

The American Magazine

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Mr. Henry M. Steel,

Bourse Bldg.,

Philadelphia, Pa.

My dear Mr. Steel:

I have read your article which you call a reply to Miss Tarbell's attack on the wool and woolen schedule, and rather to my surprise I find that you do not touch her fundamental points at all. You take exception to Miss Tarbell's statement that the mass of the people of the country are poor. Poverty, of course, is always a relative thing. Our people are not poor, of course, in the sense that they are in the Orient or in southern Europe, or in many parts of northern Europe. That is not the point. They are poor compared with the wealth in this country. I suppose most of us who labor may be called poor, but that is not saying that we may not be getting ahead a little every year and leading happy and useful lives. Miss Tarbell's point, as I understand it, is that the mass of us whose incomes are small should have the advantage of getting the best possible returns for the amount of money we have to spend. It is notorious every where in this country that those on a very small income frequently do not get their money's worth.

The bulk of your article is taken up in showing how much lower foreign wages are than ours, how much worse the condition of working people are in other countries than here. I do not see that Miss Tarbell touches on this point at all. As I understand it, she does not dispute in any way that assertion. We all know that, as a rule, wages are much higher here and conditions much better than in other countries. That is not the point that Miss Tarbell is trying to make. It is that our people are in many particulars not getting what they ought to, the wealth of the country being considered.

Again, the amount of adulteration that there may or may not be in other countries has nothing to do with what is going on in this country. We have this adulteration here. Miss Tarbell complains of that. It does not make it any more justifiable here, my dear Mr. Steel, because it is practised in other lands.

As I see it, the two serious criticisms that Miss Tarbell makes against the wool schedule, ~~that~~ the discrimination of 11 cents duty on all kinds of grease wool whatever its value, and the injustice of always counting four pounds of grease wool to a yard of cloth, you do not attempt to answer.

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-2-

H. M. S.

You ask in your article what good it is for us to continue publishing these articles by Miss Tarbell. Of course I have only my editorial sense to guide me in this, and I am hoping they may be of some use in arousing people against the dishonesty of continuing the two fundamental errors, such as those I have just quoted, in a schedule which is so important as the wool schedule. That is all that is of real importance in Miss Tarbell's article, and I do not see that you have touched on those points. I am therefore returning the paper to you.

Very sincerely yours,