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PITTSBURGH: WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 14.

RIGHTS OF LABOR.

SPEECH OF HON. J. K. MOORHEAD, OF PENNSYLVANIA, IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 7, 1860.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. MOORHEAD said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Three months have elapsed since we assembled in this Hall. Amidst all the excitement which has existed, the members with whom I act have preserved a commendable silence, believing, as they did, that no business but the election of Speaker was in order until the House was organized. I will not review the scenes exhibited during the struggle for the election of Speaker. I will not expose, in their enormity, the hissing threats of disunion which proceeded from the lips of gentlemen on the Democratic side of the House. I have no heart, Mr. Chairman, to undertake such a work, and would not even recall them, did I not consider it important that the people should understand the purposes entertained by the distinguished leaders of the Democratic party. These threats were, in my opinion, very unwisely made. If intended to prevent the election of a President who has respect for and sympathy with the interests of the free white laboring man, they will be powerless; for the people of this country know their interests, and will protect them. Least of all, will they abandon them under treasonable threats of destroying the Government. The people have always maintained, and will always maintain, the right of the majority to rule. In disregard of all this bluster, and those threats, the Republican party will meet in convention, nominate a candidate, elect him if possible, and as surely install him in office when he is elected. They will not brag nor swagger about it. They do not now use the language of defiance. But they will permit no dictation of interested parties to swerve them from their purpose, nor nullify the popular will. It is a slander upon the Republican party to say that they have any design against the persons or property of our Southern neighbors. They are Union loving men, and will stand by the constitution and the laws. Whilst they will carefully avoid attacking others, they will resist aggressions upon their rights, come they from what quarter they may. To anticipate the reverse, is in one case to charge them with perfidy, in the other with cowardice, both foreign to the character of the American citizen.

But, Mr. Chairman, I did not rise to discuss any of these topics, believing, as I do, that this Union will not be dissolved, let who may be elected President, but will continue to grow and prosper until we become the greatest nation on the globe. My purpose is to direct the attention of the House to the revenue policy of the Government, and to suggest what, in my opinion, will tend more than anything else to strengthen the bonds of this Union. Mr. Chairman, the Government must be supported by revenue, which the people, in some way or other, must pay. Now, to make these contributions most equitable, least burdensome, and most beneficial to the entire community, and have their proceeds placed in the treasury at the smallest expense, should be the object of the statesman. Whether the revenue be raised by taxing imports, or by direct taxation, are grave questions. As the legitimate results of free trade would lead to the latter, it is well to examine them; and, in so doing, I will refer to the doctrine laid down in the Cincinnati platform on this subject, which is as follows:

"*Resolved*, That there are questions connected with the foreign policy of this country which are inferior to no domestic question whatever. The time has come for the people of the United States to declare themselves in favor of free seas and PROGRESSIVE FREE TRADE throughout the world; and, by solemn manifestations, to place their moral influence at the side of their successful example."

How far the Cincinnati platform may be considered authority with the Democracy, it is not for me to say. The ambiguity of its terms has caused endless disputes and discussions, while a strict adherence to its doctrines has cost many an official his head. But I regret to [illegible] that, on this question of PROGRESSIVE FREE TRADE, so far and here there can be no doubt, there is a very general acquiescence by that party, and thus the means and manner of supporting the Government are made, or attempted to be made, mere questions of party politics—a course to be regretted by all fair and candid men. So far as I may discuss them, I will endeavor to treat them as questions of political economy, and not of party politics.

We have an extensive country, and greatly diversified interests, all to be governed by the same law. It should, therefore, be so framed as to confer its blessings upon all; or, in other words, add to the prosperity, enterprise, industry, and value of the whole country; to make us healthy and happy at home; respected, honored and feared abroad. How can this be done? If I can say anything that will contribute to produce this result, my purpose will be accomplished. I will, at least, give my views upon what I consider equal in importance to any subject that will engage the attention of the present Congress. We buy too much from abroad, and, I was going to say, sell too little; but I will not say that. We sell enough, perhaps too much, for it would greatly enhance our wealth and prosperity if we consumed our products at home, instead of sending them abroad to feed foreign labor; and then buy the proportion of that labor in the shape of manufactured articles, as I will endeavor to show more fully hereafter.

There has been much discussion and variety of opinion on the subject of a *protective tariff*, or a *revenue tariff*—a mere difference of terms, as the opponents of protection have, until recently, favored a revenue tariff, with discriminations in favor of the manufacturer of our own country. It matters not by what name a tariff is called—call it what you please; but it does matter that its principles should be such as to add to the prosperity and happiness of the people. Providence has dealt most bountifully with us as a nation and a people. We have every natural resources, mineral wealth of all kinds, and in immense qualities. Commerce has spread her wings from the Atlantic to the Pacific and that upon our navagable rivers and lakes has no parallel on the face of the globe. Our free and liberal form of government is inviting to our shores the emigration of the world; and, having the means to feed and support them, and the material upon which to employ their labor, why should we not make the most of our own resources, and become the wealthiest, the happiest, and the greatest nation on the earth?

Why should we permit so humiliating a record to be laid before the House as that exhibited by the financial report now on your table? I say, sir, it is the result of bad legislation—miserable legislation; legislation to foster and protect the manufacturer, laborers, farmers and artisans of other countries, while you bring ruin, distress, and starvation upon the same classes at home. What is it? Why here it is, sir:

	1859.
Total importations, exclusive of specie	$338,268,427
Total exportations, except specie	292,902,051
	$631,170,478

Yes, sir, the balance of trade is against us to the amount of $39,496,376, and that paid by draining our precious metals (which are the heart's blood of a nation) from us, at a rate equal to the product of the California mines. It requires no prophetic vision to see that this must lead to national bankruptcy, and that that point would have been reached ere this, but for the fortunate discovery of valuable gold mines in our own country. The most humiliating aspect in which this picture can be examined, however, Mr. Chairman, is that presented by the Secretary of the Treasury. We find him highly delighted with the large importations; exulting over the fact that the revenue from that source has exceeded his estimate, and congratulating the country upon this great evidence of prosperity. Why, Mr. Chairman, it reminds me of the fable of the frogs: "Whilst it is sport to you, it is death to us;" and so, surely in this case, whilst it may be sport to Mr. Cobb, whilst it may for the present bring money into the Treasury and keep the wheels of Government in motion, it is death to the best interests of the country.

And now, sir, this very fact of the large amount of revenue received from these excessive importations is to be used as an argument against a revision of the tariff. No matter how the country groans and suffers, so that we have revenue to carry on the Government; no matter how little demand there is for labor, how utterly prostrate the manufacturing interests of the country may be, how many thousands of our industrious citizens may be turned idle and driven to starvation; so that we have money to pay the office-holders, the contractors and various expenses of government, all is well. Away with such doctrines. Outupon such a policy as this. Give us such revenue laws as will foster and protect our manufactures and give employment to labor at home. Enable us to develope the resources that we have in such abundance, and that are entirely without value whilst buried in the earth, but by the talismanic touch of labor become gold. Let this labor receive aid and support by a wise and just policy, and not crush it to the level of the downtrodden foreign labor. Why require protection? is a question frequently asked. Why can you not manufacture iron as cheaply in this country as in England? I answer: it is true we have the raw material in abundance; we have the requisite skill; we have the labor-saving machinery, and we have the labor; but that labor should be encouraged, and not crushed to the earth. It is the glory of our country that the road to fortune and to fame is open to all and is traveled by all. We have no special classes or grades here. We frequently find the laborer of to day the employer of to-morrow; and this can only be the case, when labor is remunerated. We cannot employ labor at the prices paid in the old countries; we should not wish to; and when the day arrives, if it ever should, (which Heaven forbid,) that the laboring man of our country is reduced to the wages paid in foreign countries, then indeed will our glory as a nation have departed.

Let us, on the other hand, encourage home products. Stop this miserable policy of forcing our provisions abroad to find a market, and having them returned to us in the shape of manufactured articles, we paying some 60 or 80 per cent., in addition to their original value, for transportation, etc., to the middle men through whom they have passed; but let us apply *our own labor* to our *own raw materials*, and thus provide a home market for our own breadstuffs, for the product of our own farmers; supplying ourselves with the manufactured articles; saving transportation, commissions and various expenses, and feeding and supporting our own labor in preference to foreign. If the power and greatness of a State or country depend upon the number and prosperity of its population, then it follows, as a matter of course, that, by combining manufacturing with agriculture, you can increase the population to the extent that the products of the soil would supply with nourishment; or, in other words, you could employ as large a population in manufacturing and trade as the agricultural productions of the soil would feed, and by this policy you would bring the producer and the consumer together; you would have a home market for the agriculturalist, who would, in exchange, receive his domestic manufactures instead of the foreign, and thus add to the wealth of our own country by developing its great natural resources.

Why should any portion of our Union object to this policy? The argument is, that some States of the Union are consumers and not producers of these manufactured articles; hence they must buy as cheap as they can, and sell their own products as dear as possible. Let us examine this. At the formation of our Confederation, when the great experiment of a Republic was about to be tried, and a Republican Government about to be put in operation, the wise men of that day, knowing that the rest of the world were upon them, and that the predictions of the Monarchists and absolutists of the Old World were, that this was a Utopian scheme that would not be carried into practice, and that the then infant Republic would soon crumble to atoms, endeavored to guard and protect every interest, and prevent eternal strife and division. The manner of raising revenue for the support of the new government was a matter of great concern. Various propositions were made and fully discussed. Should there be a tax upon land? Should the tax be on imports, or should they tax *exports*?

The principal discussion was between the two latter propositions. Tobacco was then an article of considerable export. Cotton had not yet assumed any importance as an article of trade; in fact, it was about the year 1790 that the planters of the Southern States began to turn their attention a series of years there until 1793, that Mr. Whitney invented the cotton gin. In 1784, eight bags of cotton from one of our Southern States, consigned to Mr. Rathbone, an American merchant in Liverpool, were seized by the custom house officers, on the allegation that it could not have been grown in the United States—so insignificant and unknown was the production of this great staple at that time, although now denominated King. I refer to this for the purpose of showing that, had the cotton interest then been what it is now, one section of our country having an entire monopoly of its production, that was sufficient might have decided differently the question of taxing exports, and the producers of cotton, who now object so strenuously to taxing imports, so as to protect the American manufactures, might have been paying tax upon their exports. What did the great men who framed the Constitution say on this subject? We volume three of the Madison Papers, page 1339:

"Mr. Mason urged the necessity of connecting taxing exports with taxing imports, duties, &c., lest the former article should be laid on exports. He was anxious for this, from a jealousy he had conceived of the disposition of the Northern States to trust to its being done in future. He hoped the Northern States did not mean to deny the Southern this security. It would be rather as desirable to the former, when the latter should become the most populous. He professed his jealousy for the productions of the southern, or, as he called them, the staple States. He moved to insert the following amendment: '*Provided*, That no tax, duty, or impost, shall be laid by the Legislature of the United State on articles exported from any State.'

"Mr. GOUVERNEUR MORRIS considered such a proviso inadmissible anywhere; it was radically objectionable; that it might cost the whole system the support of some of its members. He considered that it would not, in some case, be equitable to tax imports without taxing exports, and that taxes on exports would often be the most easy and proper of the two.

"Mr. MADISON. First, the power of laying taxes on exports is proper in itself; and as the States cannot wish property exercise it, it ought to be vested in them collectively. Secondly, it might with particular advantage be exercised with regard to articles in which America was not rivalled in foreign markets, as tobacco, &c. * * * "Fourthly, the Southern States, being most in danger, and most needing naval protection, could the less complain, if the burden should be somewhat heavier on them. And, finally, we are not providing for the present moment only; and time will equalize the situations of the States in this matter. He was, for these reasons, against the motion."

On page 1344 Governeur Morris says: "The state of the country, also, will change, and render duties on exports, or skins, beaver and other *raw materials*, politic, in view of encouraging American manufactures.

Mr. Ruttenanen, 1356—"Is now the time for giving the power to lay the tax when a proper time may call for it. This would certainly be the case when America should become a manufacturing country."

On page 1388, on the question "No tax shall be laid on exports," it was carried in the affirmative—seven States voting yea, four voting nay—General Washington and Mr. Madison, of Virginia, voting no. With such authority as Washington and Madison in favor of taxing exports, it cannot be denied that withholding the power to tax them was a concession of the South, and one that would probably not have been made, had the production of cotton to any considerable extent then existed. Now, we do not ask for a tax upon our exports, but we do ask our Southern friends, who enjoy the exemption, to give us such duties upon imports as will equalize our condition and encourage American manufactures. We ask that the duties shall be so laid as to afford incidental protection, and not as recommended by the Secretary of the Treasury in his report on the finances, made to Congress at its last session. In that report, the Secretary says:

"I do not deem it proper to enter into any extended discussion of the theoretic principles on which a tariff act should be framed. They may be briefly stated, and such duties should be laid as will produce the revenue required, by imposing on the people at large the smallest and most equal burden.

"It is obvious that this is most effectually done by taxing, in preference to others, such articles as are most produced here, those in which the consumer pays the least proportion to the quantity imported, are the fittest for taxation."

Such is the language, such the recommendation of the financial officer of the present Administration. I regret that it was reserved for the Administration of a native (and once "*Old favorite Son*") of Pennsylvania to recommend the raising of revenue by taxing articles *not* manufactured in this country, and, of course, exempting from taxation those articles that come in competition with our own labor and products. How does this correspond with the doctrines of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and Jackson? I will not incumber my argument by quoting from their different messages; it has been done so frequently that their doctrines of protecting and fostering the manufactures of our own country are like household words, known to all intelligent minds. I will, however, give an extract from the message of President Monroe to Congress, December 21, 1828:

"Having communicated my views to Congress at the commencement of the last session, respecting the encouragement which ought to be given to our manufactures, and the principle on which it should be founded, I have only to add that those views remain unchanged; and that the present state of those countries with which we have the most immediate political relations and greatest commercial intercourse, tends to confirm them. Under this impression, I recommend a review of the tariff for the purpose of affording such additional protection to those articles which we are prepared to manufacture, or which are more immediately connected with the defense and independence of the country."

What different language from that used by Mr. Secretary Cobb! This, the enlarged view of an American statesman; that, a blind and narrow policy, destructive to American interests. But would such blind policy promote even the sectional interests intended to be benefited? I contend not, sir. We are members of one great family; when one suffers, the others must sympathize to a certain extent; and when one prospers and flourishes, the effect is felt by all.

Mr. Chairman, why will we not be admonished by experience? Why not derive wisdom from the past? What has been the result of high tariffs and of low tariffs, in this country and in other countries? This information is accessible to all. It has been spread before Congress very frequently and very ably, and I almost shrink from the effort of again reciting it; but, in the language of the late Mr. Benton, "that the truth of history may be vindicated," I will briefly refer to it. The result has been that, under protective tariffs, the country has been prosperous, money plentiful, labor fully employed and compensated; the industrious, frugal mechanic, artisan, or laborer, not only subsisting himself and family, but becoming the freeholder; building his own house, and residing in it with his family; cultivating his own soil, and perhaps in turn becoming the employer, the capitalist, the manufacturer, and finding labor and sustenance for the scores of human beings that would gather around him. On the other hand, low or strictly revenue tariffs have flooded the country with foreign goods, foreign iron, foreign everything; have drained us of our precious metals to pay for them; have put out the fires of our forges and furnaces; stopped the shuttle and the loom; sent consternation, poverty, distress, and even starvation into our manufacturing districts; and the hardy, able-bodied laborer, after spending wearisome days and nights in vain search of employment, has been doomed to penury and want, and forced to beg or starve. The value of all property, real and personal, has been greatly reduced; and few or no buyers at the sheriffs' sales, which are the legitimate result of this course of policy. Has this not been the case? Is it not a true picture of the past? And will not the same course produce the same effect in the future?

From 1812 to 1815, during the war with Great Britain, when our foreign commerce was suspended, and is became a necessity for us to manufacture and produce at home what would supply our wants, we became a nation of exchangers or barterers. The manufacturer turned out his iron, glass, salt, cotton and woolen goods, which he exchanged for the farmer's surplus, and the products of the soil. The farmer had a home market; the producer and consumer were enabled to take their place by each other's side; the laborer had constant employment and good wages, and at the close of an expensive and glorious war with the most powerful nation on the globe, we were prosperous and happy, with a revenue that was fast diminishing the public debt. The tariff of 1816, which superceded the double or war duties of 1812, (which were continued to June 30, 1817, was essentially a revenue tariff, only, without protection. Under its operation, foreign goods flooded into the country; st