

FREE COINAGE OF SILVER.

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SPEECH

OF

HON. ANTHONY HIGGINS,

OF DELAWARE,

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 1892.



WASHINGTON,

1892.



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The Senate, as in Committee of the Whole, having under consideration the bill (S. 51) to provide for the free coinage of gold and silver bullion, and for other purposes—

Mr. HIGGINS said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: The agreement of yesterday afternoon to take a vote on this bill and its amendments at 2 o'clock to-morrow was made in my absence. Had I been present I should have objected to it, because otherwise I find myself forced into the presentation of some views on this question without having had an adequate opportunity of preparation.

I had not expected, in addition to this difficulty, to be met by the statement from any Senator, and least of all from the distinguished Senator from Alabama [Mr. MORGAN], that this bill had already been discussed *ad nauseam*. To be sure, he had made at least three set speeches upon it, and he followed up that declaration with another one to-day. While the Senator from Nevada [Mr. STEWART], who has particular charge of this bill, holds the Senator from New Jersey [Mr. MCPHERSON] and all the members of this body to the rigid exactions of the agreement made under these very peculiar circumstances, and almost, as the Senator from New Jersey well said, in violation of an antecedent agreement out of deference to the Democratic members of this body and the necessity to attend the Chicago convention, the Senator from Nevada, under those circumstances, insists upon our going on with this vote to-morrow, and accuses those who desire adequate opportunity to debate the question of wishing to perpetuate gag rule.

It may be idle to refer to these matters when I propose to discuss the subject-matter of this bill, but I do so because this performance—if I may be permitted to speak of it as such—is in keeping with the attitude of the promoters of this bill from the

time the question has been brought before the Senate. Those who are opposed to it belong to a gang of wicked conspirators, genuinely bad men, those who have been ascertained and found out and marked and spotted—plutocrats, and I believe they have been called in the West Plutarchs—men who have their grip upon the gold of the country, upon its currency, upon its life-blood, utterly wanting in regard for the interests of the people. They are opposing this bill, it is said, in order to continue the wicked exactions in which they have been indulging since 1873.

All this, Mr. President, is interesting. On the other hand, the Senators who have particular charge of this measure and promote it find themselves in a position of peculiar, singular, and most enviable self-satisfaction. They represent the people, the people who are being outraged. Somehow or other they have a special mandate from the people of this country. It may not be impertinence on my part to inquire whence they got it. Are they sent here in any manner other than all the rest of us? Does the Senator from Alabama, who has reiterated again and again that the people are in his charge and he is their savior, come here other than as the representative of the people of Alabama and elected by its Legislature? Can the Senator from Nevada, any more than myself, claim—coming from States as small in population as we do—that we can speak for all the people of this country?

The history of the relation of the people to the proposal for the free coinage of silver is a curious and most interesting one. Two years ago, when the then pending bill, which afterwards became the present act of 1890, was before this body, a majority of the Senate turned it into a free-coinage bill, passed it, and sent it to the House of Representatives, elected by the people and not elected by the Legislatures of the States. That body, then Republican by a majority of 20, did not pass the bill. For once in the history of this country it was startled by finding that the Senate was no longer the conservative but had become the reckless branch of the Government, and the conservative interests of this country were lodged with the popular branch, with the House of Representatives.

In this Congress, with a two-thirds majority Democratic and Farmers' Alliance together, the promoters of this measure, or its equivalent, came forward with confidence which seemed to be justified by events; but lo, and behold, they roie to a fall, and in a House of Representatives thus constituted, elected by the people and amenable to the people, that measure failed on a tie vote, and those who are responsible for its action have seen proper not to bring it up since. Thus, whether you consider one Congress representing a majority of one party, or the present House of Representatives when there is such an overwhelming majority of Democrats, we find those amenable to the people dare not pass such a measure.

But there is another branch of the Government, which is popular, that is the Executive, elected substantially by the vote of the people. Both parties have held their conventions and made their nominations. Each has put up a candidate about whose opinions and in the expression of whose opinions there has been no uncertain sound; and neither party dared put up any

candidate who was not known to be opposed to the isolated free coinage of silver. Nay, more, go to the platforms of both parties, to the expressions of opinion made by the great national conventions, and you find that our confident and daring friends, who are ready here to bell the cat and dare do anything, were in those conventions as mild as sucking doves. They did not even propose any platform or plank that carried out the principles of this bill, knowing, as they did, that they could not on any such ground successfully appeal to the verdict of the American people; and yet on this floor, back behind the ramparts of their Legislatures and their terms of six years, they can here be courageous and claim that they par excellence represent the people and that everybody else misrepresents them.

When this measure came to this floor, after the opening speech of the Senator from Alabama shelling the woods, as it was said, to find lurking Democratic candidates who were afraid to express themselves on this issue, an inquiry, the interest in which seems to have evaporated by this time, he was followed by the distinguished junior Senator from Colorado [Mr. WOLCOTT] in a mortuary discourse, asking who killed this great bill, who killed Cock Robin; and his colleague, the senior Senator from Colorado [Mr. TELLER], apologized to the Senate for remarks which he made, as he said, when it was no longer of any use; but at last the junior Senator from Nevada [Mr. STEWART], with infinite pluck, brought up his measure and put it before the Senate by a comfortable vote, and has kept it as the pending business; and now in rather a quick, I will not say a snap judgment, has fixed it so that we must vote upon it to-morrow, and we find ourselves face to face with this question.

I regret Mr. President, that long as this bill has been before the Senate, my other engagements have not permitted me to give the time for the preparation of the views I entertain, so that I can do satisfaction to myself in asking attention of the Senate upon it.

As I understand the issue between the two sides of the discussion, it arises out of the fact of the disparity of the metals. Gentlemen on the other side would ignore and whistle down the wind the fact that to-day the bullion in the American silver dollar is not worth more than 70 cents. I have not the exact rate of exchange of the price of silver to-day.

Before that disparity arose the metals had stood in equilibrium at one ratio or another from time immemorial. Within the memory of man, from the time when statistics upon the subject were first taken, as far as we know silver and gold have been the immemorial currency of the race from the earliest dawn of civilization and in times of which history no longer tells the tale. It went on until the disparity arose and the dislocation of the two metals took place on and after 1873.

I will ask to have printed with my remarks some tables which I extract from the speech of the Senator from Alabama [Mr. MORGAN], made on the 15th day of June, showing the ratio from 1493 until 1890, and also I ask to have printed with my remarks an extract from a speech made by ex-Senator Thurman as one of the commissioners of this Government to the conference in Paris on the money question.

The papers referred to are as follows:

TABLE D.—Showing the proportion of silver in the world's total production of gold and silver in periods from 1493 to 1890; also their varying ratios of market value prior to the mint enactment of France in 1803; and with special reference to their remarkable approach to constancy of mutual value, under extraordinary variations in their proportions of production, during the seventy years to 1873, in which the mints of France coined gold and silver without limit, as legal-tender equivalent, on her ratio of 1 to 15.50.\*

Period.	Pounds avoirdupois.		Proportion of total.		Average ratio of market value of silver to gold.
	Silver.	Gold.	Silver.	Gold.	
1493-1520	2,895,200	537,380	89	11	10.5-11.10
1521-1544	4,762,560	378,048	93	7	11.25
1545-1560	10,968,320	299,552	97	3	11.30
1561-1580	13,178,000	300,960	98	2	11.50
1581-1600	18,431,600	324,720	98	2	12.10
1601-1620	18,607,600	374,880	98	2	12.50
1621-1640	17,318,400	386,200	98	2	14.00
1641-1660	16,117,200	385,880	98	2	14.50
1661-1680	14,82,8000	407,440	97	3	15.00
1681-1700	15,043,600	473,660	97	3	14.96
1701-1720	15,646,400	564,080	97	3	15.21
1721-1740	18,972,800	839,520	96	4	14.71
1741-1760	23,468,380	1,082,840	96	4	14.71
1761-1780	28,720,560	911,020	97	3	14.64
1781-1800	38,678,640	782,760	92	2	14.76
1801-1810	19,671,300	391,116	98	2	15.42-15.61
1811-1820	11,895,940	251,790	98	2	15.54
1821-1830	10,132,320	312,752	97	3	15.80
1831-1840	13,121,900	446,358	97	3	15.57
1841-1850	17,169,130	1,204,698	93	7	15.75-16.60
1851-1855	9,747,265	2,172,665	82	18	15.42
1856-1860	9,954,800	2,266,638	81	19	16.30
1861-1865	12,112,650	2,036,353	86	14	16.36
1866-1870	14,729,935	2,110,900	87	13	15.55
1871-1875	21,663,675	1,877,425	92	8	15.98
1876-1880	24,200,088	1,831,720	93	7	17.00
1881-1885	29,333,894	1,694,258	95	5	18.78
1886-1890	37,962,785	1,863,700	95	5	21.49

\*Mints of France from 1803 to 1873 equally open to silver and gold on the ratio of 15.50 to 1.

Mr. President, and gentlemen, the general discussion having closed, we are brought, by the previous orders of the conference, as I understand them, to a consideration of the *questionnaire*. I propose to submit some brief observations on some of its points; but they will be little more than an expression of my individual opinions, with little or no argument.

The first question propounded is substantially as follows: "Have the diminution and great oscillations in value of silver that have occurred, especially of late years, been injurious or not to commerce, and, consequently, to general prosperity?"

"Is it desirable that the relation of value between gold and silver should be stable?"

I do not see how it is possible to give any but an affirmative answer to these questions; unless, indeed, the use of silver as money is to be wholly discontinued; and no one, here or elsewhere, advocates that. Although according to the logic of gold monometallists, it might seem that if an exclusive gold currency is the best for one country, it must be for all countries, yet I do not understand that anyone proposes to inaugurate measures for the universal demonetization of silver.

Silver, then, in a greater or less degree, is still to be used as money by commercial nations everywhere, and, this being admitted, can argument be required to prove that great fluctuations in its relative value must necessarily be injurious to commerce and to general prosperity? And as gold is also to be used, is it not equally obvious that the relative value of the two metals should be as stable as possible? The effect of an unstable and greatly

fluctuating currency upon debtors and creditors, at one time to the injury of the former, and at another to the injury of the latter; the discouragement to production, the uncertainties of employment, and the difficulties of exchange, to say nothing more, are sufficient to demonstrate how great are the calamities that such a currency is sure to inflict, and how imperative is the duty of Government to prevent, or, at least, to mitigate them.

We are next asked, "whether the fluctuations in the value of silver of late years are to be attributed to an increase in the production of that metal, or rather to legislation?"

It seems to me very clear that they were caused by unfriendly legislation, and not by increased production. According to the table presented by Dr. Broch, the mean price of silver in 1845, in the London market, was 15.93 of silver for 1 of gold, and the mean price, or ratio, in 1873, twenty-nine years later, was precisely the same.

During this period there were some fluctuations, not very great, however; and, taking the mean of the whole twenty-nine years, we have the striking fact that the relation was 15.54 to 1, being almost exactly the legal relation (154 to 1) that has existed in France for about seventy-eight years, and that now exists in the states of the Latin Union.

But, during the twenty-nine years above mentioned, the production of gold was enormous, and was, in value, at least double that of silver; so that, if either metal should have lost value as compared with the other, it would seem that it should have been gold, and not silver. Yet their relative value was precisely the same in 1873 that it was in 1845.

But in 1873 began, both in America and Europe, that course of legislation to which, in my judgment, are chiefly to be attributed the monetary troubles which this conference has met to consider. In the United States, by acts of Congress of 1873 and 1874, silver was demonetized; and, although the error, after the lapse of several years, was corrected, yet the coinage of full legal-tender silver is greatly restricted.

In Europe, Germany and the Scandinavian states have become gold monometallic, while the states of the Latin Union have almost wholly suspended the coinage of the white metal. That metal, being thus, by force of legislation, condemned and dishonored, its fall in value was inevitable, and the only matter of surprise to me is that it is no greater than it is. Look at the facts. In 1873 the relation between silver and gold was 15.93 to 1. Then commenced the legislation of which I have spoken, and its effect was instantly seen. In 1874 the relation was 16.16; in 1875, 16.63; in 1876, 17.80; in 1877, 17.19; in 1878, 17.96; in 1879, 18.39, and in 1880, 18.05 to 1. Was ever a result more directly traceable to its cause?

Mr. HIGGINS. I venture to read from the final sentence of Mr. Thurman's letter, as it is short, the facts as to when this disparity arose.

But in 1873—

He says—

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The promoters of this bill claim that this disparity arose by the act of Congress of 1873. I contend that it had nothing whatever to do with it; but on the contrary it does appear from the figures given by this sage of Democracy and wise man in the councils of our Government, Mr. Thurman, vouched for by the distinguished Senator from Alabama when he prints with com-

mentation the letter in his speech, that the disparity arose when the adverse legislation of Europe was enacted on this question, and the disparity was fixed and established before we ever resumed specie payments in 1878, and of course before our act of 1873 could affect the question of the money metals in any way whatever. We did not resume specie payments until January 1, 1878. Silver was demonetized by Germany in acts running from 1871 up to 1873. It was followed by the Latin Union in 1875; and before that, as I understand, by some of the other countries of Europe.

So by 1875 or 1876 all of Europe had ceased the coinage of silver and the United States had not resumed specie payments. Whatever effect the act of 1873 by our Congress had, it could only have been at least in the way of inducement to the other nations to take like action, though it is not to be presumed they knew what was done here. We were then under paper currency and not on a specie basis at all. Thus we find that this disparity, this dislocation of the metals was complete and established before any action touching the matter taken by our own Government.

It is claimed by the friends of this measure that we can safely indulge in the free coinage of silver, that we can dare indulge what I should call isolated free coinage alone, and that such isolated coinage by the United States will restore silver to a parity with gold. I contend that the depreciation of silver arises out of the action of the European governments and that it can only be restored by our joint cooperation with them or theirs with us.

I also ask leave to print with my remarks certain tables on the ratio between the two metals, which I take from an article in the June number of the Forum by the Director of the Mint.

The tables are as follows:

*Commercial ratio of silver to gold each year from 1637 to 1872.*

Year.	Ratio.	Year.	Ratio.	Year.	Ratio.	Year.	Ratio.
1637	14.94	1712	15.31	1737	15.02	1762	15.27
1638	14.94	1713	15.24	1738	14.91	1763	14.99
1689	15.02	1714	15.13	1739	14.91	1764	14.70
1690	15.02	1715	15.11	1740	14.94	1765	14.63
1691	14.98	1716	15.09	1741	14.92	1766	14.80
1692	14.92	1717	15.13	1742	14.85	1767	14.85
1693	14.83	1718	15.11	1743	14.85	1768	14.80
1694	14.87	1719	15.09	1744	14.87	1769	14.72
1695	15.02	1720	15.04	1745	14.98	1770	14.62
1696	15.00	1721	15.05	1746	15.13	1771	14.66
1697	15.20	1722	15.17	1747	15.26	1772	14.52
1698	15.07	1723	15.20	1748	15.11	1773	14.62
1699	14.94	1724	15.11	1749	14.80	1774	14.62
1700	14.81	1725	15.11	1750	14.55	1775	14.72
1701	15.07	1726	15.15	1751	14.39	1776	14.55
1702	15.52	1727	15.24	1752	14.54	1777	14.54
1703	15.17	1728	15.11	1753	14.54	1778	14.68
1704	15.22	1729	14.92	1754	14.48	1779	14.80
1705	15.11	1730	14.81	1755	14.68	1780	14.72
1706	15.27	1731	14.94	1756	14.94	1781	14.78
1707	15.44	1732	15.09	1757	14.87	1782	14.42
1708	15.41	1733	15.18	1758	14.85	1783	14.48
1709	15.31	1734	15.30	1759	14.15	1784	14.70
1710	15.22	1735	15.41	1760	14.14	1785	14.92
1711	15.29	1736	15.18	1761	14.54	1786	14.96

## Commercial ratio of silver to gold each year from 1687 to 1872—Continued.

Year.	Ratio.	Year.	Ratio.	Year.	Ratio.	Year.	Ratio.
1787	14.92	1809	15.96	1831	15.72	1853	15.33
1788	14.65	1810	15.77	1832	15.73	1854	15.33
1789	14.75	1811	15.53	1833	15.93	1855	15.38
1790	15.04	1812	16.11	1834	15.73	1856	15.38
1791	15.05	1813	16.25	1835	15.80	1857	15.27
1792	15.17	1814	15.04	1836	15.72	1858	15.38
1793	15.00	1815	15.26	1837	15.83	1859	15.19
1794	15.37	1816	15.28	1838	15.85	1860	15.29
1795	15.55	1817	15.11	1839	15.62	1861	15.50
1796	15.65	1818	15.35	1840	15.62	1862	15.35
1797	15.41	1819	15.33	1841	15.70	1863	15.37
1798	15.59	1820	15.62	1842	15.87	1864	15.37
1799	15.74	1821	15.95	1843	15.93	1865	15.44
1800	15.68	1822	15.80	1844	15.85	1866	15.43
1801	15.46	1823	15.84	1845	15.92	1867	15.57
1802	15.26	1824	15.82	1846	15.90	1868	15.59
1803	15.41	1825	15.70	1847	15.80	1869	15.60
1804	15.41	1826	15.76	1848	15.85	1870	15.57
1805	15.79	1827	15.74	1849	15.78	1871	15.57
1806	15.52	1828	15.78	1850	15.70	1872	15.63
1807	15.43	1829	15.78	1851	15.46		
1808	16.08	1830	15.82	1852	15.59		

The decline in the price of silver, as compared with gold, commenced in 1873. The relative value of silver to gold since that period has been as follows:

Year.	Ratio.	Year.	Ratio.	Year.	Ratio.	Year.	Ratio.
1873	15.92	1878	17.94	1883	18.64	1888	21.99
1874	16.17	1879	18.40	1884	18.57	1889	22.09
1875	16.50	1880	18.05	1885	19.41	1890	19.76
1876	17.88	1881	18.16	1886	20.78	1891	20.92
1877	17.22	1882	18.19	1887	21.13		

The average price of silver in 1873 was 59½ pence per ounce (British standard), equivalent to about \$1.30 per fine ounce, the exact equivalent of the French ratio being 60 13-16 pence, or \$1.33, per fine ounce. The lowest price of silver was reached on March 28, 1892, viz, \$0.85½ per fine ounce, a decline in the brief period of nineteen years of 47½ cents an ounce, or over 35 per cent. Forty years ago, England and Portugal were the only countries in Europe which had the gold standard. Silver was practically the money of Europe. To-day the situation is entirely reversed.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. President, I contend that silver can be restored to its parity with gold only by the joint action of the nations of the earth.

When we consider the importance of this issue we may well ask the friends of this bill to support their contention by some argument or some demonstration, because if they could show to the satisfaction of the country, if they could show to the satisfaction of the Senators who are opposed to this measure that their contention is right, they surely would have no opposition to it. Whether there have been at any time in this country doctrinaire monometallists or not, those who believe that other countries as well as this country will be better by having gold alone as the money metal of the world, I confess that now I do not know of any.

I have but one man in my mind who ventures to make that

contention. America has come freely and fully to adopt and accept the principle of bimetallism, and the promoters of this bill have no right to claim that they *par excellence* are its friends and its only friends. Least of all have they any right to impugn the motives and cover with wanton and unnecessary abuse and reproach those who want silver to be made equal with gold as a money metal, but fail to see how the United States can do it alone. When we ask them for arguments they indulge in prophesy. They say it will be done because it will be done.

We have had prophesy from that quarter before. When the bill of 1890, which afterwards became the act of that year, was pending the Senate was hypnotized by the genius of the distinguished Senator from Nevada [Mr. JONES] into the belief that by the purchase of four and a half million ounces of silver per month by our Government silver would go to a parity. They said at first, buy four and a half million dollars, but afterwards they said only give us ounces and that will make it sure. So the question was, I think in a conference committee, whether it should be four and a half million dollars or four and a half million ounces that was to be purchased, and at last we conceded that it should be ounces, and that was put in the bill. Some indulged in speculation and bought and got their fingers burned. Silver went up to 119 if not to 120 cents per ounce, and then it went back and lower than it ever did before. The act would provide for a larger measure of purchase of silver to-day if it had been four and a half million dollars instead of that many ounces, because the price of silver is about 90 cents per ounce.

Thus have the prophecies of our friends on the other side been confounded. Have they any standing room on which they can ask us any longer to indulge in their reading of the future? Shall we venture again to take their prophecies on the great financial interests of this country, reaching to every man's home and touching the pocket of every person, interesting the people, interesting the workingman, who sells his labor and is the largest creditor in the world, interesting the laboring man who is thrifty enough to save his money and put it in savings banks, interesting that large class who are the object of the bounty of this Government, its pensioners. All those are interested. Have we any justification in taking the prophesy of these gentlemen?

I confess I know of but one argument that they have urged, and that is not an argument, it is an illustration. They say that France opened its mints to coinage in 1803 under the control of Napoleon, and keeping them open to free coinage until 1873 maintained the parity of the metals during all that time. Their argument is, and I want to put it with perfect fairness and as strong as any of them can do it, that because France maintained the parity from 1803 to 1873, when they ceased the coinage of silver, therefore the United States can do the same thing.

Mr. President, the trouble with the argument or illustration is that it does not accord with the fact. It is not candid. It is not true. It is true that France during that time had her mints open to free coinage, but it is not true that upon the free coinage of France alone the parity of the metals rested during those seventy years. On the contrary, every government in Europe was on a silver basis except England and Portugal, which was a

sort of appendage to England.' The real statement of the situation as it subsisted during those years is that England was upon a gold standard. That is, under the act by which they resumed specie payments in 1816, passed, I think, about 1806, gold alone was a legal tender, except silver for 40 shillings. So England was on the gold basis. Yet they made a very large use of silver during that time, amounting to considerably over a hundred million dollars of our money. Portugal, I believe, was on a gold basis, but she is so small that she does not count. All the rest of Europe with France was upon a silver basis. So the true proposition is that silver was maintained at a parity with gold by the joint coöperation of the rest of the world in the free coinage of silver and gold, whether England and Portugal coöperated with them or not, because all of that time, of course, besides the rest of Europe the United States also was coining silver, and upon a silver basis, and a large user of silver.

So, when we come to what is, as far as I can see, the only and the final argument urged here, you discover that it is no argument at all. With absolute confidence, berating us with all the flourish of broomsticks like a virago, one and another Senator comes at those on this side and says the United States can restore the parity of silver with gold by coining silver alone and isolated from the rest of the world. If that is true we have already an example of free coinage which ought to bring about this result, namely, in India. India is now coining silver freely. All the miners of Colorado and the Rocky Mountains can send their silver there if they want to do so. India is open to free coinage. Why does not that restore parity? We have free coinage in Mexico and South America as well.

Oh, but they say India is in Asia. Suppose it is. Its population is fast growing up, approximating to 300,000,000 people, and while individually they are poor, in the aggregate they represent enormous wealth and enormous exchanges. It is not the India that Burke described in his great speeches on Warren Hastings. It is not the India of the mutiny. It is the India of the close of the nineteenth century, radiating with railways, all its vast population in peaceful avocations, and going forward with enormous strides in the march to wealth under the protection and the aegis of the British Empire. If those 300,000,000 people with free coinage can not restore the parity of silver with gold, how can gentlemen here say to us that we alone can do it?

There is one other thing to be said, and that is that India has gone to a silver basis. Or rather she has never been on anything else, and it differs radically from the proposition to coin silver freely in America, for we maintain the silver we have already coined at a parity with gold. Why? Because we coin silver in a restricted amount, in an amount so restricted that it can always obtain a dollar in gold. It is virtually, if not directly, redeemable in gold. The silver dollar of our coinage is virtually a bill of exchange or draft drawn upon our Treasury Department to pay a dollar in gold, and as long as you can get a dollar in gold the parity is maintained.

But it is argued by our friends on the other side that we can throw our mints open to free coinage and have all the silver of

the world come here and keep that vast mass at a parity with gold. Of course, so long as any man can bring here 70 cents' worth of silver bullion and get a dollar in gold with it he will do it. Hence you may expect that the vast mass of foreign silver will be brought from abroad when this measure passes. We know we can not respond. Already there is more anxiety than we like to admit as to the effect of the present law of 1890 upon our gold reserve.

The junior Senator from Nevada himself has argued here that under the operation of the present law there is danger of the gold going out, and yet in the face of that we are told that by our own fiat we can lift the vast mass of depreciated silver of the world to a parity and keep it there, so that the relatively small reserves of gold that we have will not be drawn out and that we will not be carried to a silver basis.

Mr. President, I have stated as far as I know the arguments that have been made in support of this phase of the question by the friends of this measure and the reasons that there are against it. If this bill should be passed and free coinage were decreed and enacted by this Government, either silver would be brought to and maintained at a parity with gold, on a ratio of 16 to 1, or it would not. If it did not come to such a parity and were not maintained there, then our gold would go out and we would come to a silver standard. One of the results would be that instantly our stock of gold, from \$600,000,000 to \$700,000,000, would cease to be currency and would become a commodity. By one fell stroke you would contract our currency to that extent, and we would have to wait until the silver was brought here from other countries in order to fill the vacuum with it, or we would have to meet it by larger issues of paper money or fiat money.

The senior Senator from Colorado [Mr. TELLER], who is not in his seat, ventured the remark that if we had to choose between a gold or a silver standard he would welcome the silver standard. As I understand it, he considers that we are on a gold standard now, and therefore if the free coinage of silver continued the disparity he would prefer to bring this country to the silver standard, to the use of silver alone, to the expulsion or the hoarding of our gold, rather than to maintain the bimetallic arrangement that we now have, by which we have gold and silver in almost equal amounts in furnishing the currency of the country in addition to our greenback notes.

It seems to me that any man who takes that ground, who takes it advisedly and takes it after study of the question, is taking with it a grave responsibility and is acting with infinite rashness. I do not propose to detain the Senate or to cumber the pages of the RECORD by an attempt at the story of even America under depreciated currency. No one the traditions of whose family go back to the Revolutionary period can but carry in his mind the burning recollections of the losses suffered by continental money. The very act of Napoleon in the free coinage of silver was taken when he cast out the wretched paper money issued by the French democracy during the reign of terror.

Take the experience that we had before we resumed specie payments in 1878. Take the warnings that were given on this floor when the legal-tender act was first passed, done under a

war necessity and costing this people more almost in treasure and loss suffered by it than by the direct outflow of money on account of the war of the rebellion. I know of my own experience that before we came to the resumption of specie payments, and especially before the panic of 1873, when gold was at a premium of from 50 to 100 per cent, it in my State cost the farmer more to raise a bushel of grain than he could get for it. Farm after farm, the product of prosperous agriculture in former years, went under the hammer of the sheriff.

Interest came to be 18 per cent per annum and the usurer threw. When at last this country resumed specie payments and drove out an irredeemable and fluctuating currency, the worst scourge of mankind, it brought about a general prosperity and crowned the Senator from Ohio [Mr. SHERMAN], who has been subjected to such defamation by the promoters of this measure, with undying fame. He had the double honor to project that measure on this floor and to administer it in the executive branch of the Government. Yet it is after such experiences that Senators assume the people of this country can be drawn into another trial of an irredeemable and fluctuating currency.

Mr. President, we have had one battle on that field and that was on the greenback question. The Greenback party has gone out, and I think it has gone out to stay. When we see both of the great parties going into national convention this year, and, notwithstanding they have had so much of training and declaiming and objugation from the Senator from Alabama and the Senator from Nevada, planting themselves before the people firmly upon the principle of honest money, I have no doubt as to what the answer will be from the people of the United States. It is no way for our friends from the Western prairies to recoup whatever losses they may think they have suffered and to supply whatever wants they think they may have for more money to launch themselves on this dangerous sea of irredeemable and fluctuating currency.

But there is another class whose representatives are advocating this bill and who have been most severe in their denunciations of all who have been opposed to it, and they are the representatives on this floor of the silver States. I do not mean by that to include all of them. I am very glad to except all from that remark who have not seen proper to indulge in the violent language of the Senator from Nevada and the Senators from Colorado as well as the Senator from Alabama. But, if I am correct in the assumption that isolated free coinage by the United States will not bring silver to a parity, then I claim to be a better friend to the silver miners of America than their representatives here. It was their representatives who induced the Senate to vote for the purchase of four and a half million ounces of silver per month on the claim that it would send silver to a parity. It has not done it. Suppose isolated free coinage by the United States does not do it, are they in any better case?

But suppose, on the other hand, that cooperation by the nations of the world should do it, then every dollar mined by the miner of Colorado and the Rocky Mountains will be worth its dollar in gold and not worth 70 cents.

Yet after the President of the United States has called a con-

ference of the nations to take such action, and after he has had favorable responses from all and such conference is about to meet, when the names of its members for this Government are about to be sent to us for confirmation before we disperse, we have the Senator from Alabama and the Senator from Nevada on this floor denouncing this great measure of relief before it is put in operation and saying that we must have isolated free coinage or nothing.

I have been told in conversation by gentlemen of one branch of Congress or the other from the South and from the West their constituents did not care so much for silver as that they wanted more money. There are, of course, large classes in this country who believe in the doctrine that lay behind the greenback heresy, that the Government should emit fiat money. Cheap money has no terrors or no horrors for them, however much it may affect their interests. Whether they are wrong or right, it is a matter of great and dire concern to the owners and the laborers in silver mines. What they want is that their product shall be sold for the most that it is worth, and they can not afford to have this country go to free coinage and put it upon a silver standard and have the price of silver no higher than it has been made by free coinage in India.

Believing as I do, and submitting this argument in all fairness to the other side, I say here with the utmost deliberation, and I only wish that my voice could go into every mining camp and into the office of every smelting works in the West, they have enemies, deadly enemies, and those enemies are the gentlemen who misrepresent their interests on this floor by endeavoring to precipitate our Government and people into an isolated free coinage of this nation alone, when, judging from all in the past as well as the present, and in all reason, there is no probability that it will advance the price of silver at all beyond its present price.

Mr. President, I have something to say to the Republicans from the silver States. I believe what was said by my friend from Wyoming in conversation on this subject. When Senators stated that their people were in favor of the free coinage of silver he said that no man was worthy of a seat on this floor who could not mold the sentiments of his people on a question where he was right, and it would be better to have them against him and have it go the other way than to tamper with a subject of such dire concern as this or one which so infinitely affects the interests of the people.