

MEMORIAL

A COMMITTEE OF A MEETING OF PAPER MANUFACTURERS OF NEW ENGLAND,

PRAYING

That the present duties on foreign paper and books may not be changed.

JULY 23, 1846.

Ordered to be printed.

To the honorable the Senate of the United States:

The undersigned respectfully represent, that at a meeting of the paper manufacturers and dealers of New England they were appointed a committee to present to Congress a memorial, showing the disastrous consequences to their interests of the proposed reduction of the duties on paper and books, and such statistical information as would show the magnitude and importance of the business.

In furtherance of the views of the numerous and respectable body of citizens whose interests we represent, we ask leave to lay before your honorable body the following statement of facts in relation to the business, and some of the reasons why we pray for a continuance of the tariff of duties of 1842 on paper and books.

The manufacture of paper was commenced in this country about the year 1760, and was then deemed of so much importance that special privileges were granted to the manufacturer by the colonial legislatures of Massachusetts and Connecticut. Its progress from that time was slow, notwithstanding the high prices obtained, until the establishment of a tariff of duties enabled the manufacturer to compete successfully with the foreign article. From that time to the present the quantity manufactured has steadily and rapidly increased, and prices have steadily declined. Costly machinery and great improvements have been introduced, and there is now no description of paper that cannot be as well manufactured here as abroad. The facilities for supplying the country are ample, and so great has become the competition, since the introduction of duties, that prices have fallen at least one-half, quality considered.

The capital invested in the business is estimated, on a careful examination, at eighteen millions of dollars, and the annual product at seventeen millions—the number of mills being about seven hundred, distributed over twenty-two States of the Union—and the number of persons deriving their support from the business at not less than seventy-five, and probably one hundred thousand. This capital is not monopolized by a few

wealthy individuals or companies; but, with few exceptions, is held by men in moderate circumstances, and generally by those who contribute their own labor in the prosecution of the business.

The value of the stock consumed in the business, consisting of rags, cotton waste, bale-rope, bagging, junk, &c., is estimated at seven millions seven hundred thousand dollars. About one-tenth of this stock is of foreign origin; the balance is obtained from every inhabited house in the Union, affording, by its collection, a comfortable subsistence to hundreds and even thousands of our poor people. It is an article which is entirely worthless for any other purpose; and as from its low price and great bulk it could not be collected for shipment from the country, it is plain that this large amount would be a dead loss in the event of the manufacture being destroyed. In this connexion, we would remark, that a large portion of this material, such as rags, waste cotton, and bale rope and bagging, is collected at the south; and we find, by calculation, that all the paper used in the six cotton-growing States (other than is there manufactured) is paid for wholly by this raw material.

In addition to the above, large quantities of coal, wood, iron, wrought and cast, leather, sizing, bleaching salts, feltings, wire and wire-cloths, smalts and other coloring materials, oils, alum, lime, soda ash, potashes, pearlashes, oil of vitriol, soap, twine and cordage, &c., amounting in value to over two millions of dollars, are consumed. The amount paid for transportation, in this branch of manufacture, is not less than five hundred and fifty thousand dollars—constituting no inconsiderable item of income to our coasting vessels, railroads, canals, and teamsters.

It is apparent to your memorialists that this extensive and important branch of manufactures must be seriously injured, if not wholly broken down, by substituting an ad valorem duty of 30 per cent. for the present specific rates; and we ask leave to present some of our reasons for arriving at such a conclusion.

The average price of labor in our manufactories for the past ten years has been from six to nine dollars per week; whilst that of Europe varies, in the different countries, from two dollars and fifty cents per week, in England, (where labor is best paid,) to one dollar and fifty cents per week in France, Germany, Sweden, and Norway; and in Italy and Spain, it is still less. Now, as labor constitutes a large and important item in the manufacture of paper, particularly of the finer kinds, it is obvious that unless the wages of our labor be reduced to the pauper level of Europe, competition upon equal terms is out of the question.

The prices of the raw material (owing to the cheapness of labor, and the small amount of books and newspapers printed, compared with that of this country) are very much lower than with us. In some countries with which we have intercourse, France particularly, the exportation of paper rags is prohibited. This is done to protect their manufacturing interest, securing the raw material at almost nominal rates. By other governments, as that of Great Britain, a bounty is allowed on the exportation of paper and books, amounting in many instances to a large per centage of their value. Other materials used in the manufacture, as felting, bleaching salts, soda ash, smalts, &c., are procured in Europe at much less prices than in this country; and this difference will be much greater should the bill now under consideration become a law, because the duties on most of these articles are fixed at higher rates. Most of the European

paper manufacturers are capitalists, who, if the business yields them an income of four or five per cent. per annum, are perfectly satisfied. In addition to all this, the ad valorem form of duty is so liable to fraud and evasion, by false invoices, &c., and the difficulty of determining the different qualities and value of paper imported is so great, that instead of a duty of 30, we should not have one of over 20 per cent.

We also respectfully ask leave to call your attention to the duty proposed on books in the new bill. The effect of this will inevitably be to prevent the republication of all foreign works in this country; and the consequence will be, that not only will the reading population be obliged to pay an increased price for all foreign literature, but the business of our publishers, book binders, type founders, &c., &c., and our own interest, will be seriously affected.

For the reasons above stated, we would respectfully ask that the present rates of duties on paper and books may be continued.

E. P. TILESTON, *of Mass.*

ALLEN C. CURTIS, *of Mass.*

BOSTON, July 18, 1846.

