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Locofoco — SPEECH

Part 16th

MR. STEENROD, OF VIRGINIA,

OF

ON
THE TARIFF.

*Read
MAY 1844*

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 27, 1844.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The government requires the aid of legislation to restore it to its republican character and destination. The expenditures of government still remain unreduced; and all the profligacy of which the people have so long complained, as yet is unarrested; and to swell the complaints of the past, the treasury is not only drained to emptiness, but to an unexampled indebtedness for a period of years. Though a stupendous system of taxation has been fixed on the people, still the revenues of the government are inadequate to meet its expenditure, and it is driven to the extremity of resorting to loans and credit to meet its appropriations.

But this is not all. Unwise legislation has not only reached every department of the government, but all the pursuits of business, capital, and labor. If we examine the returns from the custom-houses, we see the imports are greatly diminished; by a table furnished in Mr. Wright's speech, the comparison between imports of certain articles of the single year of 1843, and those of the year 1842, are shown:

The imports of wool for 1843, were less than for 1842, by	- 23 per cent.
The imports of woollens	- 56 "
" cottons	- 53 "
" silks	- 61 "
" iron rolled	- 66 "
" " not rolled	- 58 "
" " pigs	- 78 "
" leather and manufactures of	- 65 "
" glass	- 72 "
" hemp, cordage, and duck	- 2 "
" cotton bagging	- 66 "
" sugar and sirup	- 48 "
" paper	- 10 "

This discloses the fact that, though our population and production have greatly augmented, our commerce is declining, if not languishing. It is true the dividends of the manufacturers have swollen to an enormous amount, and this may indicate that they are flourishing; but the wages of the operative and laborer are reduced. And it is true that the crops of the farmer are extraordinary; still they must rot in their granaries, or be sold at prices greatly reduced, while all that he consumes is greatly appreciated in price.

The tax payer and citizen will compare this con-

dition of the country with that of the days of the Jackson democracy, with feelings of unmingled regret, if not of unmeasured condemnation. Then the treasury was full to overflowing; the taxation of the people annually reduced; the old federal debt extinguished; one entire half of our commerce free; the pursuits of labor rendered freer; the farmer and tradesman reaping the full fruits of their toil to a great extent, unharmed and unembarrassed by federal legislation. In connexion with this, allow me to state a fact, which, I believe, is not generally known to the people—that if the tariff had not been adjusted by the compromise act, and thus given assurance to the country of a settled policy on this vexed question, General Jackson would, at that session of Congress, in a special, or in his next annual message, have recommended the reduction of the tariff to an exclusive revenue duty.

This was not only the policy of the administration of General Jackson, but of Mr. Van Buren—to reduce the tariff to the revenue point, and to bring the expenditures of the government within its income; and I aver, from the documents before me, had it pleased the country to have continued that administration in power, with the then declining revenue, soon to be reduced to 20 per cent. on imports, all the then existing liabilities of the government would have been discharged, the government now free from debt, and an ample revenue sufficient to meet all its expenditures. It is true the reduction of the revenue in June and July of five millions of dollars, left a deficiency to this amount; but to supply it, it was recommended by Mr. Woodbury, the then Secretary of the Treasury, to impose a duty on luxuries, within the terms of the compromise act, which would have been amply sufficient to supply it. The omission of this necessary modification of the then existing tariff law, to supply the deficiency occasioned by this reduction, created the debt of five millions of dollars, which the whigs attributed to the extravagance of Mr. Van Buren's administration. Calumniated and reviled as has been this pure and excellent statesman, these facts ought to go far to con-

vince the country of the great injustice done to him by this imputation. A man, sir, that

"Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead, like angels, trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking off."

I say this much in reply to the historical sketch which the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. KENNEDY] favored us.

This policy of the administration of General Jackson and Mr. Van Buren, under which the country prospered, and which the people so long and so often approved, has been reversed—reversed at the late extra session of the whig Congress. The hundred days' session—that, while the farmer was planting and maturing his crop of corn, expended five millions and a half of dollars, gave to the States the only permanent revenue of the government, and then increased the taxes on the people, in the form of a tariff, to meet the deficiency; passed a loan bill to borrow twelve millions of dollars—without creating a fund to pay either principal or interest; then huckstered the bonds of the government from banker to banker, with a credit so reduced that even the Wall-street stockjobbers could not venture to speculate in them. This is the policy, the great state quackery that has had the chief agency in bringing the government to its present unenviable condition; legislating the government out of its accustomed revenues, and then resorting to loans and credit to meet its expenditures.

It has been the usage of this government to receive a great portion of its revenues by duties on imports; but this taxing power of the government, by whig legislation, has been converted to another purpose than revenue to support the government—a distinct and opposite end, to promote home manufactures.

At the extra session, they passed a law which was called *the little tariff*; at the long session the existing law was enacted, which they called *the big tariff*—thus imposing such high duties as precluded the government from receiving its accustomed duties from imports. Afraid to resort to direct taxation to sustain this system, they have been compelled to resort to loans and credit until they have run the government in debt to the amount of twenty-one millions of dollars in a little more than two years.

Now, the country has suffered enough by this partial and favorite system of legislation. It appears to me but yesterday when I saw an association of capitalists conspiring against the government, and rallying under the money feature of the constitution, seeking to become allied with it, to enforce it to receive the paper of the bankers as constitutional money, to give the revenues of the government—the taxes paid by the people for the support of the government—to the banks to bank on, to increase the dividends of the stockholders, and to furnish accommodation to their customers.

These arrogant demands were pressed with all the appliances that ingenuity could devise, or recklessness dare to execute. The trade and commerce of the country were stricken down; their dependants, with their fortunes, credit, and reputation, were all put to the rack; and even the government threatened with being brought to a dead pause, if their arrogant demands were not submitted to. Then, this was the great panacea—the cure-all for the people and country. And now, ere the country, by the force of its great resources and recuperative energy, has re-

covered from this ruinous and disastrous controversy—"ere the shoes were old, with which" they followed this humbug and imposition to the grave,—we witness these same capitalists, under the mantle of manufactures, rallying, with a reanimated spirit of rapine, under the taxing power of the constitution, demanding that taxes might be imposed upon the people, not to support the government, but to protect home manufactures. Yes; though the national treasury should remain empty, the nation in debt, the revenue inadequate to meet its expenditure, and compelled to resort to loans and credit, all this must be endured to protect the manufacturers.

I am one of those that believe that it is our duty to arrest this growing system; to restore to the government its accustomed revenues; to free the taxing power, from its present incumbrance, its impotence to replenish the treasury. No longer allow this power intended to provide for the common defence and general welfare, to be prostituted by administering to the importunities of capitalists and manufacturers.

I agree with the gentleman from New York, [Mr. SEYMOUR,] who has made a minority report on this subject from the Committee of Ways and Means, that of all the modes prescribed in the constitution to levy taxes by the federal government, duties on imports has long been the preferred system of taxation by a large majority of the people. And while they stand ready to sustain this as a preferred mode of taxation to furnish a large portion of the revenues to the government, still, if these duties are to be imposed for other purposes than revenue for the government, to take money from the pocket of one man to put it into others, I warn gentlemen it must bring this entire mode of taxation under the condemnation of the people. Taxation for government purposes is deemed by the citizen a necessary burden. But taxation for other purposes than this, is rather a system to test the patience of the citizen than his loyalty to the government. No man can longer be deceived on this subject. A tariff is but a tax bill to levy and collect duties on imports, to furnish a revenue for the government, paid by the importer at the custom-house; which tax becomes a part of the price of the articles, is paid by the retail merchant, and then repaid by the consumers. Though it is not paid to the marshal or the sheriff as an internal tax, levied on the head or the property of the citizen, still it is not less a tax, though it is more subtle and less obnoxious in form. It is, to some extent, a voluntary tax, paid by the citizen in the form of price on all that he buys that is dutiable. The iron, cottons, woollens, the salt, molasses, sugar, leather, all come to him at an increased price by the duty imposed on the article in the form of a tariff; and as the duty on the article is high or low, to a great extent makes them cheap or dear to the consumer. When a man says he wishes a revenue tariff, we understand he wishes such a tax on imports as will furnish the government with revenue duties from this source. When a man says he wishes a protective tariff, we understand he means duties on imports, not for revenue for the government, but to protect the home manufactures in high prices against the cheap prices from abroad. Now, sir, I hold it as a maxim, that every disinterested citizen ought to be the advocate of low taxes—first, to secure an economical administration of the government; next, to give to each citizen the control and management of his own earnings and estate. Then concede that the limited power to im-

pose duties on imports, to furnish revenue for the support of government, gives also the power and discretion to employ it to protect any one great interest in the country, and I fear it would be a dangerous power. The same power would allow Congress, in its discretion, to impose all the burdens of government on one great interest, and to exempt another; and thus perhaps enrich one by impoverishing another. When we acknowledge this protective power to exist, as it is called by its friends, there is no safe restraint against its abuse.

The tax payer and property holder have no security but the unlimited discretion of the representative—a frail texture to shield the laboring masses in the great contest that capitalists so often wage against them. But concede that this power exists in the constitution: is it expedient to exercise such a power in a free government?—a government resting on the will of the people; a government which is administered upon their sentiments. In the contest for political power, the manufacturer may succeed today in getting the control of the government; he then

“Thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening.”

With the power to secure a system of privileges and bounties, he invests his capital, extends his credit, to gather a fortune in a season. But the system can only be sustained for a short period; the great masses become impatient and restless under their unequal burdens; and, sustained by an enlightened appeal to an honest public opinion, soon another revolution is effected. A popular declaration goes out through the ballot-box against this system, and down comes the lumbering policy, with all its disastrous reverses, alike to its upholders and the country.

This fluctuation begets a gambling speculation, by which capital often profits; but it is at the expense of the wages of labor. “Under our free institutions, if any particular pursuit afford large profits to labor, others will rush in and participate in them, and reduce them below the average rate;” and this results in great gain to the capitalists; but prostrates labor, and reduces it often to indigence and want.

The framers of the constitution provided for this alternate mode of taxation on imports; not that it was the cheaper or the most uniform and equal, but that, by the acquiescence of the people, the government might thus be supplied with revenue; and, perhaps, to the extent of the revenue duty, to give the home manufactures the incidental protection that would give them greatly the advantage in the home market. To this power, and its legitimate exercise, the people would cheerfully acquiesce. This, at all times, would give the home manufacturers an advantage over all foreign competition in the home market from twenty to thirty-five per cent.: with this they ought to be content. I, sir, am no enemy to manufactures; but one who is solicitous that they should be permanent and prosperous. I would not, then, trust their safety to the uncertainty of legislation.

I desire to secure to them all the advantages which a revenue system affords—its profits, permanency, and repose; and to shield them from the ruin and hostility which favorite legislation must inevitably entail on them.

Then, I imagine the first duty of the friends of this mode of taxation is, to ascertain the extent to which it should be carried, to furnish the government with revenue, and stand commended to the cheerful support of the citizen. On this subject, I

happy to believe there is no room to speculate. All political economists, from Smith down to McCulloch, all enlightened statesmen acknowledge there is a revenue standard in every country, a point in this system of taxation where the greatest amount of revenue can be furnished; go beyond that, and the duties imposed become prohibitory, and, to that extent, preclude revenue to the government. It must be conceded, then, that the revenue standard, as a mode of taxation, is the point at which this system should stop. With the experience of upwards of half a century upon the subject by this government—the flood of light poured out on it by a long protracted and enlightend discussion—I care not whether you take the two great periods of revenue and protective duties, or the single period from the commencement to the close of the compromise, there is abundant proof to be found to sustain the position that, as a fiscal problem, it is solved that the revenue standard in this country is an average duty of 20 per cent. [Here some member asked. Do you say an average duty? and how high would you range?] Yes, sir, I say an average duty, and range to 33, or perhaps 35 per cent. Discrimination, I concede, discrimination between luxuries and necessaries, a discrimination necessary to secure a uniform revenue from customs, and to enable the tax-payer to be able and willing, at all times, to pay his portion of the revenue. This, then, is the revenue standard in this country—a standard that will furnish the country with the most uniform duties: a safe revenue, without affording a premium to smuggling, or crippling the commerce of the country, or interfering with the pursuits of labor and capitals, and confusing and distracting the business of the country.

Here is presented the great objection to the present stupendous tariff law, and the necessity of its modification. This law imposes an average duty of thirty-seven per cent. on the dutiable imports—near twice the amount acknowledged as the revenue standard—duties that, to a great extent, are prohibitory, and lessen the income from the customs, and yet imposes a heavy system of taxation on the people. This law imposes on the following seventeen articles a duty from forty-five to two hundred and thirty-five per cent:

Articles.	Ad valorem rate of such duty.
Anvils, Wilkinson's warranted	70 per cent.
Brass battery or hammered kettles	50 do
But hinges, cast iron	73½ do
Hammers, blacksmiths'	67 do
Iron, in bars	112½ do
“ “ under 5-8 inch square	240 do
Irons, sad or smoothing, tailors' and hatters'	140 do
Iron wire, No. 0 to 6	235 do
“ “ No. 14	230 do
Iron wrought nails, rose-head, a bag of 100lbs., 8d.	103 do
Pins, mixed	75 do
Saws, cross-cut and pit	75 do
Screws, iron, called wood screws	87 do
Bright trace-chains, 6½ feet, No. 3, iron	144 do
Kitchen furniture, such as saucepans, kettles, &c, tinned	45 do
Bright ox and log chains	160 do
Jack chain	96 do

A law that imposes these high duties on articles that enter so generally into the use of the tradesman and others, and then leaves a long list of thirty-odd free articles connected with manufactures for their cheap use and exclusive profit, cannot stand vindicated as a revenue law. As such, it is inoperative and unjust, opposed to every principle of taxation prescribed to us by the constitution. It was the de-

sign of the founders of the government to limit the taxing power by all the restrictions that could check its abuse. The amount of taxes to be imposed on the people was limited by the enumeration of the purposes for which they should be appropriated; and to prevent unequal legislation, it was provided that taxes should be uniform; but these constitutional injunctions are totally disregarded in this law. The exporting States have not only to pay an undue portion of the revenue, but it goes further, and makes the most odious of all discriminations. It discriminates for the wealthy, and against the poor, by imposing light taxes on one, and high on the other. All that enters into the daily use of the man of fortune is taxed comparatively light, while all that is consumed by the poor is taxed to an exorbitant amount. The poor, with no estate, dependent alone on their labor, receive but little from government. It is the rich that require by government to be secured in their possessions, and protected in their estates; and the policy of our institutions is to impose on those who require the expenditures of government to be augmented, to bear their proportionate charge. But the policy may be broader, and may be extended beyond this. This is a "government of the people by the people." It can only stand commended to their confidence and affections by administering it in the economy which will confer the greatest benefits on the greatest number. The rich are always the few in every age and country; the great masses are the laboring millions; and to administer the government on the policy that lays at the foundation of our institutions—confer the greatest good on the greatest number—its burden should rest lightly on the masses, and rather aim to better their condition, than depress them. But this law imposes the heaviest burdens on the masses, and makes the laboring man a mere machine, to work out his existence for the classes that are to be favored and instituted by government. But even this law does not disclose all the enormity designed by its advocates, "cheated of feature," "deformed," "unfinished," "scarce half made up," and that "so lamely and unfashionably," that even its friends design it shall be amended, to complete the purposes intended. When the bill that is now the law, was reported from the committee to the House, at the last Congress, it contained a provision to tax all unenumerated articles twenty per cent., and this imposed a duty of twenty per cent. on tea and coffee. It is true, that this provision was stricken out in Committee of the Whole, and this amendment sustained in the House; but it was reinstated in the Senate, and the House afterwards concurred in it; and the bill afterwards passed both Houses of Congress. This bill was vetoed by the President. The bill was again introduced into the House, and the provision to tax tea and coffee, and another equally important part, were stricken out of it; it then again passed, and became a law. The Secretary of the Treasury, in his annual report to Congress at the commencement of the present session, recommends that this law should remain undisturbed; and to furnish the government with the revenue necessary to meet its expenditures, to press this system of taxation still further, and to impose from three to five millions of dollars of taxation on the people. And impose it on what? On the diamonds, jewelry, and luxuries of the rich, that "fare sumptuously every day," and might be able to endure it? No, sir; no! But on the prime necessities of life, on tea and coffee, which are the chief susten-

ance and great beverage of our people. A tax that requires the poor man who has no resources but in his sinews and labor, to pay as much for the support of government, as the man with his great patrimony and immense possessions. I would as soon think of taxing air, light, water, or any of the elements of life, as these prime necessities of our people. I would rather this day see the government impose a poll tax on the head of its citizens, and thus openly avow the principle of taxing the rich and the poor alike, as to see this unequal system thus disguised. This, then, I say, is a part of this policy; it has been sustained in this House and the Senate by the friends of this law; and it has been recommended as an ulterior resort. As an auxiliary to sustain this law, the minority report of the Committee of Ways and Means, and the distinguished gentleman near me [Mr. INGERSOLL] require the imposition of this tax on tea and coffee, rather than allow this law to be altered or modified; and the reason of my remarks upon this subject is to show to the people of the country that this duty is to be a necessary part of this law.

Sir, when it occurs to me what portion of this system of taxation is to be borne by my poor constituents, what it will cost them, whose brawny arms have to stand exposed alike to the heats of summer and blasts of winter, to earn a bare subsistence, and when I think how much of the earnings of this people the government is to exact, I am bold to warn you that the day of your trial is at hand; and though this class of our people is now weak, the day is not distant when they may be as terrible to you "as an army with banners."

This is not the policy of our institutions, nor the policy of the country, though it may be the policy of Great Britain, one of the oldest kingdoms of Europe, a small island in the bosom of the ocean, with a dense population, but 1-88 acre to the inhabitant, and two hundred and thirty-two people to the square mile, with no field opened there for labor but to crowd the people into the workshops and manufactories. But it must be known this is not the condition of our country. If this country possesses any one advantage above all others, it is that it is a land for the poor and destitute, and the inviting field it opens to labor. It is here, if unembarrassed by unwise legislation, man can find an unbounded field to pitch his enterprise, and direct his industry. It is an agricultural country, where every man, by industry and economy, can soon command a home and farm, by which he can put himself and his family on the highway to ease and independence, if not to affluence. A country with a boundless, varied, and fertile territory, unrivalled by any other on the face of the globe, from the "Orient to the drooping west," embracing the beautiful savannahs of the South; the extended prairies of the West; the rolling uplands of the middle States; abounding with a soil and climate adapted to the cultivation of almost every vegetable production; a long line of lakes extending nearly across the entire country, and the mighty waters of the St. Lawrence and Mississippi, not only watering a continent, but affording highways for the farmer's products to our ports, alike on the Atlantic and Pacific, from whence they may be shipped to the markets of the world. These great elements to constitute an agricultural country, it might be supposed, the government would cherish, and foster this as the great interest of the country.

But the government has a deeper stake than even

this in the agricultural prosperity of the country. It has a patrimony in the public domain that surpasses the estate of any other nation; and it might be supposed, in the present embarrassed condition of its finances, that it had a great interest in selling these public lands, if not certainly a great interest in peopling them, converting them into farms, to increase its productive industry, to furnish tax-paying citizens in the time of peace, and soldiers in war.

Then, sir, what effect has this law on this great farming interest of the country; on the employment of the largest number of its citizens; on the labor which furnishes a greater portion of its exports; on the farmer, who was the first to make his way into the mighty forests of the New World, and was the pioneer of all the civilization and improvement which followed in his train?

Now, the first feature that is presented to my consideration in the examination of this question, is, the duties on beef, pork, wheat, flour, and other agricultural productions, which have been held up so exultingly on the other side of the House, to delude the farmers.

Why, sir, are these duties imposed? Does not every man here know, that the duties arising out of the importations of these articles would not pay the expense of levying and collecting them? There is but little of these articles imported, except in a season of redundant paper currency, or at a time of great scarcity—a failure of crops, when, certainly, it is the policy of none than importation should be retarded, or the price increased by duties. But if these duties are imposed to protect the farmer, it is needless. These are the great exports of the country, and with them our farmers are underselling and competing for the markets of the world. I am then reluctantly compelled to believe, this is but to disguise this unjust policy, and thus to commend it to the support of the agriculturist. By the operation of this law, the government is conferring a bounty on the manufacturers, levied and exacted, to a great extent, from the farmers and planters. The articles which pay three fourths of the duties at the customhouse, are principally consumed by the farmers and planters; and an exorbitant duty imposed on every article which enters largely into their use and consumption; and thus greatly lessens the profits of their industry, by increasing the cost of their production.

Iron, that is so much required in the cultivation of the farm and the household, in sending the farmer's produce to market; by the operation of this law, he is required to pay, on every dollar of iron he buys, \$1 12½; on salt, (that is as necessary as grass and provender for his stock,) he pays a tax of 80 per cent.; on leather 53 per cent.; on cottons 100 per cent.; woollens as high as 67 per cent.; all of which are necessary for his daily raiment. The farmer who is required to pay these high duties to sustain the manufactures, it might be supposed, would be protected by like high duties on the raw material produced by the farmer, and worked up by the manufacturer; that so far, at least, the duties would be reciprocal: but not so. On all raw material coming in competition with the farmer, and to be worked up by the manufacturer, the farmer receives none of the favors of protection, but maintains this law for the exclusive benefit of the manufacturer. On such articles, there is imposed not even a revenue duty; on hides, so extensively imported from Brazil, which come in competition with our western graziers for the home market, there is

only a duty of 5 per cent.; on coarse wool, which is produced more or less by every farmer in the country, and which has to encounter the competition of the coarser wool from Spain, and which is sold cheaper in our market than the American growth, there is imposed the light duty of 5 per cent.; but when these articles are worked up to protect the manufacturer, the duty is raised from 35 to 60 per cent. I might pause here, and ask why this discrimination—this partial legislation? If the manufacturer receives the protection of 35 per cent. on hides when worked into leather, and from 28 to 60 per cent. on woollens, why not allow the farmer a like protection on hides and wool? If it is to protect the home against foreign laborers, ought not this bill to extend the same protection to the laborer in the fields as in the manufactory? No, this was not the design of the law; it was to give a hasty and a hot-bed existence to the manufacturers, to enure alone to their profit by discriminating against all the other great interests of the country. I would be glad, Mr. Chairman, (if that minute hand did not warn me to forbear,) that my time would allow me to show the effect of this system on the division of labor, and to demonstrate to this House that it is not only inducing capital and labor from the cultivation of the fields—the healthy, independent occupation of the farmer—but is discrediting this reputable pursuit, and giving a fallacious importance to the manufacturer, to the great injury of the farmer. But the crowning objection to this system has yet to be examined. Three-fourths of the exports of this country are from the fields, the forests, and the fisheries. The Old World is their best market; there they sell highest and buy cheapest. The exporter buys these products of the country, and sells or exchanges them in foreign markets for fabrics and other articles for his return cargo, to supply the home market. This tariff law now interposes, and arrests this natural trade and exchange of surplus products of this and other countries. Though the farmer can sell, by means of the exporter, his products higher in the markets of the Old World than at home, and can buy cheaper, this law is to interfere with this, and to protect the home manufacture against the low prices at which the farmer could procure his supplies, and levies duties on these articles; which duties become a part of the price that the farmer has to pay, which makes the articles as dear to him as the high prices charged by the home manufacturer. This, he is told, is necessary to sustain the home manufacturer against the free competition, the cheap labor, low interest, and low prices of the foreign manufacturer. But this does not complete the picture. Does the law confer equivalent favors on the farmer? Do the manufacturers take the products of the farmer's labor at like high prices? No, they do not buy one-sixteenth of the farmer's surplus produce; and what they do buy they fix their own arbitrary prices, as the competition of other markets are, to a great extent, closed on them. The exporter will not buy their surplus produce, because this law, with its high duties, precludes him from selling in the market where he only can buy. Where, then, is to be found the market for the farmer's surplus produce? This law closes up his foreign market, and puts him at the mercy of the home consumers; and it is fallacious to suppose this surplus produce can find consumers and demand at home. In an interesting and elaborate memorial of Joshua Leavitt, printed by the Senate the 2d session of the 26th Congress, "praying the adoption of measures to secure an equitable

and adequate market for American wheat," he states, after thorough examination of the subject, that the four northwestern States and two Territories, "at the same rate of productiveness with the cultivated land in the United Kingdom of Great Britain, the land already sold by the government should produce subsistence for near 30,000,000 of people, while the vast quantity still unsold admits of a nearly proportionate increase." The occasion will not permit me to adduce the statistics by which he demonstrates conclusively the truth of this proposition. Where, then, I ask, are the residue of the planters and farmers of this great country to find a market for their surplus produce? Upwards of half a century has a great political school in this country been industriously inculcating the policy of making a home market for the surplus produce of the farmer, by the government directing the industry and controlling the investment of capital, by inducing the people to bear the burdens and privations imposed by legislation to rear up and protect domestic manufactures, under the delusive persuasion that the golden season would soon come when they could compete with the foreign manufacturers, sell cheaper, buy dearer, and multiply the population so as to furnish a home market for the surplus produce of the farmer; and this argument, that gave existence to the system that has sustained it for near a half century, is now reinforced to sustain this law, which has justly been styled the black tariff; perhaps from the fact that it embodies more of the principle of protection to manufactures, exclusively, than any ever yet enacted; or perhaps from the fact that, for the first time, it discloses the design of the upholders of this unjust system to render it the settled and permanent policy of the country. We cannot close our eyes on the lessons of experience. The system has not sustained the prophecy of its friends, or fulfilled the purposes for which it was instituted. Human intelligence can no longer be imposed on by its fallacies, and popular expectation can be no longer baffled. Our immense agricultural production must find a market; and to find this, our ports must be unlocked, and the government divorced from this restrictive policy. This will enable our farmers and planters not only to produce much cheaper, by reducing the cost of their consumption, and enable them to undersell other nations in foreign markets, and secure to them a steady market, and increase the profits of their industry. This would give a fresh impulse to our agricultural pursuits, by furnishing a safe market; and our immense uncultivated and unimproved lands would be speedily converted into farms, and be peopled by a hardy and industrious yeomanry that could supply the markets of the world. And then their produce would be found to float on every sea, and crowd almost every port. Then villages, towns, and cities, would start up in every section of our wide and extended empire, as places of trade and commerce; and manufactures would then grow up, not by the artificial aid of legislation, but upon a solid and permanent basis, as required by the interests of the country, and as warranted by the profits that would reward their industry and capital. And the country would then exhibit its munificent resources, and the magnificent results of labor and capital left free in their competition in the field of their respective enterprises, unshackled by partial legislation.

If political economy has settled any one principle

of trade as incontrovertible, it is, that the best market for the farmer is where he can sell highest and buy cheapest. No one can then doubt but the American farmer is more interested in having the markets of the world for his produce than any one, though that should be the home market. Under revenue duties, the farmers of this country have all the convenience of the home, and, to a great extent, the profit of the foreign market. His stock and surplus produce he either sells to his merchant, or to the speculator or exporter, who ships to the foreign markets, and is regulated by the prices they pay, to some extent, by these, rather than the home market; and no farmer need here, to dispose of his produce at a profitable price, ever hazard the perils of the ocean, or engage in the enterprise of a voyage, to find a market for his surplus produce. The trader, the speculator, and exporter, make this the business of their life.

I cannot, then, concur with the gentlemen on the other side of the House in their estimate of the value of the foreign market for our surplus produce. The dissertations we have had from them on the English market, show that they either totally misapprehend its value, or misrepresent it. England is our best customer, and takes more than one-half of our entire exports. In 1842, she bought upwards of fifty-two millions of our exports; and our trade is swelling to an importance, under auspices that betoken, to a great extent, her dependence on us for her provision trade. Since the application of steam power to vessels, steamers have brought us in such proximity to her markets, that, in seasons of short crops and scarcity there, we can immediately supply all the demands of their market, and at prices greatly reduced by our improved facilities. A barrel of pork or beef can now be sent from Ohio directly to the English market, at the low price of \$1 62. But this is not all. We are enabled to undersell in this market, and have great security in its being a uniform market for our provision trade:

The Liverpool papers inform us that large quantities of American cheese arrived at that port, and been sold at a price far below that which the Cheshire farmers could offer. The tariff has made no change in this article, and the duty remains the same; and the importation shows formidable rivalry which the English farmer has to expect from Brother Jonathan.

Another article (lard) is being imported in considerable quantities, which will seriously affect the price of Irish butter. The poorer classes of consumers find in this an excellent substitute for butter, so that it is likely to displace a large amount of our southern produce, being purchasable for about one-third the price of butter; and though not so wholesome or nutritious, yet the difference of cost will bring it largely into consumption.

In Wilmer and Smith's European Times of January 4, 1844, the latest advices we have had at this time, it is said: "The trade in American provisions, in our report of the 3d of January last, denominated as 'yet a new one,' has, during the year just closed, made rapid strides. Some of the articles must now rank as staples of large and positive consumption, whilst many of the others are daily growing into favor. With our working population in the manufacturing districts well employed, prices generally low, and money easy, a large, steady, and profitable trade, for well selected articles, may be safely anticipated. It being now established that really good and well-put-up beef can be had from America at a lower price than Irish, the prejudice against the articles amongst ship owners is fast giving way; hence there is a regular demand from the trade, and the highest quotations are obtainable for a really fine article. For really well-selected fine cheese there continues a steady demand, and for such full prices are obtained."

And we also learn that the American provision trade is growing into great popularity in the English market.

The London Farmers' Journal says: "We declare, and stake our reputation on the avement, (for we speak from personal experience, obtained in almost every State in the Union,) that finer meat than the American Indian-corn-fed pork cannot be found."

Mr. Du Croz said "the American pork is the best in the world; it is principally fed on maize, and at certain periods of the year nothing can be finer." Again: "Within the last few days, 204 boxes of American cheese have been received in Liverpool. Every year the quality of American cheese improves. Another article which is arriving in very large quantities is American lard, which is coming into us for many purposes for which salt, and even fresh, butter has been employed. Very excellent salted beef has come from the United States in considerable quantities." "Some really fine dry canvassed hams having arrived, sales have been made to a considerable extent. With a moderate supply of a similar quality, these rates may be maintained." "We have lately had a few small parcels of superior hams, (Cincinnati cured,) which have brought 60s. to 63s. per 112 lbs., (duty paid,) or 40s. to 45s. in bond. The quality is much approved, particularly Yeatman's cure. All hams must be in canvass, neatly covered, handsomely marked, and shipped loose." "The opinion we have often expressed, that fine hams would command a high price, has at length been realized. A small lot of 100, from New York, well cured, sewed in canvass, and loose, has found a purchaser at 48s. in bond, or about 62s. 8d. duty paid. Tallow, (United States.) We have pleasure in drawing your attention to this article, inasmuch as we are of opinion that it is likely become an article of considerable importance. A Liverpool paper, speaking of the effect of the new trade on Ireland, says: "The recent large importations of American provisions of good quality into this port, which have been eagerly sought after, has attracted a good deal of attention in Ireland, and the farmers of that country are considerably alarmed lest the Americans should cut them out of the English market."

The British tariff reducing the duties on salt provisions has not yet been in operation one year, and its benefits but partially reached our provision trade, and this is its present prosperous condition. But we hear complaints on the other side of the House of the high duties imposed by the English government on our products. Now the English government impose less duties on our provision trade than our government does on their fabrics, and the balance of trade is greatly in our favor. The gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. Morris] has given us some of the duties imposed by the British government on our produce, and, as if satisfied himself that these duties were moderate, has also given the duty of 1,200 per cent. on tobacco, and then held up his average estimate of these duties as exorbitant. Every person must know that this is but to give an exaggerated character to the duties imposed by the British government on our produce. Tobacco is taxed as a luxury, and designed to impose a prohibitory duty; but on our provision trade and produce there is imposed only a light revenue duty, and that, while we export less than four millions of dollars of tobacco to the English market on which this high duty is imposed, we export upwards of thirty millions of cotton to the same markets, on which is imposed a light duty, less than 8 per cent.; and upwards of six millions of breadstuffs to the same markets, near six hundred thousand of beef and cattle, upwards of two hundred and forty-five thousand of butter and cheese, and one million and near two hundred and twenty thousand of pork and lard, on which the duty imposed will not much exceed 20 per cent. I mention these facts to show that we cannot arrive at any well-informed opinion as to the operation of the British tariff on our trade by thus averaging the duties. And now, when the British tariff has just gone into operation, reducing the duties on our provision trade, and might be esteemed as an offering for reciprocal duties to us, we are to recede and adopt the restrictive system, and this free nation, that is contending for suprema-

cy in the markets of the world, is to put on her free and elastic limbs the cumbersome shackles thrown off by the English nation as too burdensome to be borne.

Now, sir, in concluding my remarks on this branch of the subject, allow me to inquire what has the operation of this system disclosed? How has it affected the investment of capital and the pursuits of labor; and what are their respective advantages and profits? By a table, computed and revised by Mr. Woodbury, and endorsed by a distinguished political economist in my own State, it is stated that 12,750,000 persons are employed in agriculture in this country, with a capital of \$3,000,000,000 invested in it. In manufactures and its branches 1,500,000 persons are employed, with a capital of \$300,000,000. Now examine the proportion of capital and income to each person connected with these branches of industry in this country. The capital per head invested in agriculture is \$235; the income per head is only \$62; while the capital invested in manufactures and its branches is \$200 per head, and the income on this swells to the enormous amount of \$159 per head. Now what statesman or citizen, that will "look here upon this picture, and on this," "and what judgment would step from this to this," that the people embracing the largest number, the greatest amount of capital, and receiving much the smallest income from this capital, should submit to be taxed by this government to maintain the smaller number with a smaller amount of capital, and still receive near thrice the income on it?

The pedestal on which this world of the manufacturers rests is, it is said by them, that the imposition of duties do not enhance the price of the dutiable article to the consumer. Are we asked, then, to believe that the importing merchant pays the fifty or hundred per cent. duty on the article, sells it to the retail merchant, and he to the consumer, at the same price as if free of duty? No; this is rather too unprofitable a business for the known sagacity of a merchant to engage in; it is reversing all that we have learned of their laws of trade. The duty is paid by the importing merchant, and is transferred to the cost of the article; and the interest and profit paid on it to the importer by the retail merchant, and then again repaid to him with his cost, interest, and profit by the purchaser or consumers. But we are answered on the other side of the House that the increased price by the duty is reduced to a proportionate extent by the foreign producers. I never have been able to learn the legerdemain by which one government, by the imposition of duties, could tax any other than its own citizens. I have been taught to believe, by my little reading and experience, that this power of the government was confined within the limits of its own territory; if not, it would be in vain for one nation to claim exclusive jurisdiction within its own limits. The trade of other countries will only seek our market as long as it is profitable; and when this government imposes duties that require the foreign producer to reduce his price to the extent of the duty, to enable him to sell in our market, he then will seek another market and abandon the trade, before he will thus encroach on his accustomed prices. But to controvert these positions, we are answered that the manufactured fabrics are now cheaper than formerly, when paying comparatively a light duty. But this is no argument against the proposition. It must be remembered that the free articles are fallen to a like extent, and this will not warrant the inference that an in-

creased duty imposed on an article tends to cheapen it to the consumer. If this theory of the manufacturers was true, then indeed might this government boast of discovering the great secret of fixing the bill of prices on its imports, by the enactments of law. It is a reduction of price produced by other causes in defiance of high duties. The perfection of machinery, the labor-saving inventions, and the great progress that the arts and the sciences have made in mechanics within the last few years, have produced a great reduction in the cost of manufactured articles; this, with a great competition for our market, and the gradual return of the country from an inflated paper currency to the specie basis, have been the potent agents that produced the present great reduction of prices, and now much higher than they would be were it not for the present high duties. No statesman or tax-payer can be persuaded that, by imposing duties, the dutiable article is to be reduced in price to the consumer. The manufacturers themselves discredit their own theory by coming up here and importuning Congress to impose high duties to protect them in high prices against the cheap prices of the old world.

These I believe are the true outlines and features of this law and its policy, with the principal reasons on which it rests for its support with the people. What statesman, schooled under our free institutions, ought to stand up here and advocate it? What citizen, with a proud and generous soul, ought not to blush to enjoy such exclusive privileges alike to the prejudice of our free institutions, and the great body of our people; and who can believe that the current of the times is so corrupt, that, to strip the system of its disguise, and show its naked deformity, it would be borne, battenning on the very life-blood of our free institutions, administering to the increasing appetite of wealth, by wrenching from industry its hard-earned pittance, under the false persuasion that this is to be borne to protect the industry which, in fact, it is reducing to indigence and want? Or reduce it to its original elements to levy a tax on one man to support another, or to put one interest of the country under contribution to sustain another; and what man would dare stand up in this hall and advocate legislation like this by the government? None. Yet this is but that system stripped of its disguise and imposition.

The great mass of our citizens only know the federal government as a government to provide for the "common defence and general welfare;" and as such, every American citizen, I believe, stands ready to maintain it, or perish with it. But if this government is to go on augmenting its powers, and burdening the citizens with its taxation, it may alienate their affections from it, and perhaps drive them to calculate the cost of this Union. I refer to this with regret; but the history of the past warns us that this is tampering with important interests that once brought this country to the eve of a revolution.

I am one who believes the tendency of this government is to enlarge its powers, and to extend the compass of its authority. And as the evidence that discloses this, I will not only refer to the increasing appreciation of the government, not as one to provide for "the common defence and general welfare," but as one to administer as a beneficiary to the private pursuits and interest to the citizen, as

shown by the daily impertunity by which we are beset for some partial and favorite legislation; but I refer to the fact that we have recently seen a presidential candidate (Mr. Clay) animating his partisans not only with the promise of the offices of the federal government as the prizes of war that should reward their success in his behalf, but to mendicant States their proportionate distribution of the public lands; and to bankers and manufacturers special privileges to be bestowed: that is to be but equivalent to putting this great government in their keeping, and the people at their mercy, with the power to levy on the tax-payers to any extent that their avaricious appetite may require, or their arbitrary will may suggest; to mortgage, by loans or distribution, the last inch of the real estate of the citizen, and to take from the limbs of nakedness its last rag, and from the lips of hunger its last morsel. And to the dishonor of the country it must be said these measures, unknown to the framers of our government and the constitution, are the scaffolding on which a great party of the country stand, and from which they expect to hoist themselves to the control of the institutions of the country.

The democratic party stands opposed to these heresies; and in this struggle for power, will stand out for the constitution and its inviolability by federal legislation. They have no offices to tender to partisans; these are the offices of the country, constitution, and the laws, and it is forbid they should be conferred on any but the competent. They have no special privileges to confer that will conflict with "the perfect liberty" intended to be secured to all in the constitution. Then if, in this great contest, the democratic party is to be overcome, and these bankers, manufacturers, and distributionists, are to prevail, and these measures become the settled and permanent policy of the country, then—I hesitate not to avow it—a fatal blow is struck at our free institutions.

When the down-trodden masses can no longer look to the constitution to stay the progress of oppression and usurpation, and to this hall to their representatives for relief, what then must ensue? Some spirit, touched with the sentiments of the people, moved and goaded on by their grievances, and perhaps gifted with the spirit of the Roman Gracchii⁶ may rise and make the last appeal to the living masses, and invite them to the last struggle for restitution and retribution. In this moment, pregnant with revolution, the empire of the Cæsars, the crown of the Corsican hero, or the inviting Italian fields that were laid open to the Carthaginian spoiler, were but a poor prize in comparison to what every citizen would have in this moment of peril. In a moment like this, then, might these men tremble in their strongholds of wealth and power, and cling to their ill-gotten gain, and find, perhaps when too late, the error into which they had been betrayed; and, like the strong man of old, that, as they pulled down the mighty pillars of the temple under which they reposed, it was but to be doomed to be crushed and buried beneath it. As a citizen, I would deplore such a calamitous event; and as a statesman, I would desire to avoid it. Then let me implore you to pause ere you press this system further, which, I honestly believe, is charged with such fatal consequences alike to our institutions and the people.