that over \$60,000,000 of the increase was of  
articles in the free list and about \$125,000,000  
in the dutiable list. The increase of imports  
free of duty will not hurt the manufacturer  
or the laborer.

Our manufactures do not then stop. They  
go on with increased activity. They did not  
stop in 1880 when the large importation set  
in. It gave them renewed life; their wheels  
flew faster, their machinery worked more  
constantly, and their operatives were all em-  
ployed. Why is this? Why, Mr. Chairman,  
we can produce at least 90 per cent. of all the  
manufactures consumed in this country more  
cheaply at home than can be produced any-  
where in the world and delivered here. This  
90 per cent. which we can produce at a lower  
cost than any other people can will not be  
hurt by importation.

I have here a letter from the chief of the  
bureau of statistics, which shows that in  
1850, with a low tariff, the consumption of  
domestic manufactures in the United States  
was 88.39 per cent. of the whole, and of im-  
ports 11.61 per cent. In 1860, with a still  
lower tariff, our home manufactures consti-  
tuted 87.57 per cent., and the consumption  
of imports was 12.43 per cent. In 1870 the  
consumption of domestic manufactures was  
93.14 per cent., and 6.86 per cent. of imports,  
and in 1880 were consumed 92.58 per cent. of  
home manufactures and 7.42 per cent. of  
foreign manufactures. Now, it is evident  
from these figures that under any circum-  
stances we can hold 90 per cent. of the  
market against the world.

If we had no tariff, if all the custom  
houses were torn down and the government  
was supported by direct taxation, not more  
than 10 per cent. of all the manufactured  
products consumed by the people would be  
imported into the country. Senator Sher-  
man, in a speech delivered three months ago,  
quoted a statement of ex-Consul Dudley,  
that nine-tenths of all the articles of manu-  
facture consumed by the people could be pro-  
cured as cheaply here as in England. He  
indorsed the statement as correct. I deny  
the accuracy of the statement. If he had  
said that nine-tenths of all the manufactures  
consumed in the United States could be pro-  
duced more cheaply here than in England he  
would have been nearer the truth. If nine-  
tenths of all the manufactures consumed  
here are cheaper here than in England it is  
because they are produced at a lower cost.  
Then what objection does he see to reducing  
the tariff?

The manufacturer is not so much interested  
now in the foreign market as the farmer.  
Less than 2 per cent. of the \$7,000,000,000 of  
his annual produce goes to the foreign mar-  
ket, but the farmer sends 15 per cent. of his  
products there, and would send a larger per-  
cent. if the way were open.

## THE TARIFF AND WAGES.

But, Mr. Chairman, it is said that if we  
reduce the tariff wages must be reduced.  
How is it high tariff makes high wages for  
labor? How can it be explained? Why, they  
say, as a matter of course, if you increase  
the value of the domestic product, the man-  
ufacturer is able to pay higher wages. Un-  
questionably he is; but does he do it? No.  
Mr. Jay Gould, with his immense income  
from his railroad property, is able to  
pay his bootblack \$500 a day, but  
does he do it? Oh, no; he pays the  
market price of the street. He gets his  
boots blackened and pays his nickel like a  
little man. [Laughter.] Mr. Vanderbilt,  
from the income arising from the interest on  
the immense amount of bonds he has can af-  
ford to pay his hostler \$10,000 a year, but  
does he do it? Oh, no; he goes out into the  
market and employs his labor at the market  
value, and pays the same price that the hum-  
blest citizen in New York does.

Wages are regulated by demand and sup-  
ply, and the capacity of the laborer to do the  
work for which he is employed. If high  
tariff regulated wages, how is it the wages in  
the different states of the Union are differ-  
ent, while the tariff is all the same from  
Maine to California? In every part of the  
territory of the United States the tariff is the  
same. How is it the wages are not the  
same? How is it that wages in the different  
localities in the different states are differ-  
ent? What is the cause? What is it which  
disturbs the tariff and prevents it from fix-  
ing a high rate of wages all over the country  
for labor?

We find by the census the rate of wages in  
the cotton industry is lower in Rhode Island  
than Pennsylvania, and we find the wages in  
the iron business are higher in Rhode Island  
than in Pennsylvania.

It is admitted by all who are well informed  
on this subject that our rate of wages is  
higher than anywhere else in the world, that  
England is higher than France, and that the  
rate of wages is higher in France than in  
Germany. Why is this? Germany and  
France both have a protective tariff to guard  
against the free trade labor of England.  
What then is it that makes higher wages? It  
is coal and steam and machinery. It is these  
three powerful agents that multiply the  
product of labor and make it more valuable,  
and high rate of wages means low cost of  
product. A high rate of wages means that  
cheap labor has got to go; and the history of  
our country in the last fifty years demon-  
strates that as clearly and as conclusively as  
any mathematical problem can be demon-  
strated.

Fifty years ago, Mr. Edward Atkinson  
shows, it required five persons, two carders,  
two spinners, and one weaver, working by  
the old methods, to make eight yards of cloth  
in one day. They got 20 cents a day; a dol-  
lar for the whole five. The labor cost of the  
cloth was 12½ cents a yard, and, calculating  
300 working days in a year, the whole pro-  
duct of these five cheap laborers was 2,400  
yards of cloth; but when coal and steam and  
machinery were harnessed together to pro-  
duce cloth, five persons today in New Eng-  
land produce 140,000 yards of cloth. The  
wages of labor, instead of being \$60 a year,  
or 20 cents a day, is \$257 per annum for  
each.

The result of the labor saving machinery  
used was an enormous increase in productive  
capacity. The result of that was a great in-  
crease in the rate of wages, and the further  
result was a great decrease in the cost of  
production. The old hand wheel and the old  
methods of labor have had to depart before  
the all conquering march of coal and steam  
and machinery. They had to go because the  
small amount of product of the article drove  
them out of the field. It is not the rate of  
wages, it is the article which the labor makes  
and the cost at which that article can be pro-  
duced—the lower cost—which drives the  
rival article out of the market. Such is the  
history which has been written in our country  
in the last half century.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Edward Atkinson, one  
of the clearest thinkers and writers on politi-  
cal economy of the present day, in his little  
book on "The Distribution of Products," lays  
down the principle that high rate of wages  
means low cost of product and low rate of  
wages means high cost of product. He says  
that "the cheapest man is the one who works  
the greatest amount of machinery with the  
least stops." I read a paragraph from his  
book on page 44:

In any given country like the United States,  
where the people are substantially homogeneous,  
where the means of intercommunication are  
ample, where there is no hereditary or class dis-  
tinction, and where there is no artificial obstruc-  
tion to prevent commerce, high rates of wages  
in money will be the natural and therefore necessary  
result of low cost of production in labor.

Now, then, it follows, he says, on page 50:

That the nation which has diminished the  
quantity of human labor in greatest measure by  
the application of machinery produces goods at the  
lowest cost, and by exchange with the hand  
working nations, who still constitute the majority  
of the people of the world, is, by way of such ex-  
change, enabled to pay the highest rate of wages  
in money, because their goods are made at the  
lowest labor cost.

In order to prove that fact Mr. Atkinson  
made an investigation into the condition of  
two old manufacturing houses in the state of  
New Hampshire; he compared two periods—  
1830 with the year 1884. He found that in  
1830 the wages per annum were \$164 in gold  
to each operative. This increased until 1884,  
when it amounted to \$290 in gold.

Now as to the efficiency of the labor em-  
ployed. In 1830 the total number of yards  
of cloth produced by each operative was  
4,321 per annum, while in 1884, mainly by  
the aid of improved machinery, it had been  
increased to 28,032 yards. The cost of the  
labor per yard was 1.00 cents in 1830, and but  
1.07 cents in 1884.

The pound of material turned out by each  
spindle or operative was taken as a unit of  
measurement, and Mr. Atkinson's table shows  
that the pounds that each spindle turned out  
was increased 22 per cent., and the pound  
that each operative turned out in a day had  
increased 190 per cent.; the pounds that each  
operative turned out per hour increased 240  
per cent. The increase of wages of opera-  
tives per hour (for the number of hours was  
made less) increased 240 per cent. The wages  
of the operative per annum had increased  
64 per cent. and per hour 94 per cent., while  
the labor cost per yard had decreased 41 per  
cent. The other house showed the same con-  
dition. It showed that productive efficiency  
had increased in spindles 276 per cent., in  
pounds per operative 214 per cent., while  
wages increased 77 per cent. and labor cost  
per yard decreased 44 per cent.

This great revolution in production,  
wages and cost is not the work of the tariff,  
but of coal, steam and machinery. These  
three powerful agents have produced these  
marvelous results. The effects inevitably  
follow the cause—high rate of wages because  
so much more service is rendered the em-  
ployer, low cost of product because so much  
more is done in a given time. I repeat it,  
the tariff has had nothing to do with bring-  
ing about the great change, and it is im-  
potent, utterly impotent, to increase the rate  
of wages.

But, Mr. Chairman, I want to call the at-  
tention of the committee to a statement  
found in the report of the United States  
census. This is the report in reference to the  
wages in the manufacturing industries of the  
country, and I call special attention to a re-  
port of an ax manufacturing establishment  
in Connecticut, on page 153. This gentle-  
man who makes the report compares the op-  
erations of his house from his books in 1840  
with 1880. In steel fitting, in ax making,  
each operative turned out 600 pieces per day  
in 1840. In 1880 each operative turned out  
1,250 pieces per day. Each operative re-  
ceived in 1840 24 cents per 100 pieces. He  
earned in 1840 \$1.44 per day, and in 1880,  
though he received less for each piece, he  
earned \$2.50 per day.

Now, was the increase of the daily wages  
of these operatives due to the tariff? Let the  
manufacturer answer. He says: "The follow-  
ing table shows the results of labor saving  
machinery, together with the increase in the  
efficiency of labor in the manufacture of  
axes, from 1840 to 1880." Now, when I saw  
these tables, proving the principle so clearly  
presented and so strongly enforced by Mr.  
Atkinson, I went to our very able and efficient  
chief of labor, the Hon. Carroll D. Wright,  
and asked him to have a table like this in the  
census report prepared, and to send an intelli-  
gent ax into some of the oldest houses in  
the country and get a statement from their  
books and send it to me, that I might see if  
there was a different result in other establish-  
ments. I now give you the testimony of  
those houses to add to the others.  
(Continued on 8th page.)