

The County Record.

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NO. 22

LUMBER MAN COMES TO ELLERBE'S DEFENSE.

BY INGENUOUS ARGUMENT TRIES TO JUSTIFY HIS VIOLATION OF PARTY PLEDGE.

Editor County Record:—

I have read over twice your editorials in The Record of August 4 wherein you attack vigorously Hon J E Ellerbe's vote against free lumber. I am glad to note that you are a personal friend of Mr Ellerbe's, and that there has been no criticism made of his work in Congress except his vote against free lumber. This criticism is made on account of the Democratic platform in the last Presidential campaign declaring for free lumber, and because of this declaration of the so-called Democratic party at that time, it is claimed that Democratic Congressmen and Senators were bound by their pledges to support this declaration in the platform, and that because Mr Ellerbe, with a very large number of other strong and influential Democratic Congressmen and Senators, voted against free lumber and in favor of a tariff for revenue, they are charged vigorously, mostly by political opponents and their friends, as being unfaithful to their pledges.

I am, of course, as you well know, no politician, and am not writing you this letter for publication, and will not engage in any political controversy, and if I desired to do so, it would be altogether useless and unnecessary, as Mr Ellerbe is fully prepared to defend his vote against free lumber and, therefore, does not need such help as I could render in a controversy or otherwise. I am writing in the interest of fair play and, in a small way, to show my personal appreciation of Mr Ellerbe's hard, arduous and effective work in Congress for the best interests of his fellow-citizens and for the South at large, not only in his vote on the lumber tariff but in numerous other ways.

The following are the points in your editorials which I wish to refer to (I take it, of course, that you are willing to be corrected where you are in error):

First, as to the increased price of lumber to the local and Southern consumer Mr Ellerbe is entirely correct, and his statement can be verified by numerous affidavits, if necessary, from lumber people and also consumers that not only the present tariff but also the Dingley tariff caused practically no increased price to the Southern consumer of lumber at large, and no increased price whatever to the local consumer, Mr Ellerbe's constituents. This may seem strange to you and difficult to understand, but a partial explanation is this and should be easily understood: Practically all of the Canadian lumber brought across the line is marketed within a radius of from 100 to 400 miles from the dividing line between Canada and the United States, and is of a low, coarse, knotty grade, known to the lumber trade as "box and roofer grade"; this grade of lumber in the South is manufactured from the top cuts of the tree, being the coarse, knotty logs and these logs cannot be manufactured into any other grades except box or roofers or small, low-grade scantling. When you speak of "lumber" to a person not acquainted with the lumber trade, it only means "lumber"; to the lumberman he does not know what it means without the word "lumber" is defined by lumber language or expressions, by using the grades and specifications known to the lumber trade. To illustrate, if you were to write me for prices on 10,000 feet of lumber, I would not know how to make a reply; it would be necessary for you to advise me on the grades

and specifications wanted. Speaking generally, I presume there are something like fifty to seventy-five different prices on Southern pine lumber and equally as many grades or kinds, and the Southern consumer uses all of the different grades and prices of lumber in the construction work of the South. About one-twentieth of the amount of lumber consumed in the South is the roofer or box grade, this being the grade on which the tariff helps the Southern manufacturer, and such a small portion of it used South that the price to local consumers is not affected, and as the Southern mills have a large proportion of roofer and box grades, they are compelled to seek a market directly in competition with Canadian common, low grade lumber on the border line where this grade is used extensively in the numerous box factories; there are very few box factories South, and Canada offers no competition whatever, regardless of tariffs, on the better and higher grades of our Southern pine, and no competition whatever on dimension sizes for heavy construction work, house framing, railroad trestle work, etc., and no competition whatever, regardless of tariffs or otherwise, on heart long leaf pine timbers and lumber, because they have no such timber to sell anywhere; therefore the Southern lumberman is helped by the tariff to market a grade of lumber that would otherwise be compelled to rot in the forest untouched, for want of a market at any price, as a great deal of it is now doing. This grade is called locally culls and very little used by farmers.

I note with surprise your reference to a "lumber trust"; you refer to this in a way that leads me to conclude that you do believe there is a lumber trust. I have been in the lumber business for 25 years as manufacturer, retail and wholesale, and I am pretty well acquainted with the lumber trade in a general way, both North and South, and if there is a lumber trust, or if there ever has been a lumber trust in 25 years, I do not know anything about it, and I am positively certain that there is no lumber trust nor any kind of compact or agreement by lumbermen in this section of the country, including the whole of South Carolina and a large part of North Carolina and Georgia, controlling the price of lumber; on the other hand, I know from every-day experience that there is the keenest possible competition on every kind of lumber manufactured in the South, and I am utterly amazed when I see reference to a "lumber trust", and it causes me to wonder if all other trusts referred in the papers are fiction and imagination, like the reference to a "lumber trust" is.

Now, with reference to Mr Ellerbe's pledge to support the "principles" of the Democratic party, I do not think you will question my statement when I say that the national Democratic party, prior to the time Mr W J Bryan gobbled it up and put it in his vest pocket, always advocated a tariff for necessary revenue. I do not think that you will say that the Democratic party before the time referred to advocated free trade, and certainly the tariff on lumber under the Dingley law and the present law could not be considered anything like a protective or prohibitory tariff, and if you will take it up and compare the lumber tariff with the tariff on a great many other articles which a great many Southern Democrats voted for, you will find that the lumber tariff cannot be construed to be higher than necessary for revenue. This was clearly shown by the lumber people in advocating a tariff in the last Congress; therefore Mr Ellerbe and all other Southern Democrats in voting for the lumber tariff are very

much more loyal and better Democrats than those who declared for free trade.

I suppose you know that the demand for free lumber was put in the platform by Mr W J Bryan, over the opposition of numerous delegates, and to please the Western people and catch their votes for Bryan; this, of course, was a shrewd political move on Bryan's part and altogether un-Democratic, as practically all his policies are. He knew the Southern people would vote for him against a Republican candidate, it mattered not how much injury his success at the polls would have done the South.

I had occasion to visit Washington when the tariff law was under consideration and called upon practically all of the South Carolina Congressmen, and without a single exception, so far as I can now remember, they all agreed that there should be a tariff on Canadian lumber, and that the tariff then in existence was not too high as a tariff for revenue. Some of them, of course, refused to vote as Mr Ellerbe did, on account of what is known as the party pledge. I repeat, however, that I think it is easy to see that the platform for free lumber was un-Democratic, and to vote for a tariff for revenue was strictly in line with Democratic principles.

I think you are unfair to Mr Ellerbe when you charge him with voting in the interest of a lumber trust when there is no such thing in existence; also you are unfair in charging against him as a result of his vote against free lumber that he has increased the cost of lumber to consumers.

It seems to me it is unfair, although you will no doubt differ with me, to charge him with unfaithfulness because he could not conscientiously, in the discharge of his duty to his constituents, vote for an un-Democratic demand in the platform put there for no other purpose than to please W J Bryan.

While this letter is not for publication, and I do not wish you to publish it, at the same time you are at liberty, and I shall be glad to have you make use of what I have said in explanation of Mr Ellerbe's course in some way that will correct erroneous impressions created in the minds of many people by your editorials, and if you are unwilling to do this, and are willing to publish this letter, with-holding my name but stating that it was written by a lumberman, if you wish to, you may do so.

A great deal more could be said in proof of the matters as stated herein, and also several other points in favor of the position taken in this letter could be made and explained, but it would take a letter too long, and what is herein stated is sufficient for your consideration, for, judging from your editorials, you will be slow to learn and accept facts contrary to your established views.

With kind personal regards, I am,
Yours very truly,
LUMBERMAN.

Picnic Near Trio.

Editor County Record:—
Please allow room in your paper to invite the public to attend a basket picnic at A W Graham's, near Trio, S C, on August 19, 1910. We will expect you with us. Committee:

- A W GRAHAM,
- W T ROWELL,
- W S J FLOWERS,
- J W LOCKLEAR,
- R D BLAKELEY,
- E R ROWELL,
- S P COOPER.

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A Card.

To the Voters of Williamsburg County:—

In response to a request made in The County Record of last week asking for the views of the candidates for the House of Representatives on the whisky question I gave my views last week in part. On the 17th of last August I voted for prohibition and if it comes up in the Legislature and I am elected, I will vote the same, but I believe prohibition should be taught in our schools, in our churches and Sunday-schools. The evil of drink should be taught to our children from the cradle. Our moral law will eventually enforce prohibition, but our statutory law can only prohibit.

Hope this sets my position in the whisky matter clear.

Respectfully,
W S CAMLIN.

Andrews, August 8.

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E. C. Epps, Clerk Board of Trustees.
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