

The struggle will test the virtue of American Citizenship. We cannot close our eyes, if we would, to the great peril in which our American system of government is placed by corruption at, and false returns of, elections. We do not for one moment doubt the virtue or the ability of our people to cope with this great evil. The heart of the people is sound on this question, and is in no mood to trifle with it; but we believe it will require the united efforts of all good citizens for many years to bring back our elections to the purity of the earlier days of the Republic. If the resolve is made and firmly adhered to by the people to cast out this evil, experience will lead the way to proper remedies. Failures will only stimulate the invention of new remedies for the failures. The secret official ballot, so far as experience has now shown, is the most efficient remedy yet devised for the corruption that prevails in securing votes at our elections. We therefore propose the following:

*Resolved*, that the Union League Club recommends to the Republican members of the Legislature, at its ensuing session, and to all other members who desire to advance the reform of the evils of our elections, to sustain a ballot reform bill embracing the substantial provisions of the Saxton bill, so-called, of last winter; that we especially recommend the official ballot as an essential feature of the reform.

UNION LEAGUE CLUB HOUSE,  
New York 31st Dec., 1889.

CLARENCE C. BUEL,  
*Secretary.*

E. B. HINSDALE,  
*Chairman.*

EDWARD H. AMMIDOWN,  
D. B. ST. JOHN ROOSA,  
CEPHAS BRAINERD,  
F. A. PADDOCK,  
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## THE Committee on Political Reform

*Submit the following Report and Resolution and  
recommend their adoption.*

On January 11, 1866, after the triumph of the cause that led to the organization of this Club, it adopted an additional Article of Association, as follows:

"It shall be the duty of the Club to resist and expose corruption, and promote reform in our National, State and Municipal affairs, and to elevate the idea of American Citizenship."

It is this declared purpose to explore these various fields of governmental action that distinguishes this Club from almost all others. While this Club seeks to maintain the highest standard of social club life, it has never hesitated to declare its opinion upon any important public question, or to raise its warning voice in the presence of any impending evil. At the present time public attention is greatly disturbed over the question of ballot reform, so-called.

It is the lower estimate in the minds of many citizens of what our Club so aptly styles "the idea of American Citizenship" that causes the difficulty. It is not among the ignorant and corrupt alone that this idea of American Citizenship has been lowered, but among the wealthy and the educated there is often a want of appreciation of its benefits and a realization of its responsibilities. To be an American Citizen should be a prouder title than it ever was to be a Roman Citizen. Those who hold this high office must discharge its duties or forfeit the respect of mankind. This thing that has been so styled does not refer to money getting, learning, art, science or religion. All these things flourish under various forms of government. What is this thing that is so peculiar to our institutions and distinguishes us from all the older forms of government? It is the



doctrines that were promulgated in our country, over one hundred years since, by the Declaration of Independence, that all men "are created equal," and that "all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." These were strange doctrines then, except among a few philosophers and scholars. The abstract doctrine of equality of natural rights and the principle that all just governments derive their authority from the consent of the governed have been stoutly maintained for more than one hundred years. In our practice, we have, however, departed seriously from our professions. It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss our failure to live up to the doctrine of equal human rights. We all know what it cost us, in blood and treasure, to re-establish the national policy, although it is now imperfectly carried out in practice.

The other principle, "that all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," is seriously threatened by the corruptions and illegal practices that gather around the ballot box. The scheme chosen by our fathers to determine who should rule, and how the ruled should express their consent to be governed, was by the secret ballot and the ballot box. No one possessed with the "idea of American Citizenship" desires to depart from the substantial features of this primitive method of carrying on self-government. It seems to be fundamental and essential to our scheme of government. It is fair, just and right that the will of the majority of the people, as to rulers, should be acquiesced in by the minority. No one professes to desire anything else.

Somehow the idea has gained a deep hold upon the public that our elections are not fair and honest; that the will of the people is often defeated by the most corrupt practices in securing votes, and by the criminal failure of officials to make true returns of the votes as cast. Charges of corruption crop out first in one part of the country then in another. Those who are conversant with the subject know that but a small per cent. of the real vice comes to the surface. It is not easy to tell to what extent this evil has weakened the foundations of our system of government, but it is easy to see that, if it is to continue and grow in the future as in the past, the time will come, and that very soon, when all confidence in the result of our elections will be lost. What will then follow is beyond human power to forecast. Each intelligent citizen can conjecture the result for himself.

We do know that the history of the world is full of the wrecks of governments that have gone down because of unrestrained

vice and corruption. A nation is truly great when it has virtue enough to grapple with and overthrow a vice that threatens its existence. For a citizen to be indifferent in the presence of such a threatening political evil is but one remove from approving the evil.

The difficulty that we labor under does not seem to be with the theory of our government, but with the machinery by which we administer it in the matter of elections. We need to perfect our election laws, and to cultivate in the minds of all a higher idea of American Citizenship. All men should understand that, while it is their privilege to vote, it is more than that—it is their duty to do so. In the early days of the Republic, in New England, it was the custom to conduct the elections in the meeting house. The election was opened with prayer by the clergyman and then each elector would leave his pew and go decorously and reverently forward and deposit his ballot. It was considered an unpardonable affront to suggest to an elector how he should vote. No such thing was known as a false return. What a contrast to modern methods in many localities? Every man considered it a privilege and a duty to vote in those days. If we cultivate a high sense of the "idea of American citizenship" it will induce vast numbers to discharge this duty who now habitually neglect it and then mourn about the corruption and degeneracy of the times. We also need all the safeguards that can be devised thrown around the ballot box, so as to defeat the well known methods of the vicious and corrupt. It is the purchasable vote and the intimidated vote as well as the fraudulent returns that the country needs to be protected from. In the light of experience, the Australian system, as embodied in the Saxton Bill, so-called, is the best system yet devised to check the corruptionists of elections at the polling places. To pass a bill in the Legislature that leaves the way open for the continuance of the well known corrupt practices of the past is folly. It is not a subject for compromise that leaves the evil untouched. Better methods should also be devised to insure correct returns of the votes actually cast, and more severe punishment should be provided for those guilty of corrupt practices.

This great reform will not be carried to perfection at once. The evil to be dislodged has gained too strong a hold to yield easily. Those who think that any single effort will correct this political vice fail to comprehend the extent of the corruption that has prevailed at our elections. There are too many who have practiced these corrupt methods and profited by them also.



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## THE COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL REFORM

*Have had under consideration the McKinley Tariff Bill, and submit the following report and resolution, and recommend their adoption:*

The primary purpose of impost duties is to raise the money necessary to support the General Government. The most vital function of a government is the power to raise money for its support, because its usefulness in all directions is gone without this power. A government cannot exist without exercising it. Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to forms of government, all have this corner stone in common. Political economists may differ as to the method of raising the money, but all agree as to the basis on which the political structure we call a civil government must stand. There are but three sources, with trifling exceptions, known to civilized countries from which to derive support, and those are either impost duties, commonly called tariff duties, export duties and internal taxation in some form. Export duties form no part of the fiscal policy of this country and need not be referred to again. Statesmanship in financial matters has to deal with the method of raising the necessary money to carry on the government. It is the statesman's duty to point out the place or places from which, and provide the means by which, the collection of the money can be enforced.

The political economist may very properly point out the best method of raising the money so that the burden may fall as lightly upon, and be distributed as justly among, the people as possible, and therefore the statesmen should also be a political economist. The amount of money necessary to be raised at this time to support the general government is about \$400,000,000.

That an annual levy of \$400,000,000 should be a burden upon the people of the United States which they would like to



be rid of is not surprising. The question is, upon which shoulder shall they carry the burden? It proves nothing against the tariff bill to point out that some particular interest or interests would be better off without an impost duty. The friends of the tariff may safely concede that, and yet justify the tariff duty as necessary and best on the whole for the government support. Free-traders but half argue the question when they point out that the tariff tax burdens somebody. All exactions from the people to support civil government are distasteful. A desire to escape the assessor and the tax collector is not an unusual thing, at least in this country. There is no particular wisdom in calling a "tariff a tax" unless it be wisdom to characterize with an opprobrious term the successful financial policy of all the fathers of the Republic.

If the free-traders would develop their ideas as to how they would raise the \$400,000,000 and tell the people what their scheme of taxation is, it would add life and interest to the dreary discussion they have been carrying on. How much of this money do they expect to take directly from the farmers and what is their method of doing it? What proportion of the fixed incomes of the people are to be taken to make up this vast sum? What proportion of the incomes from the professions, what stamp duties, and in general where is this money to come from? As political economists, while examining with philosophical nicety the bearings and effect upon business of a tariff upon imported goods, it is not to be presumed that they have overlooked the prime factor that, when they have educated the people to be free-traders, they must be prepared to substitute some revenue scheme to take the place of a tariff. The more details they will give of the new scheme the more interesting it will be to the public, because the people will be better able to compare the two plans and judge which they like best. Philosophers sometimes dislike practical questions, because they interfere with their theories. This is a practical question. The British free-traders have met it manfully. They simply tax everything a British subject has or uses from a cradle to a tombstone, inclusive.

While the British free-traders have urged upon us the beau-



ties of free trade, it is not recalled that, in any of their dissertations prepared for this country, they have dwelt at length upon the beauties and delights of their scheme of internal taxation.

What the people want, at this time, is more light on this subject. They are pretty well informed as to the free-traders' objections to the tariff. They have learned all about its iniquity, inequality and immorality. What is now wanted is the free-traders' scheme for raising \$400,000,000 that shall be free from the objections they find in a tariff, and the burden of which shall rest upon the people as gently as a benediction.

The friends of a tariff are not ready yet to abandon that method of raising money to support the government, because a better method has not yet been pointed out. The field of internal taxation is pretty well worked at this time to support our state and municipal governments, and the people are not anxious to see the tax gatherer for the general government asking for a further sum for its support. It is not yet made clear to them that it is desirable to change the traditional policy of this government. Since its formation, this policy has been to seek support from impost duties whenever a sufficient sum could be realized from that source. The first revenue bill signed by Washington was a tariff bill which declared in its preamble that its purpose was to raise money and protect American industries. That was soon followed by an internal revenue bill. It was not until after the war of 1812, and about the year 1818, that the internal revenue system was terminated, and from that time until the war of the Rebellion, in 1862, the United States was never driven to resort to internal taxation for its support.

During the rebellion, and for some years thereafter, both systems, the impost duties and internal taxation, were strained to the highest practicable point so as to raise the greatest amount of revenue possible. Since the war closed, most of the internal taxes have been repealed, and the laws imposing impost duties have been from time to time modified so as to reduce the revenue from that source, chiefly by placing upon the free list articles not the product of American industries. For over



forty years before the war all parties agreed that the general government should be supported by impost duties, but they differed as to what kind of tariff should be levied. The Whigs contended for a "protective tariff," while the Democrats contended for what they called a "revenue tariff." This description of a democratic tariff was gloriously uncertain, and the phrase could be made to do duty for any kind of a tariff according to locality. It was a very much overworked description in those days, like the words "reform" and "revenue reform" at the present time. Both Whigs and Democrats sought to raise the same amount of money. The difference was in the method of levying imposts. The protective tariff system contemplated that the impost duties should be so laid as to promote American industries. A revenue tariff was generally described to be a tariff so levied as to produce the necessary support of the government, regardless of its effects upon home industries.

Free trade as understood in English financial policy has never had a practical foothold in this country. The doctrine is revolutionary and, if practically applied, involves an entire reversal of the financial policy which we have followed from the foundation of our government. It is not believed that the people when they fully understand the question will ever consent to be taxed by the general government for its support, and open the ports to free-trade. There is no escape from the proposition that it must be supported by tariff duties or by internal taxation in some form. There is no consistency in denouncing all tariff duties as wrong, unjust and immoral, without at the same time advocating internal taxation as a substitute.

If the people adhere to the policy that the general government shall find its chief support in impost duties, the only remaining question of broad policy is, shall those duties be adjusted so as to raise the necessary revenue, regardless of its effect on our industries, or shall they be so adjusted as to foster and promote those industries? In other words, shall it be a revenue tariff or a protective tariff. Republicans, and a not inconsiderable portion of the Democratic party, especially in the South, as expressed in many of the leading Democratic



papers, believe that in raising this vast sum for the general government, it can be so levied as to promote our own industries. The money is not raised to aid manufacturing interests or any other home industries. It is raised because it must be levied somewhere. Free-traders have industriously tried to make people believe that the protective tariff is a system of taxation for the benefit of certain manufactures, and that the people are taxed to make the manufacturers rich. Nothing can be more false in fact or in logic than this statement of the case.

Not a dollar is raised for the benefit of the manufacturers. The purpose of a protective tariff is to raise just the amount required for the support of the government. As this sum must be raised by internal taxation, unless raised by impost duties, the protective policy is to so raise it by impost duties as to promote our own industries. These are promoted by letting in free such things as we do not or cannot produce, and by placing this tax to support the government upon such foreign articles as we do or can produce.

The free-trade and revenue reformers have of late been claiming great credit to themselves for their advocacy of free raw material. They seem to boast as if they were championing a new doctrine. They have intentionally or ignorantly overlooked the fact that this is and always has been one of the axioms of protective policy, and one that has always been maintained by those who understood the true doctrine of protection. This advocacy of free raw material by the free-traders is a concession on their part that when impost duties are levied there should be discrimination in favor of American industries, and to that extent admits the case of the protectionist. Raw material, which it is desirable to import free, includes such products of industry as we do not and cannot produce reasonably cheap in this country, taking into account our natural resources and their capability of development. The term "free raw material" is liable to be misleading, because that which is the finished article of one industry may be only the raw material of another and higher grade of industry or manufactures. A just application of the doctrine of protection is to so adjust



the levy of the necessary money as to equitably protect all industries of the country. The bearings of the impost upon the industries of the manufacturer, the farmer, the miner, or any other industry should be carefully studied, so as to aid, rather than retard, the same.

It is no answer to the propriety of a particular impost duty upon an industry, that such industry would be better off without the impost, and with free trade.

The real question is, is the impost unequal as compared with other industries? The burden of supporting the government must be borne by somebody in some form.

In framing any tariff or tax bill, there is great practical difficulty. There are liable to be private and conflicting interests difficult to satisfy. Some persons will take only a narrow and personal view of a particular impost or levy. All cannot escape the burdens of supporting the government. If an attempt were made to frame a purely revenue tariff, or a bill to raise this large amount of money by internal taxation, the same difficulties would arise as to conflicting interests. Some would think they had not been fairly treated. In fact, pure abstract justice cannot be attained no matter on what lines any revenue bill may be framed. It is not the purpose of this Committee to express an opinion on the wisdom of any particular impost proposed in the McKinley Bill in its bearing upon certain industries. Among those who adhere to the doctrine of a protective tariff, in particular cases, there are wide and honest differences of opinion. The bill seems to be an honest, painstaking and able effort to prepare a revenue measure to support the government, based on the established principles of protective policy, which were adopted by the Republican Party at the last National Convention, and fully discussed in the last canvass and approved by the people. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That the Union League Club approves the general scope and principles of the McKinley Tariff Bill as calculated to produce only the money necessary to support the government, and as embodying the sound doctrines of a protective tariff adopted in the National Republican Platform, and recom-



mend that Congress pass the same, with such amendments, if any, as may be necessary to perfect it, to the end that it may speedily become a law of the land, and thus put at rest the questions affecting the vast interests of the country, now disturbed by suspense and uncertainty as to the final action of the government in this important matter.

Union League Club House, E. B. HINSDALE,  
NEW YORK, April 29th, 1890. Chairman,

M. M. BUDLONG,	R. M. GALLAWAY,
Secretary.	D. B. ST. JOHN ROOSA,
	S. V. R. CRUGER,
	J. K. CILLEY,
	MORTIMER C. ADDOMS,
	CLARENCE C. BUEL,
	CEPHAS BRAINERD,
	EDWARD H. AMMIDOWN.

NOTE.—The foregoing report will be presented at the next meeting of the Club.



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