

ISSUES OF THE NATION.
Discussed by Senator Vance.

Having shown that a tariff levied not to raise revenue for the government but to increase the price of manufactured articles to the consumer is unconstitutional, and contrary to the accepted ideas of a free government, I will next consider it with reference to its justice and morality. We believe that our representative Democracies are the best form of government in the world because the most just—justice between man and man being the essential liberty, equality, order, and everything else that is essential in government.

The old watchwords of the French revolutionists, "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality," though somewhat short of their beauty by an association with the violence and blood of that unhappy period. Yet contain the sum and substance of Democratic liberty. Confessors also our ancestors made war against all forms of legal exclusive privileges and class distinction, and the fight was kept up by each succeeding generation. When our fathers in the continuation of that struggle, took on their high supremacy in 1776 and established the American Union by their Constitution, they thought they had thrown off also all the ideas and institutions of aristocratic Europe which tended to create artificial and unnatural distinctions among men. Theoretically they did succeed in bringing about the equality of all before the law, but they did not provide for, because they could not foresee, the encroachment on popular rights of the spirit of greed which in modern times converted the very instruments of Democratic equality into the means of class advantage. The possession of wealth confers such powers and privileges as makes its attainment the ambition of all. In the struggle for it the law should do no more than give all men a fair start and an equal chance. In no case should it lend one man help against another. There will soon be inequality enough at best. The strong man would soon overcome the weak; the man of brains would circumvent the dullard; the diligent, the temperate, the industrious will soon forge ahead of their rivals. As soon as one advantage is secured the capacity to secure the next one is double it; for in the business world the increase of power is in arithmetical ratio to the increase of capital. Hence, without a law of legislation, according to the course of nature, the inequalities of our society caused by the unequal distribution of wealth are sufficiently great to cause much misery. There is no subject which causes greater anxiety to the humane statesman. Yet when such things come about naturally, as the result of superior thrift, industry or ability, no one can justly complain. It is the fulfillment of a great moral law. But what shall we say of that character of legislation which hastens and increases these inequalities? Which creates them where, according to the moral law, they would not exist? By which one class of our people, however industrious, temperate and diligent, are yet so weighted down with restrictions and taxation in favor of another class that they are left behind in the struggle? Law represents the supreme power of the State. With us that power is lodged in the people, and law is the expression of the will indicated by the majority. There can be nothing more cruel and despotic than to bring the collective will of the majority or supreme powers of the State to the point of taxing or confiscating the property of the minority, or, which is the same thing, giving the one a legal advantage of the other which enables the same result to be obtained. Yet such is the effect and intention of a protective tariff. Its avowed objects

is to enable the home manufacturer to make money, and as it rejects the idea of free trade, and shuts it out altogether, it is only persons off whom he can make it at his own expense. The element of moral wrong in such legislation is radical and fundamental. No matter by what ingenious, half-tried, and untried arguments they attempt to show the duty of the State that in the long run he is benefited, the wrong committed. As a man may not do evil that good may come, even if it were certain of coming. What the tariff does is to keep the weak and idle from ever getting back his money in the long run, we know of a certainty that the manufacturer gets money every time in the short run. Whenever natural causes have operated to give one section or class of our people an advantage over another, the man who is either wise or unwise would say at once that if the Legislature interfered at all it should be to help the weak and tide them over the shoals of their situation. There is no nobler function of law than this. What is a protective tariff then but a tax levied on A to support B? If it be so then it is morally wrong. In the abstract, no man will venture to buy it. The selfishness and self-interest resorted to in its support is shown that it is not a tax levied on A, or, if it be, that he receives it all back again, are inevitably of serious consideration in this connection. It is a tax on B, and it increases the cost of the articles on which it is imposed; he is paid by the consumer, for there is no one else to pay it; it does support the manufacturer, for he cannot live without it. Otherwise we would have the strange spectacle of a manufacturer begging for a duty on goods which nobody was to pay, which did not enhance the price of anything he made to sell, and which would die if he didn't get, and that man still at large outside of the humane asylum! Such are the arguments analyzed.

The chief equitable ingredients of a contract are mutual consent; there must be a giving as well as taking. Now how is a farmer to be recompensed under a protective tariff? Where are the mutual benefits in a deal between him and the iron and woolen manufacturer? He goes to the iron master to buy his farm implements; the price is fixed by the cost of the foreign articles plus the tariff duty; in other words, he buys in a restricted market. To pay for his purchases he sells his wheat or his cotton in a free trade market at a price fixed by London in competition with all the wheat and cotton of the world. He sells in the cheapest market and buys in the dearest market, reversing the economical condition which his interest requires. Is it beneficial to him? Is it honest or just to force him to sell for the lowest price and to buy at the highest? No man will say so; and the only answer is a denial of the fact by attempting to show that when the foreigner is kept out, domestic competition becomes so great that prices become lower than they would be without any duty at all; and, therefore, so far from protection being a tax upon one class for the support of another, it is in fact a benefit to the man who is supposed to be taxed! Stripped of its verbiage this simply means that the manufacturer is a greatly maligned man; that he has no idea of taxing the consumer by placing a high duty on everything consumed—this he does for the purpose of reducing prices to the consumer—and that his anxiety for a protective tariff is because it is surest and most direct way of reducing the price of his own wares for his neighbor's benefit! A plain man, unaccustomed to the logic of protection, would naturally suppose that the manufacturer could put down the price of his own goods, if he wishes to do so, without enabling

(CONTINUED ON SEVENTH PAGE.)

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Eastern (75 Meridian) time used when not otherwise specified.

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