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What Mr. Wilson Really Said About It

The studied effort now being made in some quarters in North Carolina by men who are protectionists to make the people think that Mr. Wilson and the Democratic party are about to enact a tariff law different from what was promised during the campaign should not be heeded by Democrats. Every utterance of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Underwood, the two men most responsible for the pending legislation, all during the campaign and before, was unmistakable. They promised a competitive tariff, and that is what they are making. Verily a new day has dawned, the day when the lawmakers are taking the whole people into their confidence, instead of a few special interests, as pointed out by Mr. Wilson in his speech of acceptance. Naturally no special interest can understand this, and naturally no man who thinks the whole country ought to be taxed to support his business, can be pleased. The following quotations are from Mr. Wilson's speeches—after his nomination and all of which were quoted in the Democratic campaign book :

There has been no more demoralizing influence in our politics in our time than the influence of tariff legislation, the influence of the idea that the government was the grand dispenser of favors the maker and unmaker of fortunes, and of opportunities such as certain men have sought in order to control the movement of trade and industry throughout the continent. It has made the government a prize to be captured and parties the means of effecting the capture. It has made the business men of one of the most virile and enterprising nations in the world timid, fretful, full of alarms; has robbed them of self-confidence and manly force, until they have cried out that they could do nothing without the assistance of the government at Washington. It has made them feel that their lives depended upon the Ways and Means Committee of the House and the Finance Committee of the Senate (in these later years particularly the Finance Committee of the Senate.) They have insisted very anxiously that these committees should be made up only of their "friends"; until the country in its turn grew suspicious and wondered how those committees were being guided and controlled, by what influences and plans of personal advantage.

It (revision) should begin with the schedules which have been most obviously used to kill competition and to raise prices in the United States, arbitrarily and without regard to the prices pertaining elsewhere in the markets of the world; and it should, before it is finished or intermitted, be extended to every item in every schedule which affords any opportunity for monopoly, for special advantage to limited groups of beneficiaries, or for subsidized control of any kind in the markets or the enterprises of the country; until special favors of every sort shall have been absolutely withdrawn and every part of our laws of taxation shall have been transformed from a system of

governmental patronage into a system of just and reasonable charges which shall fall where they will create the least burden. When we shall have done that, we can fix questions of revenue and of business adjustment in a new spirit and with clear minds. We shall then be partners with all the business men of the country, and a day of freer, more stable prosperity shall have dawned.

The economic freedom of our people, our prosperity in trade, our untrammelled energy in manufacture depend upon their reconsideration from top to bottom in an entirely different spirit. . . . It is obvious that the changes we make should be made only at such a rate and in such a way as will least interfere with the normal and healthful course of commerce and manufacture. But we shall not on that account act with timidity, as if we did not know our own minds, for we are certain of our ground and of our object. There should be an immediate revision, and it should be downward, unhesitatingly and steadily downward.

"The trouble with the business of the United States under the tariff is that men think they can't make money without the assistance of the government. And as long as you allow them to think that, every mother's son of us is tied to the apron strings of the old grandmother sitting in the Capitol at Washington. Now, for my part, I am free and 21, and I don't want any assistance of the Government to enable me to make a living.

"But I want at every turn of every argument that I make of this nature to say that the legitimate business enterprises of this country have absolutely nothing to fear provided they will stand on their own bottoms; but that they have everything to fear if all they have under them is the prop of a tax which everybody is obliged to pay in order that they may be able to conduct their business—and I believe that that is the just principle of Government."