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THE JOURNAL.

W. H. HARRIS, Editor. H. HARPER, Business Manager.

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THE INTERNAL REVENUE.

Extract From a Speech Delivered by Hon. F. M. Simmons Before the House of Representatives on Tariff Reform.

MR. CHAIRMAN—After careful consideration and much earnest study from a position of great hostility to the bill now under consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it does not all, nearly all, that can for the present be done in the way of tariff revision and with slight amendments should pass.

It is well understood that the people of North Carolina, who I have the honor in part to represent on this floor, are intensely opposed to the present internal revenue system, and that their plan of revenue reduction is to begin with the repeal of that system.

Time and again the Legislature of that State has passed resolutions denouncing this system and instructing the members of Congress from that State to advocate its repeal.

Similar resolutions have been passed by at least two Democratic State conventions. There is no doubt that the Democratic part of the people of that State are heartily tired of this system, and anxious to be rid of it. With this feeling I confess myself to be in entire and cordial sympathy. I do not, however, think this opposition arises out of any very decided objections to taxing whiskey and tobacco, per se; on the contrary, I am convinced that their chief objection and grievance against this method of taxation comes almost exclusively from the harshness of the machinery provided for the collection of these taxes, and the enforcement of the vexatious provisions of these laws.

This machinery is exceedingly harsh. Those who are not acquainted with the petty annoyances and frivolous prosecutions to which the manufacturers and producers of tobacco and the distillers of whiskey are subjected cannot understand the many bitter things which they have to endure at the hands of revenue officers and Federal courts.

A system which arraigns a man for trial without the intervention of a grand jury, upon the mere information of a district attorney, and which practically denies him the right of appeal; which seizes his property without process of law and destroys it or confiscates and sells it without trial or judicial decree; which places the keys of his registered warehouse in the hands of a United States gauger and sets him a guard over his integrity; which encourages by every inducement of interest, frivolous prosecutions and false witnesses, and which places a premium upon espionage and treachery, cannot be popular or acceptable to a people who have been accustomed to the privileges of freemen.

But, Mr. Chairman, after a close examination into the source of these just complaints against the internal revenue system, I am satisfied that by far the larger part of the wrongs which it inflicts upon the producers and dealers in tobacco and whiskey spring out of these provisions and regulations of the present law which this bill either modifies or repeals right out.

I would, however, be lacking in frankness if I should say or pretend that this bill in its present shape is wholly acceptable to me, or, in my opinion, to the people of North Carolina.

The Democratic part of the Ways and Means Committee, who have framed and reported this bill, in placing the knife of reform so deeply into the vitals of this monster of wrong and oppression, have no doubt won the gratitude of those

interested in the production of tobacco and whiskey; but, Mr. Chairman, there is to my mind no good and sufficient reason why the tax upon cigars, cigarettes, and the roots should not be removed along with that upon manufactured tobacco.

If the tax upon plug tobaccos, cigars, and cigarettes, is retained, the effect will be to establish a discrimination in favor of the producer of the tobacco from which the plug is made and against the producer of the tobacco from which the cigarettes, cigars and cheroots are made. Of course there is no discrimination between the producers of these two grades of tobacco in the sense that they compete with each other, for they do not compete.

But if this tax is retained there will be a discrimination in the sense that the producer of one grade of tobacco will be given by law an advantage over the producer of another grade.

I know of no other tax which would be so disadvantageous to the manufacturer and the consumer, and I know of no other tax which would be so disadvantageous to the manufacturer and the consumer, and I know of no other tax which would be so disadvantageous to the manufacturer and the consumer.

When we consider the other features of this bill, I feel particularly to its increase tax features. There is no sufficient force in the sentimental arguments made in the interest of the boys to support this discrimination.

The tax on the sugar and molasses is also a very objectionable feature. It is a tax on the manufacturer and the consumer, and it is a tax on the manufacturer and the consumer.

I feel particularly to its increase tax features. There is no sufficient force in the sentimental arguments made in the interest of the boys to support this discrimination.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the friends of this kind are committed to the tax by the brand, and the inducement to brand against legitimate whiskey by illegal distillations is a great evil, greater, than by falsely substituting whiskey for brandy, and the detection of the brand is easier in the latter than in the former case. It may not be easy for a revenue officer to tell whether a barrel labeled whiskey contains the product of a registered or unregistered still, but it will be easy, or at least it ought to be, for such officer to say whether such barrel in fact contained whiskey or brandy, or a mixture of the two. The revenue realized by the government from fruit brandy during the last fiscal year amounted to only about \$1,000,000, and can be dispensed with without any embarrassment to the fiscal policy advocated by the Democratic party and sought to be accomplished through the instrumentality of this bill. To this extent the bill in its present shape is not satisfactory, and while I shall vote for its consideration with the greatest pleasure, I shall do so with the understanding that when it is considered in detail I shall offer or support amendments covering the general scope of these objections.

I believe I am safe in asserting that the history of the Democratic party is one of opposition to internal revenue taxes and that its continuance in power means the ultimate overthrow of that system. I believe I am also authorized to say that the Democratic party will not delay the repeal of this system one day or one hour beyond the time demanded by fiscal conditions.

At the beginning of this Congress it was my purpose to advocate the present repeal of the tax upon whiskey as well as upon tobacco and fruit brandy to the end that this whole system might once for all be done with and the people emancipated from its burdens; but a better understanding of the situation causes me to fear that the tax upon whiskey cannot at this time be repealed without denying to the farmers, mechanics, and laborers of this country relief from the unjust and burdensome taxes now imposed upon the food they eat, the clothes they wear, and the tools with which they toil and earn their bread.

Humanity as well as patriotism requires that the necessities of life should be made cheaper, and I believe that the people of North Carolina and all similarly interested will gladly consent to hold their convictions upon the subject of the repeal of the whiskey tax in abeyance until this great and paramount object can be accomplished.

Mr. McMillin. Without wishing to interrupt the gentleman from North Carolina, will he permit me right there to state, in addition to

what he said on the subject of the necessity of reducing taxation on the necessities of life, that a total repeal of the internal revenue system will leave a deficiency of about \$60,000,000!

Mr. Simmons. I will refer to that by and by.

I am familiar with the argument, so earnestly insisted upon by some, that the reduction of duties contemplated by this bill will increase rather than lessen the revenues of the Government by increasing dutiable importations, and that the tax on whiskey may be abolished with out interfering with reductions upon necessities. If the argument were sound it would furnish some solution of the difficulties presented by the situation, but the argument is not sound. Our experience in lowering and elevating duties shows the contrary to be true.

Contradictory as it may seem, statistics clearly prove that low duties increase exports, while high duties increase imports.

These facts are exemplified by cotton and wool and manufactured cotton trade. Those are our largest manufacturing industries, and also the best protected so far as a high tariff schedule can protect them. Iron and steel and machinery cotton, are protected by an ad valorem duty of 40 per cent, and wool by an ad valorem duty of 60 per cent. Yet during the last fiscal year there was imported into this country \$40,000,000 worth of iron and steel against 41,000,000 worth sent out, during the same period we bought from foreign countries \$7,000,000 worth of wool, and exported \$1,000,000 worth of wool. Cotton goods and only \$1,000,000 worth of cotton goods and only \$1,000,000 worth of cotton goods and only \$1,000,000 worth of cotton goods.

The arguments of the tariff reformers are not sound, and I would refer to the repeal of the whiskey tax and to the repeal of the tax on necessities to be open.

The truth, Mr. Chairman, there is no other way to free ourselves of this tax on whiskey and the other taxes which it makes necessary. At the same time get rid of the other and more important taxes upon the bread and meat and clothes of our laboring masses. That way is to substitute economy for taxation. If the people should wisely confine the Democratic party in power, and if that party should continue honestly and faithfully to keep and perform its pledges of retrenchment, the time is not distant when the expenses of the government will have dwindled to that point where the sixty odd millions of dollars represented by the whiskey tax may be remitted to the people and the galling yoke of the internal revenue system taken from their neck without adding to the cost of the poor man's food or blankets, without increasing the hours of his toil or the sweat of his brow, and without stinting his meager comforts.

For these reasons, Mr. Chairman, earnestly as I have in the past advocated the repeal of this tax, and as anxiously as I now look for that consummation, I shall hold both my views and wishes upon this subject in suspense for the present, relying upon the intelligence of my constituents to understand the true status of the situation, and assuring them that in season their grievances will find fitting remedy at the hands of the Democratic party.

There is no man in North Carolina or elsewhere who is more sincerely and honestly in favor of the whiskey tax than I am, and I see an opportunity during this Congress to accomplish this object without defeating all reductions upon the necessities of life, I shall gladly avail myself of such an opportunity.

But I do not believe I am called upon or that my constituents desire me to do a vain and foolish thing. I distrust the motives of certain gentlemen on the other side of this floor who profess to be in favor of the repeal of this tax, and I want to say that I will not join them, or any one else, in a movement which has for its object the obstruction of the beneficent legislation proposed by this bill, and which gives no reasonable promise of fruition in any other direction. As we can not give to the people now the full measure of the relief which they demand, and to which they are entitled, I would give to those oppressed by internal revenue laws all that the situation will permit, and I would likewise give to those laboring under the burdens of excessive tariff taxation upon the necessities of life all that the situation will allow; but it would be unjust to give to either of these classes all that they want and to which they are entitled if by so doing we shall have to deny to the other class all and every part of what they demand and are entitled to. Divide, says the proverb, is fair play.

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