

December 21, 1937

My dear Mr. Hillman:

Thank you for your letter. It illustrates what I have always believed about the tariff, that granted for any other purpose than revenue and possibly a temporary protection of a new industry - although there I feel doubtful - it brings on us complication and is bound to produce a tangle of interests utterly impossible to straighten out even by the most intelligent men.

These conflicting interests each claim that it is not getting what it ought to have. At the bottom there is a privilege granted to one group while other groups are scrambling to get an off-setting privilege.

As I see it that is the primary trouble at this moment in the country. We have allowed this tariff jungle to grow and grow and it has grown at the expense of the men who till the soil, and the whole jungle is too complicated for the tools of poor human beings.

I am no advocate of immediate tariff reductions, but I am for a gradual reduction until they come down to the revenue basis. I do not believe that the economic difficulties of the country will ever be straightened out until we get on a non-privilege basis. The chief economic trouble is that we have established through the tariff a system not of free commerce but of privileged commerce.

Thanking you again for your letter,
believe me

Very truly yours

Mr. F. G. Hillman
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