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The Closed Shop & The Tariff.

Union workingmen are demanding all over the country the privilege of ordering the "closed shop". That is a condition of employment in which only union men can be employed, and they consider that this is a great help to them in securing higher wages and other advantages which they desire, such as shorter hours of work and less strenuous labor.

We need not for present purposes attempt to decide whether this is a wise policy or not as judged from the point of view of the public. We can readily admit that if carried out in all trades it would create a privileged class who would have a monopoly in their field and that they would use their power to increase their earnings and that the general public would have to pay the increase. Whenever competition is restricted those left in the field can make more profit. This principle is now generally understood as it is evidenced by the general uprising against the monopolistic "Trusts".

Now, why should American workingmen unite to prevent other American workingmen from competing with them and at the same time open the door to let in the far worse competition of the cheap foreign laborer? If it is an undesirable thing to have your neighbor try to get your job, why let the job go to Germany, to Italy or to Japan?

We speak of the competition of labor when we really mean the competition of the products of labor; that is of goods or commodities. Competition travels in boxes and in barrels more often than upon its own legs and every time that a case of goods is landed on the pier

in New York the American workingman is up against just so much competition from outside. He is helpless to enforce his union rules and wage scale on the other side of the seas and it is utterly illogical for him to refuse to meet open competition here at home and then welcome it from abroad.

The Protective Tariff means the closed shop, a shop in which all free American workmen are members of the union, while the cheap laborers of Europe and Asia are the "scabs".

There are a good many Americans who have not yet been willing to agree that it is right for one class of American workmen to unite in creating a monopoly at the expense of the rest of the American public, but it would seem that we could all join in one great union behind the protecting armor of the tariff to keep the good things of our wonderful land for our own uses and not throw the doors wide open so that the hungry of all lands can feed at our cost. It may be good christianity to help all of the poor and needy of the World, but it is a pretty big proposition.

If good men want to come to us and become Americans and share our burdens in developing the land and learn to live as we are accustomed to live, let us all welcome them.

If they stay at home and remain aliens and live at starvation wages and in a way which we do not believe to be according to the standard that men ought to demand, we do not want them to send into our ports the products of their poverty and bring us down to their level.

Let all Americans whether union or non-union stand together for the American closed shop. That is the American protective tariff.

Charles Cheney

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