

# The Independent.

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## FREE TRADE V. TARIFF FOR REVENUE ONLY.

Editor Independent: It is now quite certain that Hearst and Bryan will control the next democratic national convention. It is equally certain that the opposition to Bryan and Hearst, in the convention, will unite upon Cleveland; but Cleveland and Co. will not be able to make the platform; and, not being able to control the platform, they will not be able to control the nomination. It will be impossible for Cleveland to stand upon any platform that Bryan and Hearst will make, and, consequently, Mr. Cleveland and his friends will have to retire and leave Bryan and Hearst to run the convention.

From one point of view it makes little difference which side makes the platform and nomination in the next democratic convention; because, if Cleveland is nominated, he will present tariff for revenue only, or tariff reform, or tariff revision, (all of which mean the same thing), as the paramount issue; and if Hearst and Bryan or Bryan and Hearst are nominated, they will also present tariff for revenue only as the paramount issue.

If Bryan and Hearst do not present the tariff as the paramount issue, they will talk enough about it and condemn protective tariffs so much that the republicans will be able to make the tariff question the paramount issue. On this issue the republicans will certainly win and Hearst and Bryan (or Bryan and Hearst) will certainly go down; because the democrats will be foolish enough to open the door for the republicans to bring forth their great doctrine of national protection of American industries.

They will show that protection of manufacturers not only makes the nation strong as against other competing nations, but that manufacturers make a market for agricultural products. With this line of argument they will carry the farmers in the country and the mechanics of the town and city. They will carry every northern state and nothing will be left for the democrats except the southern states, where they have been preaching tariff for revenue only for half a century and more.

Free trade is not so deadly a doctrine as tariff for revenue only. There are only two objections to free trade, namely, we cannot get the rest of the nations to adopt it—and, if we could, we must adopt some other method of supporting the government before we can think of adopting free trade.

For instance, we can open our ports to the trade of all nations, but we cannot compel any other nation to open her ports to us. Therefore, before we can have free trade, we must take all other nations into our Union and extend our laws all over the world. We can have reciprocal trade by opening our ports to the trade of other nations, on condition that they open their ports to our trade; but we cannot have absolute free trade until we can, in some way, govern all other nations. Free trade, then, is a chimera and cannot be thought of until our laws extend round the world.

Again, before we can have free trade we must provide some other method of taxation for the support of the national government. We are now collecting about two hundred millions per annum by way of duties on foreign merchandise at the custom houses. If we should have free trade, there would be no duties collected at the custom houses, and the government would lose two hundred millions per annum; and the wheels of government would have to stop, until some other method of taxation were provided. As yet, we have never been able to agree upon any method of taxation in case we should adopt free trade, and, therefore, free trade has been an impossibility.

Mr. Henry George and his followers proposed a single tax upon land values as a substitute for custom house taxes and all other kinds of taxation; but Mr. George and his followers have not been able to convince the people that their system of taxation would prove practical for the support of the national government, much less for the support of

any local government in our towns or cities.

For the above reasons few statesmen in this country have adopted the theory of free trade as practical. On the contrary, our statesmen have been divided between the two theories of tariff for protection and tariff for revenue only. And, yet, free trade is not so deadly a doctrine as tariff for revenue only. It is a singular thing, and nevertheless true, that nearly all our great political men are divided between revenue tariffs and protective tariffs, instead of being divided between free trade on one side and tariff for revenue only on the other. It is also a singular fact that nearly all those who are clamoring for free trade are philanthropists, not practical politicians or statesmen. Consequently, the only thing we have to debate about, so far as the tariff is concerned, is, shall tariff duties be imposed for revenue or protection?

We cannot, therefore, think about the grand theory of free trade, by

people ought to be taxed, not according to the amount of goods they may export or import, or the amount of such goods consumed by them, but according to the amount of their incomes or the amount of property inherited. These are the proper subjects of taxation, so far as our national government is governed, whether the doctrine appeals to the state and municipal governments or not.

No public man in this country has gained a hearing for free trade except Henry George. No public man in this country has dared to advocate free trade except Henry George and his followers. And it is safe to say that Henry George would not have gained a hearing (and followers) if it had not been that he first wrote "Progress and Poverty" in which he set up a peculiar scheme of taxation, indorsed by a great many people and thereby gained a great many followers.

Had Mr. George's system of taxation—internal taxation upon wealth—been practical so that it could be seen by great masses of the common people that the federal government at Washington could be supported without resorting to taxation upon imports of foreign merchandise, it is very probable that his system would have found a great many more

tariff duties that are for revenue only; and we shall never be able to do this until we can abolish the present so-called democratic party in this country. The democratic party seems determined to stand by a tariff for revenue only, whatever position it may take on other subjects. The party may differ within itself as to free coinage of silver, the issuance of greenbacks instead of bank notes for paper money, and a great many other subjects; but it cannot differ as to the tariff. Both wings of the party are for a tariff for revenue only, which is much farther from free trade than "protection for the sake of protection" is. Under such a condition of things there is no danger from free trade.

If some of our thinking people, who are advocating revenue tariffs, would only see that they are working away from free trade instead of towards it, they would come out for tariffs for protection only, with income taxes for revenue only.

As for the Cleveland wing there is no hope. They are joined to their idols—revenue tariffs, gold standard and bank notes for paper money. But as to the Hearst-Bryan wing or the Bryan-Hearst wing, there is some hope. It may be that they will see the folly of tariffs for revenue only and drop them (before the next national convention of their party) and substitute in lieu thereof income and inheritance taxes for revenue only.

If so, let us pray for them.

JNO. S. DE HART.

Jersey City, N. J.

## Kansas Election Law

Editor Independent: I have been reading The Independent for nearly a year, and am very glad to find an Old Guard populist paper which still insists upon laws for land, transportation and finance reforms, together with direct legislation, and kindred progressive measures. I have not changed my views from what I expressed in The Independent last June, namely, that we have gone too far, and can never again rehabilitate the people's party, much as we may desire it.

If the democrats "reorganize" nationally this year, or make a meaningless platform, with a wobbly candidate, I suppose most populists will want a ticket in the national field. But even then, I do not see much to be accomplished thereby. Of course, no old-time populist will support "reorganized" democracy, nor plutocratic republicanism. And the socialists may continue too radical for us, though I do not see the wide difference between them and us populists that The Independent thinks it sees. They carry public ownership farther than our platforms have done, but hardly farther than many populists have believed and talked for years. Of course, a thorough-going public ownership doctrine eliminates largely the money and land questions, because the public ownership of the land, and larger industries will leave little for the money-lender to control, after the plants are paid for by the public.

I am unwilling to refuse to co-operate with democrats, or any other party where we can see thereby a way to advance our principles, so I have filled out the Old Guard blank sent me, and inserted that exception and reservation. I believe in holding up the standard of the triple reforms, until some other party takes them up in earnest and permanently. I have never voted any ticket but the populist, which has oftentimes been a fusion with democrats in Kansas, and always a fusion in this county except once or twice.

I send also a list of a few populists of this county. Two years ago the test showed that very many populists preferred the democratic party as a permanent party when we held two conventions (though we fused). Quite a number of populists went back to the republican party since 1896. Others are socialists.

The plan of nominating candidates directly by a referendum vote just suits me, and I send my preferential ballot herewith marked. I hope many will use it so as to furnish data as to its feasibility. It is far better than a convention, and if 5,000 would participate, that would beat any convention ever held on earth for truly rep-



"A bill is in course of passage through congress to appropriate \$90,000 to build a stable for the president's horses."

which the products of a cold climate can be exchanged for the products of a warm climate, without the hindrance of taxation upon exports and imports, (some governments putting duties upon exports as well as imports).

We are, in fact, compelled to face powerful, sovereign nations on every square foot of the earth's surface; and the products of warm and cold climates cannot be exchanged without permission of these governments. Consequently, philanthropists who want our government to open our ports to free trade of the world must get all the nations of the world to open their ports for admission of our goods into their countries, free from taxation.

In other words, philanthropists must teach all the nations of the world and convince them that they ought to cease collecting import duties or export duties, for the sake of governmental revenue only; and that whenever a government wants or needs revenue it ought to be obtained by taxing the wealth of its people, in proportion to the amount of their visible wealth found in any nation; which is equivalent to saying that

followers. The difficulty with Mr. George's system was and is that if it is adopted we shall not have free trade, but that we shall have tariffs for revenue only, which may be higher and a greater burden upon the people, all things considered, than tariffs for protection only.

Free trade is not a dangerous or deadly doctrine, because very few people, comparatively, believe in it—and very few people will believe in it as long as there are so many independent national governments on the earth's surface—that are all trying to see how much they can get out of the people by taxing their food, drink or clothing, instead of taxing them according to their wealth and ability to pay and benefits received.

Let us, then, pray not for free trade, but for the abolishment of all governments that are trying to support themselves by tariffs for revenue only. If we can wipe out revenue tariffs and substitute internal taxation upon wealth, we will have all the free trade we need and will be good for us.

Free trade is not a dangerous doctrine, because we shall never have it until we can succeed in abolishing all