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Jonesy on Wage Protection

● There's no "full dinner pail"
in tariff-protected industries

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It's a great feeling I've got, with Junior out in the Pacific knocking off Japs and me here at home building jeeps. Yes sir! Jones Senior and Junior ain't a bad team in this fight for freedom, if I do say so myself.

Yes sir! Freedom is a wonderful thing to be fightin' for. Only the other day I read about this Bretton Woods conference. When it was all over, I find out the owners of the hotel charged the government, meaning all of us, for the couple of weeks' use, about as much as they paid for the roost when they bought it a couple of months before the conference. Which proves, if anything, that this is a land of opportunity, and anyone knows a guy can't have opportunity unless he's got freedom. Yes sir! Feeding the flames of freedom with taxes and bonds gives a guy a grand and glorious feeling when he reads of successes like the conference and the Bretton

It doesn't take a Philadelphia lawyer to see that if we trade what we can best produce and don't need for what we can't produce and do need, we're better off.



Woods landlord. The rest of the world ought to be glad we offer them more of the same for free.

Maybe I oughtn't to think too much about freedom. Maybe it ain't good for me and I ought to leave it to bigger people than me to take care of. Just the other day I was at a company meeting which the union told us we could go to. The boss and a union delegate told us how free trade was bad for us American working men and that protective tariffs were the only weapon labor and capital had against the unfair competition of underpaid European workers and coolie labor

from Asia. They said if the protective tariff was taken away, a lot of Americans would lose their jobs because manufacturers couldn't make things as cheap because Americans get higher wages. Besides, the cheap goods ain't as good as American-made stuff. Then they said that our high wages were because of protection.

They convinced a lot of guys, too. Maybe I was the only one who wasn't convinced. I dunno about that 'cause I ain't that careless to argue against a boss and a union delegate at one and the same time. It ain't healthy, economically and otherwise speaking.

One of the reasons I was suspicious was that once I was workin' for a boss that didn't have no protective tariff on his stuff, and then I worked for one that had. Both places, I got the same rate of pay doing the same job. In the first place, I maintained and repaired machines making watch parts. In the second place, I done the same on the same kind of machines making works for time clocks. My first boss made stuff that had a tariff of 86 ad valorem but he didn't pay me more because of it.

So one night when I get done with my supper I hike down to the library. I want to see who's right and who's wrong. Also, I want to know for myself if freedom is something that's for everybody and works right for everybody, or just something that works one way and for Americans only. And while I was at the library I got some of the facts and figures to smack the boss and the delegate with at the next meeting. I figured if my Junior is

fightin' for freedom out in some banana and cocoanut paradise full of malaria and bugs, I just got to shoot my mouth off and take a chance of a pasting for the sake of freedom right here at home. I'm telling you this 'cause I want your company and because I think it's your job, too.

Naturally I read what the experts have to say about wages in protected industries and those that ain't protected.* I find that in about fifty protected industries the wage averages 1,100 bucks per year, the lowest being around 700 bucks and the highest less than 1,400. In fifty industries that ain't protected, but hire the same type of labor, the average is over 1,700 bucks per year, the lowest around 1,300 and the highest 4,300.

That don't look like protection is protecting the working man. But I suppose that the argument of the tariff experts is that if it wasn't for protection even the smaller wages in the protected industries couldn't be earned because cheap labor from Europe and Asia would just throw good honest American workmen out of jobs. But they ain't proved that idea, and all the figures prove so far to me is that wages ain't higher in protected industries by comparison.

So I look for more ammunition in what I calls my fight for freedom.

FUNNY, but the Japs—of all people!—give me my first hints, with lamps and toothbrushes.

Once upon a time us Americans had

*Cohn, David L., "Picking America's Pocket": N. Y., Harper's, 1936.

to put up 35 to 50 cents for a electric lamp bulb. The Japs send a couple of cargoes of lamps here to sell for a dime. They were lousy bulbs. In a couple of hours they go "Pfewt" but people bought 'em anyway. Pretty soon Five-and-Dimes were selling 'em by the carload and the market began to float away from the American manufacturers. But did they let that happen long? They did not! They came out with a cheap lamp selling for 19 cents that was twenty times better than the Jap lamp—and "Pfewt" the Jap lamps went out—of the market. People had plenty of lamps soon and didn't have to carry one from room to room like before. And soon American-made lamps dropped to a dime.

I dunno if it was new machines that made lamps cheap, but I bet whatever it was it wouldn't have happened except for foreign competition.

Most all toothbrushes used to sell at sixty cents apiece. So, being so much, not everybody bought 'em. Then the Japs barged in with a dime brush made of bamboo or bone, or bristles that got like silk when wetted. But a lot of people used 'em. Did that chuck men out of work? It did not. A lot of Americans were put to work making ten-cent toothbrushes that really did the job. Long before the war, Jap brushes faded out of the market or were dumped onto State insane asylums for the guys that don't know no better.

There ain't a single instance that I can find where machine-made goods produced on a mass production schedule can be made cheaper any-

where than here. For example, tea could be grown right here in South Carolina and other moist Southern states, but we can buy it cheaper from Ceylon, India and China. And those countries buy big and little gadgets which we can make fastest here.

And I ain't discovered any foreigners crazy enough to send their stuff here without getting some other stuff back. And the funny thing is what they get back has got to be made by Americans. And there's lots of stuff foreigners can make cheaper than us. Don't forget it! Maybe it's their climate; maybe it's because they got raw materials in the ground what we ain't; maybe they got time to waste doing a lot of hand work, or maybe they got special skills.

So what? Wages ain't to be measured in money but in what money can buy. If a lot of dumb Europeans and Orientals want to make lace by hand and get paid in radios, that ought to be all right with us—so long as we make the radios and it takes less time and effort than what they use.

As the artist said to the pretty gal in the picture, "I'll draw you a long beau." But if South Americans can raise bananas better than we can, we'd be idiots to try to raise 'em under glass, which we can. But we'd be smart if we made machetes and sewing machines and automobiles—a carload of which is worth a shipload of green bananas.

Seems to me people ought to remember that they ain't workin' just to sweat. They don't want jobs for the sake of having 'em, but for gettin'

satisfactions out of wages. The less work and the more satisfactions, the better.

And why not be consistent? This protection business don't prevent competition for the home market. The public and the government don't worry who goes out of business so long as he's put out of business by Americans.

We'd have been in a swell fix if the ice men had got full protection against the makers of mechanical refrigerators—or the horseshoers against the automobile makers—or player piano and victrola makers against the radio makers.

And there's lots of stuff on the protected list that we don't even make or grow in sufficient quantity: Manganese ore, foreign cheeses, green olives, Sumatra cigar wrappers, long staple cotton, linen, Turkish and other Oriental rugs, French lace, Chinese lace, and on and on. All that protection does is give to the manufacturers of these articles the privilege of soaking us poor guys with prices that miraculously hover just on the rim of the tariff protection.

For instance: Article Q can be made in France and shipped to the U. S. and sold here at a profit for \$3. Maybe it's an ounce of swell perfume. Something of equal quality can be produced here profitably if it could be sold for \$6. The protectionist patriot grabs a lobbyist and quicker than you can say *Djer Kiss*, there's a tariff of 200 per cent on French perfumes! Now French perfumes can't be sold at a profit for less than \$9. Does your

daughter or mine smell swell on \$6 an ounce? Tsk, tsk—don't be naive! Remember the same quality French perfume now costs nine bucks! No sir, your daughter and mine will pay 8.85 for American stuff and break one another's sweet little dispositions at a bargain counter putting it out for 8.50.

And you know how far a woman will go to get and hold her man—but you also know how far your wages will go to load the table and make it nice for the little woman. All right, maybe your Missus don't use perfume by the quart. Maybe it ain't so often that she spends 8.85 for the stuff instead of three bucks. Maybe once in a while that extra 5.85 don't hurt. But, brother, it ain't just perfume and it ain't just once in a while! It's practically on half the stuff both of you and me buy all the time!

Freedom—my hat! Equality—my eye! Protection—my foot!

ME—I'm gettin' tired payin' guys sittin' comfy behind a tariff wall, sippin' whiskey sours from wages I got to sweat for. I believe enough in freedom to let it include everybody, and I believe enough in America and the skill of her workmen and the efficiency of her machines to out-produce any and all of 'em, man for man. And I know enough to remember that high wages come from high production and not from high tariff walls. And don't the record we workin' stiffs made on the production line in this war prove it?

Yes sir! Me and my Junior got a fight on our hands 'cause we both be-

lieve in freedom—starting at home.

And this freedom includes the right to buy something from some foreigner—if he's got what we want—and sell something back to him. Takes two to make a trade, and we've gotta have foreign markets—whether it's four per cent or ten per cent of our national production—it all adds up to better living for everybody in the good old U.S.A.

It's as plain as Uncle Sam's Adam's apple that if we boost the tariff on

them foreigners, they can't ship us so much, and they can't take so much of our goods.

This idea of free trade ain't philanthropy. It's just plain common horse sense. It don't take no Philadelphia lawyer to see that if we trade what we can best produce and *don't need* for what we can't produce and *do need*, we're better off. In fact, everybody can understand that except the protected manufacturers and their lobby boys.

Reclaiming Synthetic Rubber

» Synthetic rubber, heretofore considered totally expendable because every known method of reclamation used upon it had failed, is now being salvaged for re-use in manufacture as a result of scientific research and effort.

Laboratory research was started shortly after the national synthetic rubber program began. Early estimates of the scrap situation showed that thousands of pounds of scrap, accumulated during manufacture of synthetic rubber items and manufacturing defects made from synthetic, would be useless unless new methods were found to reclaim it. Formulas applied to natural rubber for reclaim purposes failed to make the material plastic enough to start reclaiming processes.

New formulas were compounded, and test after test conducted, until processes were developed which have now made possible the reclaiming of this scrap material. Thus far more than 1,000,000 pounds have been reclaimed, employing the same machinery that has for years been used for natural rubber reclaim.

The research and laboratory work which made possible this synthetic rubber reclaim program were conducted at the Naugatuck Chemical Division, U. S. Rubber Company's laboratories in Connecticut.

Chemical & Engineering News

❖ A southerner, after attending a banquet, was asked who was present. With a reminiscent smile, he replied: "An elegant gentleman from Virginia, a gentleman from Kentucky, a man from Ohio, a boulder from Chicago, a fellow from New York, and a galoot from Maine."