

Free government is self-government. There is no self-government where the people do not control their own elections and levy their own taxes. When either of these rights is taken away or diminished a breach is made, not in the outer defences, but in the citadel of our freedom. For years we have been struggling to recover the lost right of taxing ourselves, and now we are threatened with the loss of the greatest right of governing ourselves. The loss of one follows in necessary succession the loss of the other. When you confer on a Government the power of dealing out wealth, you unchain every evil that can prey upon it, and eventually destroy free institutions—excessive taxation, class legislation, bullion dollar congresses, a corrupt civil service, a debauched ballot box, and purchased elections. In every campaign the privilege of taxing the people will be bartered for contributions to corrupt them at the polls; after every victory a new McKinley Bill to repay these contributions, which taxes were wrung from the people. For every self-governing people there can be no more momentous question than the question of taxation. It is the question, as Mr. Burke truly said, around which all the great battles of freedom have been fought. It is the question out of which grow all the tissues of government. Until we settle this question wisely, permanently, justly, we build all other reforms on a foundation of sand. We, and the great party we represent, are to-day for tariff reform, because it is the only gateway to genuine democratic government. The Democratic party believes that frugality is the essential virtue of free government. It believes that taxes should be limited to public needs, and be levied by the plain rule of justice and economy. We are for the protection that protects, and for the reciprocity that reciprocates. We are in favour of protecting every man in the enjoyment of his labour, diminished only by his proper contribution to the support of the Government, and we are for that real reciprocity, not through dickering diplomacy and presidential proclamations, but by laws of Congress, that remove all unnecessary obstacles between the American producer and the markets.

The same year there was held a meeting in Cleveland, at which the Democratic Convention contains the following plank:—

We favour closer commercial relations with Canada and the removal of the embarrassing and annoying restrictions which only vex our people without yielding substantial revenue to the Government. Speaking before the convention upon reciprocity, Mr. Thurman said the time is near when the people will express their belief in complete and not restricted reciprocity. If reciprocity, which has always been a Democratic, not a Republican doctrine, is a good thing with South America, why would it not be a better thing in Canada and Europe,

He does not confine his ideas to Canada alone, but he speaks of Europe as well—

with which our trade is a hundredfold greater than it is with South America? The time has also come when the people will say to the powers that be, that the honest workingman shall no longer be compelled by law to contribute a part of his hard-earned savings to help maintain those who, under the forms of law, have robbed him for over a quarter of a century; when they will no longer sustain any party which levies and collects one dollar of taxes over and above that which is required to wisely and economically administer the affairs of the Government; when they will give due notice that infant industries that have been nursed for 100 years have arrived at the age when they must take care of themselves; when they will brand a protective tariff as stealing, its advocates as beggars, and demand that we must have a tariff for revenue only.

Mr. SEMPLE.

At another meeting held in the same state, the following deliverance was made:—

We demand the reduction of tariff taxes, and will continue the battle for tariff reform until the cause of the people is triumphant. All money taken by law from the people shall go into the public treasury. Tariff taxes shall be for revenue only. All so-called protective tariff taxes are dishonest, wasteful and corrupting. They plunder the masses to enrich the few. They have crippled agriculture, retarded manufacturing, created trusts, destroyed commerce and corrupted our law-makers. Therefore we are opposed to the McKinley Tariff Bill now pending in Congress.

The state of Michigan, also a Republican state, in convention, spoke on the same subject:

We denounce and condemn the high tariff policy of the present Administration, and demand that our tariff and internal revenue taxes shall not be higher than to maintain the Government economically administered. We especially condemn the McKinley Tariff Bill, which still further restricts the market for American products, while it increases the burden of taxation. We denounce it, because it has not a section or a line that will open a new market for a single bushel of wheat or a single barrel of pork, and also because it still further restricts our market and limits our trade with the world—a policy that must more and more depress American agriculture, lessen the value of American farms, and increase the cost of living to the American people.

These were resolutions passed in Republican states, but the whole voice of the Democratic party in all their conventions was in the same direction. Now, they have a chance to make right that which was wrong, and some wished to have a special session of Congress to do away with the McKinley Tariff. No doubt, they will move cautiously in the matter. When there are so many interests affected they will take ample time to consider, and we shall, no doubt, be gainers to a large extent through the action of Congress. The utterances that I have just read, show that the people have come to the conclusion to stand shoulder to shoulder in the endeavour to counteract the efforts of the monopolists in the combines and trusts that have existed there to so large an extent. I am glad to see that in our country there are gratifying signs pointing in the same direction. We have seen in this House many petitions presented from sources from which heretofore similar petitions have not come—from Conservative associations all over this country. I was much gratified the other day at seeing the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) lay on the Table of this House a bundle of petitions bearing over 13,000 signatures, asking that the duty be taken off binding twine, coal oil, corn and barbed wire. There are other petitions with over 14,000 signatures, asking that it be made criminal for combines to take unjust profits from the people. These are healthy signs of the times, and they indicate that the people are beginning to awaken to the position they occupy. It may be thought that we cannot at present secure free trade with the United States, and that this is not an opportune moment to discuss the question; but the