HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

FRIDAY, April 18, 1902.

The House met at 12 o'clock m. m. Prayer by the Chaplain, Rev. HENRY N. COUDEN, D. D.

The Journal of yesterday's proceedings was read and approved.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS BILL.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill H. R. 12695.

The SPEAKER. The gentleman from New York moves that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill H. R. 12695.

The motion was agreed to.

The House accordingly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, Mr. SOMERS in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN. The House is in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill H. R. 12695, the title of which the Clerk will report.

The Clerk read as follows:

A bill to establish the reciprocal trade relations with Cuba.

Mr. HARLINGER of Tennessee. Mr. Chairman, if I had been called to prepare a bill to present to this House to accomplish the avowed objects of the pending bill, I would not have presented the measure which we are now considering. The object of this bill as expressed in its caption and declared by its friends is "To provide for reciprocal trade relations with Cuba." It is to obtain the trade of that country through the principle of reciprocity. That is the object we shall be asked to vote for. This is what is meant by reciprocal trade relations between two countries. Desiring to bring about reciprocal trade relations with Cuba, I would not have presented exactly this measure, nor, not knowing all the political reasons that have influenced the bill, as I do, but I would not have dropped exactly where the friends of the pending bill stopped. I would have recommended a reduction of the tariff twenty-five per cent instead of fifty per cent.

Mr. Chairman, there have been a variety, a great variety, of opinions developed and expressed during this long debate. It has been an able debate. While I do not agree with the line taken by many of the advocates of this bill, I do agree with the line taken by those who are in the minority, that the bill should pass. Certain backwaters, Mr. Chairman, have been established by this debate, fully developed to what has occurred in the House and before the committee during the debate. If nothing else has been established there is one fact will be beyond penal criticism, it seems to me, that is of considerable advantage to the country. What is that? It is that there is a demand for reciprocal trade relations, or for reciprocal trade relations with a country by and through appropriate legislation. How is that to be done? Exactly along the line of this bill.

If you want the trade of a people, you must deal fairly with them; if you want them to buy from you, you must buy from them. Therefore, the first step that the wise men took when they commenced to frame this bill was to plant a Democratic hand south from which they could reach out. What for? Because your hand will not make trade relations, they and labor. You want to establish relations, you want to develop trade with Cuba. How can you develop it? By what? By what you call a Republican policy of placing a higher tariff against Cuba and Cuban tariff? Would not that be the Republican idea? What is the Democratic idea? Reduce your tariff wall, reduce your tariff, and provide for reciprocal trade relations with Cuba.

So, then, Mr. Chairman, without dwelling upon this important fact, this grand landmark is now planted and definitely established by the debate. Republican leaders and nation leaders of that school, who want to provide trade relations with Cuba, if we want to extend our trade with any country and open new markets, we must put down the tariff wall which now surrounds the country. That fact, then, is established. I said that I thought they had started in the proper direction. I said they did not go as far as they ought to have gone, in my judgment. It may be I am mistaken in this. The majority of this House agree with the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. MORRIS] who spoke yesterday, and who had hearings before that committee before the bill was presented, more of opinion than it was necessary that there should be 50 per cent reduction in favor of Cuban products before we would get the benefit of the friends. Others said 25 per cent. General Wood, I believe, thought 40 would give us relief, and others a still lower rate.

The gentleman who framed the bill must have thought that 50 per cent reduction would give us that trade. Having the honor of a seat on that committee, I supported the bill and gave it a favorable recommendation. I did so because, while I doubted, and expressed that doubt when I cast my vote in committee for the bill, that it would accomplish the purpose in view yet I thought I might possibly be mistaken in this respect, and it would bring about the reciprocal trade between the two countries so earnestly desired. Therefore, without agreeing to the amendments to the bill, I have allowed it to pass by default, without submitting it to the House made by the learned chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, without submitting all of the arguments and reasons which convinced the majority of the bill, and propose it might be properly amended in the House. I did not have the bill should be reported to the House with a favorable recommendation.

I will now show that Mr. Chairman, I love it is my party sense also and possibly to the country to state briefly some of the reasons which constrained me to report the bill favorably. The first reason was that it reduces the extraordinary high protective rates, now fixed by the Dingley law upon sugar and whether Cuban products, 20 per cent. Some say that only one industry is closely affected. Let us consider it for a moment. It is not only an economic, but the bill applies to all products coming from Cuba—sugar, tobacco, and necessary cigars. Sugar we all know is the chief product by equine from that island. Tobacco from is not a small matter. How much sugar do we consume? I will not undertake to say with figures, but the Commissioner of Commerce for the United States for year is about 2,000,000 tons. How much do we make in the United States? About one-third of this, including Hawaii and Porto Rico. The beet sugar and cane production is about one-third. The majority is about 800,000 tons. We consume about two-thirds of the sugar consumed by the American people, or about 1,600,000 tons. Where does our cane come? About one-half of it—800,000 tons—comes from Cuba, or will do under your, and I hope under this bill, the sugar, round numbers, from other countries, mainly from Germany.

Now, then, on one-half of this one article that the American people impose for consumption we get a reduction for this bill of 50 per cent in favor of the producer of the sugar. Mr. Chairman, that that will not affect the price. The principle is that the reduction of tariff duties will lower the price of the imported article in this country. That is a matter of common consideration. We not know how much it will lower it to the consumer, but it is a step in the right direction. The object of lowering the tax is to benefit the consumer in this country, and therefore because the bill reduces the tax on sugar I thought it right to vote for the bill. The sugar schedule, the sugar schedule, for about one-half of the amount consumed—that is, imported into the United States—I believe the bill should pass.

There is another view of the question. Some say they are tired of sentimentalism; but, Mr. Speaker, that idea as we will, there is a sentiment in this country, and properly, too, that we should do something for our neighbors, for our friends, the people of the United States in Cuba. I know it is contended by gentlemen on this side of the House that we have done enough for Cuba. There has not been a day, Mr. Chairman, since the beginning of the war, April, 1898, when there was not a soldier of the United States against Spain, that the hand of the United States, the military power of the United States, has not rested with control, force and dominating influence upon the island and the people of that island. We are there now. We will be there as long as it is necessary. How long that will be I do not know.

I am not going to discuss the effect of the Platt amendment. Mr. Chairman, I do not. I have read the Platt amendment with great care, and I believe of the effect of the power of intervention upon the island. Others have followed. Under the Platt amendment I believe that with the power vested by it, and by all the circumstances surrounding the people of Cuba for many both at home and abroad in the name of trade.

This bill will give Cuba a 20 per cent advantage. How much a will amount in cash be easily figured. Whatever it is, whether it will increase the price of sugar to the American consumer, I do then benefit the people of Cuba to that extent. It goes by and that. There are two purposes accomplished, either one of which I think is sufficient to justify me in voting for it, supposing that I did. Of course, in saying this I will add that I do not wish to do violence to any industry in this country. I know that our beet sugar friends consider that they are going to be injured, yet they will not be injured. Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that the cane sugar of sugar in the United States. Well, it will not going to affect the price to the consumer, how will the beet sugar man be injured? Let us see a little further.

Mr. HARLINGER. Mr. Chairman—

Mr. HARLINGER of Tennessee. No, I can not yield. I prefer not to be interrupted.

Mr. HARLINGER. I simply rose for information; not to have any conference with the gentleman. I am not given to that.

Mr. HARLINGER of Tennessee. I understand that, but I prefer not to yield, for I am not really in a physical condition to