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Citrus Notes-The Value of the Tariff to Citrus

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CITRUS NOTES

"THE VALUE OF THE TARIFF TO CITRUS"

Citrus

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The Value of the Tariff to Citrus

Let us recall a bit of history of the citrus industry. Many of our orange growers have come among us in recent years and know nothing of the hardships and difficulties experienced during the earlier years of its history. To some, those were years filled with disappointment and bitter experiences. Orange or lemon growing was not profitable. Many growers were becoming bankrupt. One of my groves had bankrupted two men before it came into my hands, and I would have gone the same way had not the Dingley Bill given us a protective tariff on oranges. Men who had gone into the nursery business went broke. I bought as fine trees as I ever set out for 15%.

No improvements were made in all this beautiful Southland by orange growers, or anyone else, for all are largely dependent upon the fruit industry. It was scratch and scratch hard to make a bare living.

The country awakened up and elected McKinley and a Republican Congress. The Dingley Bill was framed - the growers sent a committee to Washin

ton, at an expense of some \$6000.00, which presented the claims of the citrus industry and the first protective tariff was given us. The tariff was raised from 13¢ a box to a cent a pound, or 72¢ a box. This gave the growers courage, property values and prices advanced ~~✓~~ ^{since} ~~they~~ ^{generally} have been prosperous.

There were other problems to solve after this first great victory had been won. New markets must be exploited, for we had never put our oranges and lemons into the Atlantic Seaboard cities. To do this we had a fight and a hard one with the importers, but being handicapped with a cent a pound duty as they were, put us in these markets on almost an equal footing. In other words, their cheap freight and the tariff about equalled our freight of a cent and a quarter. It was even then a great contest to wrest these markets from the powerful importers, whose connections with the foreign growers and steamship companies were so close that these interests also entered into the

contest.

One of the weapons used by California growers to drive these importers out of business was the contribution by the growers of 100 cars of oranges to be sacrificed upon the New York market to break the importers. When a cargo of oranges arrived we flooded the market with our fruit and sold it ^{so} cheap, that the importer, after having to put up his 72¢ a box to the Government, lost money. He could take chances with his fruit and his freight, for there was but little invested in these, but he could not afford to jeopardise the cash required to pay custom duty. After a time the importers saw that California was determined to have the markets and many of them came here in person and made connections with growers and became identified with California interests.

During the years since New York and Boston and other cities have been our best markets. New York alone takes almost twenty per cent of our shipments and sets the price for the rest

of the country. On Monday a week ago, 67 cars were sold in that city alone.

California products are now shipped throughout the nation. You can find our oranges in every city and village in our country, because the American markets are held sacred to the American growers and are not give to foreign growers.

When the Payne-Aldrich Bill was being framed we again went to Washington. Our Citrus League took the matter up at that time and gathered data and went before the Ways and Means Committee and presented our case. The Committee retained the cent a pound on both oranges and lemons, but when the bill went to the Senate, the growers there found an influential friend, a man who knew more of the hardships and obstacles, the lemon growers especially had to contend with, and who at every point and to every industry proved loyal to California. He had the tariff on lemons raised from one cent to one and one half cents per pound, thus giving the

lemon industry such encouragement that lemon groves have since been set out in all sections of the citrus belt. This man, the fruit growers friend, was ^{Ken}~~here~~, our distinguished Senator, the Hon. Frank P. Flint.

Is our citrus industry now in any danger? I answer emphatically that it is. President Taft said it was. Ex-Senator Flint, who went through the fight in Washington and knows the situation, says it is. Our own Congressman, Hon. S. C. Smith says it is and anyone who will look into the situation must come to the same conclusion. Ought we, therefore, to be alarmed? We surely ought to be. Those of us who have gone through the bitter experiences of the past know better what to expect should certain conditions prevail - should the tariff be lowered.

Ought we now to put our industry in jeopardy? We are doing well, why clamor for a change? Indeed, why permit a change? Far easier to prevent the disaster than to regain again what we may now through indifference

lose. If the tariff on citrus fruits is lowered we could never again get the duty placed as high as it is at present.

President Taft will stand by us for we have his word, made to the growers at Riverside last October in which he said. "The tariff on your citrus fruits is in danger and if ever the protection of this growing industry is taken from you and my veto will save it, you shall have it."

We, therefore, know where Mr. Taft stands and we are not afraid that that he will change his mind and go back on his friends as Col. Roosevelt is in the habit of doing. He is not swayed and turned by this hue and cry for lower tariff, which is really the chief article in the creed of the self-styled Progressives. What did Gov. Johnson say on the same subject? In a soothing voice he said, "Don't worry about the tariff". An orange grower pertinently said, "that is all I have to worry about".

I may say that our Citrus League has prepared at great expense, the most complete and exhaustive data relative to the cost of production and handling of citrus fruits, both in this county and in foreign countries, ever made on any industry. We are safe with President Taft, because he proposes to revise the tariff, if revised, upon rational and scientific lines.

A grower who is wanting tariff revised on eastern manufactured goods, downward/said, "You don't suppose they would take the tariff off oranges, do you?" They certainly will. Our products are the most highly protected of the products of any state and when once taken up by low tariff advocates, you may depend upon it that it will be cut and cut hard. *An orange is no more sacred than a lemon & the Horn Pub lemons on the free list*

Back east the speakers, these progressives, are telling the people not to worry about their interests, but the tariff will be taken off California fruits so they can all have cheap fruit and not enrich those Californians as they

are now doing. Congressman Murdock, a Progressive, said in a speech on the tariff in Congress: "Is it fit that every sick-bed and every hospital in the United States should suffer in order to protect a few paltry orange and lemon growers in Southern California?".

Let me tell you that the California fruit growers, and all dependent on the great fruit industry, and that means lawyers, doctors, preachers, editors, merchants, bankers, automobile makers, drivers and caretakers, milliners, blacksmiths, carpenters, brick layers, cement workers, painters, clerks, teachers, and laborers in all branches, for all are largely dependent upon the money brought here from the East in exchange for our fruit, cannot afford to line up with the element in the Republican party who in turn give aid and comfort to the Democrats. One of the Roosevelt Delegates to be voted on Tuesday is now voting with the Democrats in Congress for free trade measures, including free sugar and free lemons.

Heney, if we are to judge from his Democrat Socialistic utterances in a recent Los Angeles speech delivered at a Republican meeting, is in perfect harmony with Congressman Kent, and seventeen other insurgents who voted for free sugar.

Every so-called Progressive Senator voted against the present tariff on lemons. This includes Senator La Follette, who now wants to be President and Senator Beveridge, who has come to California to tell us how we ought to put our interests into the hands of men of his stripe.

The strongest arguments the Committees sent to Washington by our fruit growers to secure and maintain protection for oranges, lemons and walnuts and other products, was that we had been loyal to the republican party, the party of protection. Why now jeopardize our great and growing industry? We ought at least be loyal to the party and the man to whom our prosperity is due. Taft is our insurance policy standing between us and ruin. For don't you know that

our industry depends solely upon being protected
by a tariff.

Let me read you what Congressman Smith said
to me in a recent letter:

(Read Smith's letter)

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The Los Angeles Express, owned by Mr. E. T. Earl, who built up his great fortune largely off orange growers, and who held the industry by the throat for years, has persistently knocked our present tariff. Not one word appears in this paper favorable to the protection which our industry must have in order to prosper. Yet, this paper and this man has moulded the sentiment of our people so that, strange as it is, they are not only now in large numbers arraigned against the very man^e who built the great wall of protection for us and have maintained it, but are working hand in hand with the men who fought us and who are now inducing them to help tear this