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EDITORIAL

## AND THIS IS FORDNEY!

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE Reciprocity Bill with Canada being before the House, Congressman Joseph Warren Fordney of Michigan said:

“The farmer is the only man in the land that can put a stone wall around his property and live independent of the world. No lawyer, no merchant, in all the other varied walks of life in this land is so independent as the farmer in the production of the necessaries of life.”

And this was said in this year of grace 1911—after the economic history of the land has repeatedly exhibited the farmer, no longer the self-sufficient being he once was, but a link, dependent and interdependent in the long chain of useful occupations. And this was said after the farmer has more than once been seen burning his corn for fuel, the transportation link in the chain of which the farmer is another link having left him in the lurch. And this is said after the farmer has started more than one political revolt, the populist the latest, in his endeavor to escape the interdependence in which capitalist evolution has placed him together with all other useful and necessary pursuits. Time was when the farmer could put a stone wall around his property and live independent of the world. To-day, the farmer would freeze for want of fuel; would rot for want of clothing and foot gear; would be paralyzed in his labors for want of implements, if he fell back upon himself. To-day the fate of the crops in Argentina and in India is felt by the American farmer with the speed of lightning. A stone wall around his property? Capitalist evolution makes the stone wall impossible. Such things were; such things are no more. Not to know that



JOSEPH W. FORNEY  
(1853–1932)

bespeaks one a Rip Van Winkle.

As was to be expected Mr. Fordney opposes the Reciprocity Bill. It has too much the flavor of free trade for his political temperament. Not all the nonsense he might utter against the Bill on that head could detract from his standing as one of the “strong men” in Congress. That, however, he should betray himself a sociologic Rip Van Winkle, unaware of the leading economic changes wrought right under his own nose, and holding the language of the Stone Age—that, indeed, is cause for wonder.

And this is Fordney!

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