Wilson bill

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June 25, 1907

Mr. Gibson called to see me on the tariff. On the matter of administration he mentioned the trick by which Rogers through Gorman of Maryland got the oil tariff clause into the Wilson bill. He says that Gorman refused absolutely to have anything to do with it until Rogers framed it up as it now stands.

The joker clause in regard to products: There are certain products made from Russian oil in Europe which they havebeen attempting to import. Among these is paraffine. Paraffine is on the free list. As soon as the new clause went in they claimed that paraffine made in Holland and Belgium could not be imported here free of duty, although these countries had no duty on oil, because the crude came from Russia, which did have a duty on oil. The courts decided against them up to Shaw's time, when he overthrew it. This case should certainly be looked up as an example of present manipulation. Gibson shows how each new set of men coming into office have to take up the question afresh, and how puzzled they are to understand the laws. He says he has heard a district attorney say that they have never in all their practice had a customs case. Much time is lost of course in this way. It is rather an argument for a permanent tariff commission, with choice of men based on competency, which should handle all these questions. With a court appeal, of course.

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