

SPEECH OF
CHARLES S. HAMLIN

AT

LAWRENCE, WEDNESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 2, 1904.

I have read the speech of General Guild at Lowell last evening replying to mine at Pittsfield Monday evening. I regret that he feels obliged to take exception to any of my remarks. He quotes again certain passages from his Pittsfield speech criticising me for having, as he says, "voted gold out of the platform", and he fails to find anything in his Pittsfield remarks justifying such a vigorous attack upon him. I can only say to him that I fully recognize the right of anyone to criticise another for his votes or public acts, but I feel that there is a certain kind of criticism which is universally recognized as unfair and unjust. A better illustration of such ~~unfair~~ criticism could not be afforded than Gen. Guild's criticism of my interview to the effect that I was bound by the Committee report which I had signed and that I should have to support that report in the Convention. Will Gen. Guild claim that a member of a Committee who has signed a report could in honor do otherwise than vote to sustain that report on the floor of the Convention? I do not think that he will make such a claim, and I believe, on reflection, he will see that his criticism is unfair and unjust.

Such criticism, however, unfair as it is, was not the reason for my remarks at Pittsfield. Gen. Guild went very much farther. He went so far as even to attack my person^{al} honor. After reciting an allegorical tale to the effect that when honor is gone, all is gone, he applied this tale to me, stating in effect that I went to St.

Louis pledged to vote against National repudiation and for honest payment of honest debts, but that I surrendered on "the question of the National honor and honest payment of our honest debts", and that by my vote "repudiation of honest money was carried through this year's Democratic Convention". The almost unnecessary inference from such statements is that my course in the Convention was dishonorable.

I can only say that I have sufficient faith left in Gen. Guild's good sense to know that he does not really believe such statements, and I must suggest to him that when even by innuendo, he attacks the honor of a fellow-citizen, he must expect the latter to defend his honor with such force and vigor as he may possess.

The General states that his military record is attacked. If so, it must have been by some other person. I have not attacked it. I would suggest, however, that it is hardly consonant with the military record I gladly admit Gen. Guild possesses, to impugn the honor of a fellow-citizen, without taking pains that the person attacked may be fully informed thereof so that he may take means to defend himself.

I appreciate fully that it is often a hardship to have to prepare an abstract of speeches for the press; I agree gladly that one may freely criticise the acts of another without putting into his abstract every word that he says; that I believe the people of Massachusetts, without regard to Party allegiance, will severely condemn an attack on the personal honor of a citizen of the Commonwealth made in such a manner that only by accident could the person thus attacked know that his character had been assailed.

While people may differ as to the advisability of not endorsing the gold standard in the platform as adopted by the Democratic Convention, yet surely no reasonable person can say that a member of the Committee, after having fought hours in favor of such an endorsement, has lost his honor because he failed to file a minority report. In the proceedings of the Committee, a motion was made to reaffirm the Kansas City platform. This was overwhelmingly voted down in both the sub-Committee and the full Committee; the question of having another plank directly endorsing the gold standard having later arisen, the Massachusetts member fought and voted in favor of such a plank but was out voted by those who almost unanimously rejected the free silver proposition contained in the motion to reaffirm the Kansas City plank. That the Massachusetts member accepted the situation without filing a minority report, is ~~xxxxx~~^{ground} for debate perhaps as to the wisdom of his course, but it affords no ground for attacking his personal honor.

The telegram of Judge Parker and the subsequent proceedings in the Convention are a matter of history, and I need not refer to them.

Gen. Guild pays no attention whatsoever to the monetary record discussed by me of the Republican Party. He contents himself by trying to show that the record of Democrats in Congress was about as bad as that of the Republicans. This may well be true, but he must admit that under the last two Democratic Administrations no silver legislation became law, and one silver law was vetoed, while under a Republican Administration the Sherman law was passed, bringing a terrible financial crisis upon the country. This latter measur^e

was passed at a time when the Republican Party controlled the House, the Senate, and the Presidency. Gen. Guild, in defense of this act, says that President Cleveland described the Sherman Act as a truce between the free silverites and the conservatives. This may be true, but why was such a truce necessary? Was it because Republicans feared that President Harrison would not veto a free coinage bill?

Gen. Guild ^{courageously} praises President Cleveland for vetoing the silver inflation bill known as the Bland Seigniorage Bill. In giving this praise, however, he indicts the Republican Party. The Bill vetoed by President Cleveland provided for the coinage of the silver bullion in the Treasury including the seigniorage, for the issue of silver certificates against the dollars coined, including the seigniorage, and for the cancellation of the Sherman notes. This veto was hailed with delight as a great victory for sound finance.

Does Gen. Guild, however, remember that in 1898, the Republican Party in section thirty-four of the War Revenue Act ordered the Treasury to coin the silver bullion in the Treasury vaults, seigniorage and all? Does he know that by section five of the Act of March 14, 1900, the Treasury was directed to issue silver certificates against these dollars, including the seigniorage?

If President Cleveland's veto was wise, what does the General think of this reversal of his veto by the Republican Party?

Gen. Guild's answer to the first question put to him at Pittsfield is an attempt to change the question put. He says he is asked whether he believes "the Republican Party did well six years ago in corresponding with other Nations to see if international bi-metallicism would be possible".

No such question was asked and his answer that "it was well for the world that such an examination proved it to be impossible"" is not responsive.

The question asked and now asked again is,;"Do you approve of the act of the Republican Administration in 1898 in proposing to adopt free and unlimited coinage of silver for the United States, providing France would do the same, and that England, retaining the gold standard, should simply open her India mints?

Will Gen. Guild answer this question or will he deny that such an offer was made by the Wolcott Commission with the full approval of the Republican Administration, and that only the refusal of Great Britain saved us from incalculable disaster?

If he denies this will he read the speech of Senator Wolcott, of the Commission, the Chairman, delivered in the United States Senate early in the year 1898, ~~xxx~~ when he said,-

"Our views were known to the President before our appointment; there was no one of us who did not and does not believe that the financial question overshadows all others, and that continued adhesion to the gold standard means only disaster to our agricultural and commercial interests""

Here is another quotation from the speech,-

"Whatever measure of success or failure has been meted out to us, we have been hampered by no lack of authority or sanction or administrative support".

And again this quotation:-

"By virtue of our appointment we were authorized to negotiate an international agreement."

Then follows the offer made to Great Britain described in the question put to General Guild.

Now will the General answer the question fairly and directly?

And now I will answer the question put me by General Guild. The first is whether I believe that there is danger that some silver measure may be introduced in the next Congress by the Democrats.

I presume by silver measure he means a free coinage bill. Of course I cannot tell what bills may be introduced, either by Republicans or Democrats, but I venture to express the opinion that should a free coinage measure be introduced, it will not receive the votes of the majority of the Democrats or a material fractional part thereof.

His second question is, whether, after Judge Parker (to quote his words) "is beaten" and after Mr. Bryan reorganizes the Democratic Party, will I stand by Mr. Bryan or bolt as I did in 1896?

the fact of Judge Parker's defeat on
This question contains a premise, which next Tuesday may be demonstrated to be untrue.

If the main premise is untrue, it would be idle to add other hypotheses based upon this false premise. I will, however, say this, that I always have and always shall reserve the right to follow the dictates of my conscience when, if ever, my Party takes a position, on a vital issue, which I believe to be fraught with disaster to the masses of our people.

Has your conscience, General Guild, driven you to bolt your Party? I am told it has. Will you tell me when and where?