Letter: W.A. Graham Clark to Ida M. Tarbell, January 18, 1908

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Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
The American Magazine.
341 Fifth Avenue.
New York.

My dear Miss Tarbell,

Your favor of the 31st was received just as I was leaving for a tour through South Carolina to make some addresses and I have just returned so have had no opportunity to write you before.

I do not exactly understand your diagram. If it is intended to illustrate the part that each duty plays in a mens ten dollar coat will say you would need to have a specific sample figured up showing exactly what part of the total cost is the actual selling cost of the cloth, also what part of the cloth is wool and what shoddy. The percentages would vary greatly within certain limits. Below I give you the advalorem duties on the different articles from which you could make up such a diagram for a specific cloth if desired.

(1) The duty on wearing apparel of wool is 44 cents a pound plus 50 percent. For the year ending June 30, 1907 the average value of such goods imported was $3.15 a pound and the equivalent ad valorem rate of duty figures out 80.32%.

(2) The duty on cloths, woollen or worsted, valued at over 40 and under 70 cents a pound, is 44 cents a pound plus 50 percent. For the above year the average value was 53.9 cents a pound and the equivalent ad valorem duty would be 118.89%.

(3) The duty on unwashed wool of the first class is 31 cents a pound, if washed 23 cents a pound and if scoured 33 cents a pound; of the second class washed and unwashed 18 cents a pound; of the third class 14 cents a pound washed or unwashed. For the year above stated the average value of wool of all kinds imported was 20.7 cents and the equivalent ad valorem duty figures out at 40.73%.

(4) The duty on shoddy is 25 cents a pound which is at the rate of 98.81 for the $14, of high grade shoddy imported. This duty is absolutely prohibitory. (Only $44 imported in a year).
(5) The duty on machinery of all kinds is 45% ad valorem.

(6) Buttons fall under Par. 414 of the tariff and are according to the material of which made, if of bone they are dutiable at one-fourth of one cent per line per gross. (The line button measure is one-fortieth of an inch.)

(7) Cotton linings fall under Par. 304 to 307 and the duty will depend entirely on the quality you use.

(8) Pig iron is dutiable at $4 per ton.

(9) Steel and iron schedules are Par. 121 to 135 and is so minute I can hardly say what you want but on steel ingots valued at not over a cent a pound the duty is three-tenths of a cent a pound.

(10) The duty on iron ore is 40 cents a ton.

(11) The duty on bituminous coal and all coals containing less than ninety-five percent of fixed carbon is 67 cents per ton of 20 bushels, 80 pounds to the bushel.

I do not know if I have answered you fully or not but by writing to the Department of Commerce and Labor at Washington you can obtain a copy of the Statistical Abstract of the United States for 1907 that gives the equivalent ad valorem averages for the different classes of materials imported. If you desire to obtain a copy of my report on the Woolen and Shoddy Industry of Great Britain and France they will also forward you this on application and in this report I figure out some specific cloths that may furnish part of the information you desire.

It may also be of interest to you to know that a man's suit usually takes 3 1/2 yards of cloth and that in a $35 made to order suit the tailor ordinarily pays $3.75 a yard for his cloth or a total of $13.13 for the cloth that he makes up and sells for $35.

I will say that our Department is pleased to furnish any information we can but I do not care personally to be quoted on anything in regard to the tariff as it may tend to impair the efficiency of our work.
if we were to take any sides,

With regards I remain

Yours very truly,

W. A. Graham Clark

Special Agent.