

PURCHASE OF SILVER BULLION.

S P E E C H

OF

HON. GEORGE GRAY,

OF DELAWARE,

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1893.

WASHINGTON.
1893.

S P E E C H
O F
H O N . G E O R G E G R A Y .

The Senate having under consideration the bill (H. R. 1) to repeal a part of an act approved July 14, 1890, entitled "An act directing the purchase of silver bullion and the issue of Treasury notes thereon, and for other purposes"—

Mr. GRAY said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: If the Senator from Mississippi does not object to this interruption in the middle of his speech, I shall be glad to avail myself of the opportunity he gives me.

Mr. GEORGE. I shall be glad to have the Senator proceed.

Mr. GRAY. I have listened to the Senator's remarks on this question with a great deal of interest, as I always do. When the Senator from Mississippi occupies the floor, I am very sure of hearing what is worthy of attention as being the result of the best thought of one of the ablest minds in the Senate. I have been provoked, as it were, to say something at this late hour in the evening by the very elaborate and interesting statement which the Senator from Mississippi has made in the course of his speech in regard to the enormous amount, measured in money, of the transactions of this country for one year, one month, or one day, and he might have extended that same course of reasoning to the business transactions of the world, which would only have made the aggregate of a day's business or a year's business, as the case might be, still more enormous, running into figures which entirely baffle the human intellect to comprehend.

All that he said in that line was most true and most instructive. I have forgotten the figures, of course; but it does not matter, as he was dealing with billions in reference to the enormous transportation business of this country and of the world. It requires billions on billions of dollars to measure the values of the transactions which make up a year's business. He spoke of the importing and exporting business, the steamship business, the daily traffic in our great marts of commerce and our great exchanges. All come in to swell this enormous aggregate, which the Senator contrasts most happily with the comparatively insignificant amount of gold which is in existence or visible, or, I may add, necessary, to do the world's business, and to measure the enormous ebb and flow of transactions between the civilized peoples of this world.

I was very much struck with that comparison, but I draw a very different lesson from it from the one which he has drawn; and it suggested in my mind a very different train of thought to that which was suggested, or seemed to be suggested, in the mind of the Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. President, if that amount of gold is sufficient to measure the transactions of which he spoke, and to serve as a medium of exchange for the daily business of this country, which amounts to sums so many times more than all the gold and all the silver and all the currency in the world, does not the Senator from Mississippi see that it is necessary somewhat to correct the proposition, which seemed fundamental in his argument to-day, that this country or that the world is suffering now from a famine of gold or silver or of currency, and that they are adequately performing their functions as mediums of exchange and measures of value for this enormous amount of transactions which occur every day throughout the length and breadth of our land and throughout all the civilized world.

It is most true that all the silver and gold and all the currency, greenbacks, Treasury notes, and bank circulation of this country, are not sufficient to liquidate a single day's transactions in this country of ours. How, then, is that performed? Does he not see that in the progress of our wonderful civilization we have arrived at a period when the exchanging function of the precious metals and of the currencies of the people is becoming relatively less important, and the measuring function of the standard money is becoming relatively more important?

Mr. President, we have advanced very far from that stage in our civilization when everybody was obliged to carry about him in a leathern girdle all the money that was necessary in order to transact the day's business. We have advanced very far from the condition of things which was depicted by Sir Walter Scott in *Ivanhoe*, when Isaac of York had his wealth all in his iron boxes that formed so great a temptation to *Front de Bœuf* that he wanted to roast the old Jew on a gridiron in order to induce him to part with some of it.

Our civilization and the civilization of that day can not be better marked than by the change which has taken place in the function of metallic money. Then every transaction must be performed by the buyer and seller coming together and counting down the broad pieces that measured the value of the exchange. Now, we are told, and we know, that of all the transactions that were spoken of by the Senator from Mississippi to-day, and whose enormous aggregate he has collected with such patient industry, 95 per cent are carried on without the intervention of any actual money at all. How are they carried on? They are carried on by the processes which have been evolved by the magnificent civilization whose fruits we enjoy to-day and in whose beneficent sunshine we bask, and which has brought mankind to a point at which the exchange of commodities (which after all in the last analysis every bargain and sale is, whether conducted by means of money or not) is brought about in 95 per cent of the transactions of the world without the intervention of actual money, except as it may constitute the measure of their value. They are carried on by the credit devices which the ingenuity of mankind and the improvement in the intercourse that has taken place in these latter years by steamship, railroad, and telegraph have made available.

Mr. President, are we to take a step backward, as the Senator from Mississippi would seem to indicate that we must, in order to arrive at that golden age in which there shall be enough metallic money to solve every day's business transaction as it

occurs? Are we to travel back upon our pathway? Are we to give up all the fruits of the civilization that has been so conspicuous in no other respect as in the facilities which have taken place in the exchanges between men of the commodities which make the world's wealth?

Mr. HOAR. Would it disturb the Senator from Delaware if I should state one fact in connection with what he is saying?

Mr. GRAY. No, sir.

Mr. HOAR. A very eminent member of the other House told me that a few months ago he had a conversation with the manager of one of the largest New York banks, in which he was told that the week before that bank had to settle transactions amounting to a little over \$35,000,000, and the debit and credit of the transactions they settled were so nearly balanced that 38 cents paid the difference.

Mr. GRAY. I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for an illustration such as is constantly, I have no doubt, occurring in the business of the world.

Mr. TELLER. I should like to ask the Senator—

Mr. GRAY. One moment, if the Senator pleases. But it is worth while at this time, although it may be dealing with facts that are of common knowledge, to dwell for a little while upon the processes that modern civilization have evolved for the transaction of the world's business.

I have said, and I say again, that there is no more conspicuous landmark on the pathway of civilization than the very matter of which I have been speaking, to wit, the relegation of the metals, both gold and silver, to a function of less use in the exchanges of life and to an increase of their importance as a measure of value. We need only to call to mind two or three of the great mechanical inventions that have signalized this century, and especially the last half of it.

It is commonplace to say that steam has revolutionized the business of the world. Long since steam had become a factor in the world's civilization there have been improvements in the use of that wonderful agent which in the last thirty years have produced another revolution almost as wonderful if not quite as wonderful as the introduction of steam itself. As wonderful as the superseding of the stage coach by the railroad has been the superseding by modern railroads with their steel rails and stone ballast and improved engines of the first crude attempts which were made in steam transportation. We now have a wonderful ocean transportation, the economy of fuel brought about by the development of the expansibility of steam, the triple expansion engines, the double and triple screws in the great steamships that traverse the ocean. These have served to bring the civilized world together in one great business solidarity, so that communication now between this country and the remotest parts of the civilized world is as convenient, as quick, as unembarrassed as thirty years ago it was between the Eastern States of our Union and the region west of the Mississippi, between the States on the lakes and those on the Gulf. There is no difference, in a business sense, between the rules and conditions that govern exchanges between Boston and Denver and those that govern between New York and London.

Mr. DANIEL. Will the Senator allow me to ask him a question? I shall occupy only a moment.

Mr. GRAY. Certainly.

Mr. DANIEL. I understand the Senator is arguing to show that there is no need for much money as a base of business?

Mr. GRAY. I am arguing to show that the whole course of the progress of modern civilization has been such as to dispense more and more with the use of actual money in the exchanges of a country's wealth.

Mr. DANIEL. I so apprehend the Senator's argument. Will the Senator allow me to ask him why it makes such a tremendous convulsion of business when a few million dollars of gold go from this side to England to settle the balance or a few million coming back? If money volume is not needed why is it that the transfer of a few million dollars of gold from one side of the water to the other throws one continent or the other into a convulsion?

Mr. GRAY. Could there be a better illustration of just what I am saying, that after all, when we come to this wonderful fabric of credit which has been evolved by the processes of the years, a few million dollars at the last analysis does all the business that is represented by the enormous figures, baffling the imagination to comprehend, cited by the Senator from Mississippi this afternoon?

Mr. DANIEL. I understand that; but why is it that the passage of a few million dollars from one side to the other creates such a convulsion over a continent? Can the Senator account for it upon any other idea than that there is not enough money with which to do business?

Mr. GRAY. I am not now just on the point raised by the Senator's question, but I will turn aside from the course of my somewhat desultory argument to say that no argument I have attempted to present has been for the purpose of showing that actual money and the precious metals are not necessary—and as necessary in their way as they ever were—to the business of the world, but while the great bulk of the world's transactions are carried on upon credit that credit is always expressed in terms of money; that credit is always measured by money, and that money must be the basis of the superstructure of credit that is erected upon it. Therefore, when we come down in the last analysis to the payment of the comparatively few dollars that make the differences in the world's transactions for a day or for a year, any disturbance in regard to the money that must actually pass from hand to hand then does make trouble and does make the convulsion which the Senator from Virginia speaks about. But that has been minimized by the very processes of which I have spoken.

Mr. VILAS. Will the Senator from Delaware give me leave for a moment?

Mr. GRAY. Certainly.

Mr. VILAS. I should like to ask the Senator from Delaware if, directing his attention to the point of the question of the Senator from Virginia, the true answer would not be that the United States has issued its promissory notes, payable on demand in coin, nominally, but practically to be necessarily paid in gold coin or we fall to the silver standard to an amount exceeding the money in the Treasury outside the gold of \$950,000,000; and the reason why the exportation of gold caused alarm and fear in this country was because it came out of the Treasury of the United States by the increase of the Treasury notes under

the act of 1890, as the President pointed out in his message, and the alarm and distress were caused by the threat (so very rapidly culminating to a realization) of descending to the silver standard in this country?

Mr. BLACKBURN. I do not want to complicate the interruptions to which the Senator from Delaware is subjected, but I should like to ask the Senator from Wisconsin, in connection with the question which he has propounded, to tell us whether he construes the law so as to require the Treasury of the United States to pay those promissory notes in gold. My understanding of the law as it stands to-day is that the Treasury Department will exercise its discretion and pay the notes either in gold or silver, for they are payable in coin; and up to this blessed hour, thank God, silver is a coin of this country, whatever it may be a week hence. I want to know whether the Senator from Wisconsin understands, or whether the Senator from Delaware understands, that under the law as it stands to-day upon the statute books of this country the Treasury Department is required to do what may have been done, and what the Senator from Wisconsin tells us was done, namely, to pay those promissory notes in gold instead of silver.

Mr. GRAY. I will refer the Senator from Kentucky to the Senator from Wisconsin at some future time, when I have no doubt that they will have a most interesting discussion on this matter, which, I beg leave to say, is outside of the trend of my remarks at this time.

In what I was endeavoring to show I was provoked thereto, as I said at the beginning, by the interesting statement of the Senator from Mississippi, in which he made plain to the Senate the enormous disparity between the amount of gold in this country and the amount, measured in dollars, of the country's transactions, as well as the amount of gold in the world as compared with the world's transactions. I said that nothing could be more timely than to call our attention now to the fact that at this day and in this last decade of the nineteenth century we have arrived at a point where that disparity is more enormous than it has ever been before or than it ever could have been before, and that so far from being a disaster it is a blessing, a blessing that we have enjoyed and are enjoying to-day, for along with this disparity has grown the civilization of this country, has grown the capacity of the people of this country to get more and more things which go to make up the happiness of life and conduce to its comfort and well-being.

Mr. BUTLER. Right in this connection may I ask the Senator from Delaware a question?

Mr. GRAY. Certainly.

Mr. BUTLER. Whilst the statement he has made is of course correct, is it not a fact that the large credit business of which he speaks is confined entirely to persons who have, if I may use the term, bank accounts; and are there not thousands and hundreds of thousands, millions of people in this country who do not have that system of credit, and who must resort to the actual delivery of money one to the other in the transaction of their business?

Mr. GRAY. I say the Senator from South Carolina is quite right. The money that the people carry in their pockets is an important factor to be considered. The money that a simple

agricultural or pastoral people need is a factor in this problem. But I am dealing now with very general propositions, because the Senator from Mississippi was dealing with a general and interesting proposition. I undertake to lay down this proposition, not original with me, but declared by every monetary economist who has written on this subject, that a people in proportion to their civilization and refinement and possession of those things which go to make up an advanced civilization, have less and less need of the actual money metals that a people require who are less advanced or whose life is more simple and less complex than theirs.

I have no doubt that in the country from which my friend from South Carolina comes, a large class of population there—the colored population—use an amount of silver money that is not used in any other part of this country by a population of similar size. It is a most useful thing to them, but it marks the grade of their civilization. It marks the grade of their advancement precisely as the use of silver money and silver ornaments marks the position in the world's civilization of the simple people of India and the dwellers upon the coasts of the unexplored continent.

Mr. BUTLER. If my friend from Delaware will permit me, I beg to correct him of a very erroneous impression under which he seems to be laboring in supposing or saying that the use of silver in my part of the country is confined to the colored people.

Mr. GRAY. I did not say that its use was confined to them.

Mr. BUTLER. But largely confined to them and very popular with that class. I say to him that situated as we and as many other portions of the country are, actual possession of the money, in hand, is indispensable for the transaction of their daily business, and it is not confined to the colored population of the South by any means.

Mr. GEORGE. With the permission of the Senator from Delaware, I will state that I stopped at that portion of my speech just before I got to the point where I intended to show that in the ordinary business transactions of farmers and laborers, the actual possession of money in their pockets and not in the banks is absolutely essential to their prosperity.

Mr. GRAY. I agree with the Senator from South Carolina and I agree with the Senator from Mississippi. I repeat that the use of actual money has, by the progress I have just hinted at, been largely relegated to change in the pocket for the daily retail transactions of life; and just in proportion as a people are advanced in civilization, in the production of wealth and in its accumulation, just so far do we find the actual use of money in a smaller and smaller proportion of the transactions which illustrate the business of such a people for a year, a day, or a month, or any other period.

Mr. TELLER. I understand the Senator from Delaware to lay down the proposition that as a country becomes civilized and enlightened it uses less and less money. I ask the Senator what he will do with civilized and enlightened France with \$38 of metallic money, legal-tender money, per capita? Will he class France with the countries of India and China?

Mr. GRAY. The question of the Senator from Colorado is not exactly pertinent to the argument I am making, and yet allow me to suggest to him that I might use France as an illus-

tration. Between what he says is the \$38 per capita of France and the \$24 per capita of the United States you will find an expression of the difference which tells the superiority of the civilization of this country, of which we are proud, over that of France. There is no development in France of the credit system in comparison with what we have in this country or what they have in England. There is a use of metallic money to that extent greater in France than in this country, but it does not mark a superior civilization, and by its difference I grade the superiority of my own country and of the Anglo-Saxon people of this world over the Latin races that have a larger per capita of metallic money.

Mr. TELLER. I should like to ask the Senator if that is the criterion which determines the civilization where he will place India with about \$3 per capita? India, then, ought to be highly enlightened and civilized.

Mr. GRAY. India is inhabited by a very large population of people just emerging into a higher civilization, whose wants are as yet comparatively few and simple.

And she is one of the silver-using nations of the world. Just so far as a people have advanced far enough to understand and evoke and bring into use the great instrumentalities of credit and exchange, just so far they dispense with the hard moneys that are told down for each transaction as it occurs. We are not, as I said awhile ago, in the condition of Isaac of York, who carried a leathern girdle and an iron box on a sumter mule. We have advanced to a point in which a hundred dollars to-day in gold is more efficient in the world's business transactions than ten thousand of the golden ducats in his leathern girdle or in his iron box. I mean the efficiency of gold as a basis of credit and as an instrument of exchange practical in the world's business.

This whole question, in one aspect of it, resolves itself into this: We are dealing with the mental attitude of the civilized world as regards silver and gold. I cannot control it; you can not control it: no law of any lawmaking body in this wide world can control it. They may interfere with it; they may make trouble; they may run athwart the great currents of the world's business and so far produce dislocation and trouble; but you can not change by legal enactment the mental attitude of the civilized world toward these two metals. If that attitude is one of discrimination we may deplore it, but we can not remedy it: and it is because it is largely a question of what the mental attitude of the world is toward these two metals that I feel that any attempt by this Congress in its lawmaking function to defeat or obstruct this great trend of human progress can only work mischief and can not correct what it seeks to correct or accomplish what it seeks to accomplish, honestly no doubt.

What made gold and silver the money metals of the world? Why are they precious metals? It is because we find that the people of to-day and the people of the world as far back as history tells us about human transactions regarded them as things to be desired, things that satisfied a human want, whether it be for their beauty, their durability, or whatever physical qualities belong to them that made them desirable. That is the reason, and not because congresses, or kings, or emperors, or governments have made them so. Governments have found them so, and have accepted them as they found them; and now that there

has been discovered a disposition in the mental attitude of the world to discriminate between the two, what are you going to do about it?

You are just as powerless in regard to the attitude towards both the precious metals now as in all the years that have gone before, making up the history of the world. Deplore it; say that it is unfortunate; but this great current in the world's history can no more be stemmed by legislation than you can turn the Gulf Stream by heading one of your ocean steamers down against its current. You have got to recognize it. All these laws are laws beyond the scope and beyond the competency of Congress or of a Legislature to enact, repeal, modify, or evade. We find them in existence. The precious metals were the money metals of the world, have continued to be the money metals of the world, despite any hostile action of any government, however powerful.

Now, why not recognize that fact? Why not recognize that we are dealing with economic laws that we can not repeal as we can repeal the Sherman act? We can not repeal Gresham's law. I have no doubt if we could we would. We can not repeal the law that has made gold in the last twenty years largely the world's money.

Mr. President, I only started out to address myself to the thoughts that were evoked by the speech of the Senator from Mississippi, but while I am up I will venture to consume a little more of the time of the Senate upon this general question, interesting as it is in all its phases. Silver and gold were made for man and not man for silver and gold. There is no sacredness about either metal. As long as it can be made to subserve the uses of mankind, to promote its wants, to increase its general well being, and perform those offices which are so necessary in the exchange of the commodities of the world, just so long and just so far they are to be regarded and no further. There is no sacredness about silver; there is none about gold.

The obvious question is how they can be best made to serve our interests. I want to state this question fairly. It is not fair to say that there is nothing in it. I do not say that. No one who has listened to the eloquent speeches of the Senator from Colorado [Mr. TELLER], interesting as they have always been, will ever say, if he has been attentive to them, that there is nothing in this question even though he may differ from him. It is not fair to say that those who oppose the repeal of the purchase clause of the Sherman act are opposing it because they want wealthy mine owners to get 129 cents for 73 cents' worth of silver. That is not a fair way to put this question to them. Nor is it fair to say that those who are in favor of repeal, or those of us who are in favor of repeal and are opposed to the free coinage of silver, are so in the interest of a so-called creditor class, who, by the repeal or by the defeat of free coinage, are to reap a harvest of blood and tears out of the wronged and oppressed debtor who owes them the money that he has borrowed. That would not be fair. It would be no more fair than the other assumption.

Let us try to approach this question, then, in a little more judicial shape than either of the attitudes I have just described would be. If the repeal of this law is to put us in a worse condition than we are now in we ought not to repeal it. But we are told, and we are told on good authority, and it is a matter of

common knowledge and observation, that the present condition of the country as depicted by the Senator from Indiana [Mr. VOORHEES], as known and admitted by every man within the sound of my voice, is not a good one. We know that we have passed through (I trust we have passed through), or we are passing through, what is called a business and-money panic. The money of the country to which the Senator from Virginia [Mr. DANIEL] alluded, has hidden itself. It has retired from the banks, those centers of distribution, and has sought hiding places in the strong boxes of safe-deposit vaults, or in the stockings of a hoarding community.

That is known to all men. I do not care how it was produced. It would be bootless to show the unreason of the struggling mob in the theater panic-stricken by a cry of fire. But the fact is that the money owned by depositors in the banks has left the banks, and leaving the banks it has left the machinery of distribution and lies useless, worse than useless, in the dark places in which it has been hoarded.

That is a plain, obvious reason and cause of the present money stringency. Nobody attempts to account for it otherwise. Senators talk about more remote causes, but why should we dispute about them? My friend from Colorado has a theory that the panic was ready made; that it is the result of a conspiracy to take gold out of the country and make a run for gold. I do not propose to dispute with him about it now. I want to recognize the condition and not deal with causes more remote than those I have alluded to. I feel that it is my duty to deal with the condition as I find it. I find that the reason for the disappearance of the deposits from the savings banks and from the banks of discount and deposit is that the depositors have been afraid that they were not going to receive back the same money that they had parted with.

That being true, why should we not apply a remedy which all point to as a remedy, the repeal of the act under whose operation useless millions have been piled up as a commodity in the Treasury, creating widespread distrust in the ability of the Government to make good all its issues, whether of silver or paper, by gold? Why, I ask, should we not repeal that act when everybody confesses that it is a useless law, a law that runs athwart everybody's theory as to what sound finance should be, which is denounced by those who are opposed to free coinage as a measure worse than free coinage, and is opposed and denounced by those in favor of free coinage as a degrading of the commodity of silver, and as being entirely antagonistic and hostile to any proper notions of a bimetallic currency?

Mr. TELLER. Mr. President—

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GALLINGER in the chair). Does the Senator from Delaware yield to the Senator from Colorado?

Mr. GRAY. Certainly.

Mr. TELLER. I desire to ask the Senator a question. He states, in substance, that the panic was a fright as to the currency, and he believes the depositors would not have been afraid of any proper kind of money. What was the money they were afraid they were going to get? Will the Senator answer that?

Mr. GRAY. It is very easy to answer. I can only answer it as I see it everywhere and hear it everywhere. The depositor

in the savings bank was afraid after the panic started that if he left his money there he would be paid, if paid at all, in a depreciated currency; that is, in a silver currency no longer capable of being maintained on a parity with gold.

Mr. TELLER. I should like to ask the Senator another question.

Mr. GRAY. I am not saying whether the fear was well founded or not.

Mr. TELLER. Did not the four hundred and odd million silver dollars and silver certificates doing money duty in this country disappear quite as lively as gold, and does the Senator know anywhere, or has he ever heard anybody state that there was any distinction in the money paid over the counter and gladly received by the people who wanted it?

Mr. GRAY. None at all. When a panic is started and is once under way there is no use in talking about the reasoning faculty. It is dormant in those who are subject to the panic. The depositors drew out all their money—silver certificates, gold, and silver alike. But I want to say to the Senator, as a matter of personal knowledge, that this withdrawal commenced by the withdrawal of gold coin or gold currency back in the spring and early summer.

Mr. TELLER. For export?

Mr. GRAY. No; for hoarding.

Mr. TELLER. I will ask another question, if the Senator will allow me. Does not the record show that, on the contrary, that has not been the case—that money which could have been paid in gold has not been demanded at the Treasury; that the gold has not been demanded?

Mr. GRAY. I do not know what the experience of the Senator from Colorado is. I have stated my own knowledge and information. He is at liberty to hold to his own view. We can not very well argue about things of this kind when one can not be brought to the book.

Mr. WHITE of Louisiana. Will the Senator allow me?

Mr. TELLER. But the Senator asserts that such facts exist.

Mr. WHITE of Louisiana. I understood the Senator from Delaware to say the statistics establish the fact that in this country from 90 to 95 per cent of the transactions are credit compared with currency. He has made that statement.

Mr. GRAY. That is the usual statement of monetary economists.

Mr. WHITE of Louisiana. If that statement were true, is not the cause of the panic so plain that any business man who runs may read it? The contraction which took place was not in the currency, which represented only 5 per cent of the transactions of the country, but in the great 95 per cent. Fear destroyed the credit of the country, and the destruction of the credit of the country engendered the panic. People took their money and hid it away because the credit of the country was gone.

Mr. GRAY. I think the Senator from Louisiana is quite right, and he has stated very strongly what the genesis and progress of the panic have been. When you destroyed the credit of the country then you took away 95 per cent, or whatever the per cent is, of the debt-paying currency, the currency that was capable of transacting the business of this country.

Mr. BUTLER. I do not like to interrupt the Senator from

Delaware—he is always so amiable—but we have reached a point now where I think we can talk rationally about this matter. I should like to go a little back—

Mr. GRAY. I am not making a set speech, and if I may proceed in the line I am trying to pursue I would prefer doing so.

Mr. BUTLER. It is on that point that I should like to ask a question. I should like to go a little back of the suggestion of the Senator from Louisiana. He says that the destruction of the public credit was the cause of the hoarding of the currency. I should be very glad, if the Senator from Delaware will spare the time, to have the Senator from Louisiana tell us what destroyed the credit of the country.

Mr. WHITE of Louisiana. If it would not interrupt the Senator from Delaware I could tell the Senator very quickly.

Mr. GRAY. If the Senator can tell it quickly, he can, no doubt, tell it better than I could.

Mr. WHITE of Louisiana. We began with the Bland-Allison act. We continued by giving many votes for free coinage. All over the country contracts began to be made for gold, because people feared that the country was going on a silver basis and hence depreciated. The Senator from South Carolina will not deny that, because in the Senate at the last session of Congress he expressed, I think, his opinion in favor of an act making it illegal to insert in a contract the gold clause. It was stated on this floor that that practice had gone to such an extent that it was necessary that the power of the Federal Government should be brought in to make it illegal for a man to contract for what he desired.

The distinguished Senator from Alabama [Mr. MORGAN] passed day after day in the Senate pointing out the necessity of remedying this evil and the great trouble which it was bringing to the finances of the country. In other words, the whole world, seeing that we were precipitating ourselves, as they feared, towards a silver basis, began to withdraw their credit from us. The withdrawal of credit led to a gradual contraction in the 95 per cent, which is the great volume of the currency, and whenever you contract that great volume you lead to fear, and fear leads to the hoarding of money, no matter what kind of money it is. That is the history of it.

Mr. BUTLER. I have not time to reply to the Senator from Louisiana, of course, in the midst of the speech of the Senator from Delaware.

Mr. GRAY. Mr. President, whatever the cause may have been, the fact must be recognized, and the only remedy that is demanded by the people in tones that become more impatient every day, is the repeal of the purchase clause of the Sherman act. As I was saying a while ago when I was interrupted, it is an act that is denounced by those who are in favor of free coinage and those who are opposed to free coinage. It is denounced as degrading silver and being destructive of true bimetallism on the one hand, and it is denounced on the other as being worse than any measure of free coinage might be.

Then what is the objection urged by those who belong to a party that has thus denounced this act, whose proposed repeal has caused this protracted debate? They say that they are opposed to repeal, though they consider the act itself unscientific, antibimetallic, because they want a condition (I am speaking of

those on this side of the Chamber) that shall give them a measure of bimetallic legislation for which the Democratic platform adopted at Chicago is pledged.

Now, let us consider that a moment. I have not the platform here. We are all familiar with its phraseology. It has been read over and over again. That portion of it with which we are dealing commences with an unqualified and unconditional denunciation of the Sherman act, whose repeal is now sought to be had in the Senate. There is no room for a difference of opinion about what that platform denounced, nor can there be any room, I submit, for a difference of opinion as to what is the duty of a Democrat seeking to conform his action to that platform in regard to that part of it. Certainly it means that the act which is denounced ought to be repealed.

Now, they say there is another part of the same platform which pledges the Democratic party to contend for a bimetallic coinage, to the equal use and mintage of both metals in such fashion that they shall be of equal intrinsic and exchangeable value, either by international convention or by some legislative provision. That opens up confessedly a domain of argument and of opinion which must necessarily be variant. It was intended by that language in the Democratic platform, if we can argue intention at all from language, that it should be broad enough to hold every Democrat who believed in bimetallicism, whether by international agreement or by legislative enactment. It did not intend to read me out of the party, because I honestly believe that the bimetallicism aimed at in that platform can only be obtained efficiently, obtained usefully, obtained for the benefit of the great masses of the people of this country, by an international agreement.

It did not intend to read out of the party my friend from Mississippi, who believes differently, and believes that an efficient and useful bimetallicism can be obtained by legislation in favor of free coinage by this country alone. It intends to embrace us both, and we both stand as we stood in that campaign. It is not in his mouth now nor in my mouth to charge him or him me with inconsistency or with falling away from the demands of that platform because we still hold to the opinion we held then.

Mr. STEWART. Would it interrupt the Senator if I should ask him a question?

The VICE-PRESIDENT. Does the Senator from Delaware yield to the Senator from Nevada?

Mr. GRAY. Certainly.

Mr. STEWART. The Senator has been explaining the meaning of the term "intrinsic value." I do not understand it. If he will be a little more definite I shall be obliged to him.

Mr. GRAY. The Senator will excuse me from going into metaphysics of that kind. I have only proposed to speak until about 6 o'clock. I should be glad to go into that at some other time. It is entirely outside of what I am now discussing.

Mr. STEWART. At any time when the Senator has leisure, if he would write out the definition of the term I should be obliged to him.

Mr. GRAY. I should rather do that.

Mr. STEWART. I shall be glad to have it.

Mr. GRAY. I want to dwell just a moment longer upon the Democratic platform, because I do not disguise from myself the

importance it has assumed, and properly assumed, in this argument. I have endeavored to bring to it an honest intention as a Democrat to interpret it fairly, and to live by its commands loyally and faithfully: but I appeal to anyone within the sound of my voice of the same political faith, whether the behests of that platform are not different as to the two branches which concern this financial question? The denunciation of the Sherman act makes it the duty as well as the justification of every Democrat to vote for its repeal. The other declaration in favor of bimetallism, either by international agreement or by legislative enactment, does offer a scope and breadth so wide that you, my friend [Mr. GEORGE], and I can both stand upon it honestly and loyally, without compromising our intelligence or our conscience.

If that be the case, what justice or what fairness is there in the proposition, that you who differ from me on this matter make, that the part of the platform in which we agree shall not be carried out until your interpretation of the other branch of that platform, which confessedly was made to accommodate us both, should be carried out according to your interpretation of it?

No, Mr. President, I am performing my duty as the President has performed his, loyally to the platform on which he was elected when he recommended the repeal of the purchase clause of the Sherman act, and stopped there, leaving it to every Democrat's conscience, to every man's conscience, as to what he considered to be a compliance with the behests of that platform in regard to the attainment of bimetallism.

We belong to no narrow creed. The great Democratic church is the broad church, a liberal church, and its creed accommodates my friend from Mississippi, who believes in free coinage, and it accommodates me, who believe that free coinage is not practicable in this country without the coöperation of other countries of the world to attain to real bimetallism. We are not called upon to walk up and pronounce the shibboleth of free coinage or of anti-free coinage in order to be in full communion with that great church, of which I have been an humble member during all my manhood.

Mr. President, so much for the partisan aspect of this question, and my only apology—and it ought to be sufficient—for alluding to it is that it has been dragged in here over and over again by those who have attempted to use it as an argument to those who agree with me, that we should consent to have put upon us an abhorrent pressure in order to compromise our own convictions and put conditions upon this measure of repeal. Let us discuss those things afterwards.

Nobody has compromised his beliefs by advocating this repeal. The Senator from Indiana [Mr. VOORHEES] and myself, I take it, differ as widely now as we have differed in the past upon this free-coinage question. We have neither of us compromised the opinions of our life-time in this regard by uniting in the advocacy of this measure, as I understand.

Mr. PUGH. Mr. President, I am very much tempted to ask the Senator a short question, if he thinks proper to answer it.

Mr. GRAY. I hope it is an easy one.

Mr. PUGH. I simply desire to know if we fail to get free coinage by an international agreement, what is to become of those Democrats who want free coinage by Congressional legislation?

Mr. GRAY. Well, Mr. President, what is to become of those Democrats who want free coinage by international agreement? Suppose we fail, what is to become of us? I will tell you one thing that will not happen to us. We will not be found denouncing the great party that existed before this question ever arose; we will not be found deserting its ranks; we will not be found among those who proclaim to the people that there is nothing left in the great creed of Democracy but adherence to one view as to how the free coinage of silver may be brought about and safely maintained.

Mr. PUGH. Then the Senator has changed his position in reference to the unconditional repeal of the Sherman law.

Mr. GRAY. So much for the partisan aspect of this question upon this great issue, which I have been in a measure compelled to deal with, although it properly ought to have no rightful position here. We are dealing with a great question, which is above partisanship; which is above it, and at the same time underlies it. We are dealing with a measure upon which parties have not divided; we are dealing with a question in regard to which both political parties have made the same pronouncement; and we are, as I have demonstrated, at liberty to discuss this question upon its merits, and to consider deliberately and calmly whether this repeal is not required by the best interests of this great country and the great people who inhabit it, and whether we do not owe them a duty that we can not disregard when we approach the consideration of this question.

Mr. President, I have heard a great deal here about the people and the people's rights; I have heard Senators for whom I have the highest respect rise on this floor and speak as if those who differ with them in regard to the expediency of this measure belong to a heartless and oppressive class, or represent a heartless and oppressive class, who are always willing to imbrue their hands in innocent blood, who are willing to reap where they have not sown, who are willing to enjoy the fruits of labor for which they have not paid. I tell those who indulge in that sort of argument that they will make no advance before an intelligent American public by so demeaning themselves; that there is as much of the milk of human kindness in those who are in favor of the repeal of the Sherman act as in those who are opposed to it; that we are as anxious for the welfare of the plain people of this country, of those whose sweat fertilizes the fields they till, as the opponents of repeal can possibly be. They do not advance, I say, this argument at all, by indulging in invective of that kind.

Who are the people who demand the repeal, and who are the people who are opposed to the repeal? I have heard it said that nine-tenths of the people of this country are opposed to the repeal. Who counted them? Who polled their votes? Who now dares rise on this floor and say that he, in opposing repeal, represents nine-tenths of the people, if he attempts to speak at all within the limits that sensible and moderate men prescribe to themselves when speaking on important subjects of this kind?

I speak for the people; I speak for what I believe to be their best interests; and I speak for what I believe to be their sentiments as I know them—the sentiments of this great populous seaboard from here to Eastport, with its teeming, busy, and industrious millions. I speak for them when I demand the repeal

of the purchase clause of the Sherman act. I am speaking for no Wall-street broker; I am not a bondholder nor the son of a bondholder; but I speak, as I always try to speak, so that I may have in mind the interests of those who make the wealth of this country, those who rise up early and go to bed late, and do not eat the bread of idleness. It is in their interests that I believe, and honestly believe, I am speaking to-day. I am here to demand for that great class of my fellow-citizens, whom I respect and whose respect I crave, the very best dollar that can be coined in the mint of the United States, a dollar whose purchasing power shall be the greatest possible, a dollar which, when translated into the comforts of life, means to them more of those comforts than any other dollar can bring them. In their interests I believe that I am speaking.

I do not gainsay the honesty and truth of those who believe that they represent a different sentiment. I repeat, there is a different sentiment. I know there is a different sentiment and opinion in this country, but I can not sit with patience and hear those who assume to speak for the whole people of this country, arraign those of us who are in favor of this measure as the advocates and representatives of a selfish, greedy, avaricious, remorseless band of Wall-street brokers.

Mr. ALLEN. Will the Senator yield to me for a moment?

Mr. GRAY. I suppose I must yield to my friend from Nebraska, as I have yielded to all others.

Mr. ALLEN. Is it not true that the great body of memorials coming to the Senate from the Eastern section of this country for the repeal of the Sherman act, comes from banks, corporations, boards of trade, and chambers of commerce dominated by that class of people?

Mr. GRAY. I have not scrutinized petitions. I do not deny the right of petition. I do not see why there should be a penalty put on success in American life, and I do not believe the American people want to penalize prosperity. I do not believe that a man who has gone into the business of banking, as the Senator from Nebraska said very wisely the other day, a necessary business, a business that is for the good of the community, should be stigmatized and denied the right of presenting in a respectful manner his petition to the Congress of the United States. Why is his stake in the community not as great as is that of the Senator from Nebraska? Does he not contribute as much to the common weal as the Senator? I suppose there are good bankers and there are selfish bankers, as there are good farmers and good artisans and wicked farmers and wicked artisans.

That is not the theory on which our institutions are built up. The theory is equality of all classes before the law, and disability to none. If by reason of their greater familiarity with questions of this kind concerning the exchanges of life, they have views which are worth considering, why should they not present them here? They present them as all such people do not only for themselves, but in a representative character. They represent the silent masses of whom the Senator from Nebraska speaks, in a sense in which neither he nor I, so far as that is concerned, represent them. But that has nothing to do with the merits of this question.

What is for the benefit of the people? I say that my only de-

sire is to preserve to them the purchasing power of the dollar that rewards their day's labor. I say that the dollar which is in the pocket of the laborer to-day as the reward of the toil which has produced it shall continue, so far as my vote is concerned, to purchase for him all that it purchases to-day. I believe that the monometallic silver standard, which would be the result of the policy advocated by the Senator from Nebraska, would diminish that purchasing power and would deprive labor of a part of its just reward.

Mr. STEWART. Will the Senator allow me?

Mr. GRAY. I can not yield now. I want to get through.

Mr. STEWART. The Senator has just stated that he had yielded to everyone.

Mr. GRAY. If I yield further I shall not be able to get through to-night.

Mr. STEWART. All right.

Mr. GRAY. I want to assure my friend that there is no one toward whom I feel more kindly than to him, and rather than submit to his imputation I will yield.

Mr. STEWART. I wish to ask a very simple question. The Senator says he is in favor of maintaining the purchasing power of the dollar and continuing it at the same value. Is he in favor of increasing its purchasing power?

Mr. GRAY. Yes.

Mr. STEWART. Increasing the purchasing power?

Mr. GRAY. Yes, I am in favor of increasing the purchasing power of the dollar which rewards the toil of the laborer by every legitimate means that can be used. I am not in favor of obstructing any of the legitimate processes which have been increasing that purchasing power; and that is the sense in which I said I was in favor of increasing its purchasing power. I am not in favor of any of the obstructions, whether they be of tariff or of silver legislation, which interfere with the sum of the comforts that the dollar which has been earned by labor can secure.

We can not by our legislation increase the real returns of agriculture, and I will not consent, by my vote, to diminish the amount of the necessaries of life for which those returns can be exchanged.

Something has been said in the Senate already in regard to the matter of the purchasing power of gold. There is a distinct proposition which has run through all the arguments of those who oppose this repeal, and it is the only distinct proposition which I have been able to find that merits serious discussion. I do not mean to speak disrespectfully of the arguments of those who have opposed repeal, but I mean that, so far as I can discover, the only one which merits serious consideration is the proposition that by the demonetization of silver over the world about 1873 and then on up to 1876 the value of gold all over the world had so appreciated as to lower the prices of commodities and thereby inflict injury upon the business and wellbeing of the people of this country, as well as other countries, which ought to be corrected by restoring silver, or doing something which would decrease the value of gold and prevent its further appreciation, if not bring about a depreciation.

That is a serious proposition. If it be true that gold has appreciated, then I feel that I ought to pause. If this common measure of contracts to be performed in the future, this common measure of the value of all the commodities which go into the

use of everyday life, has appreciated in such a way as to reduce their prices, to reduce their value, and make those contracts harder to be performed, that is a serious thing, and if it can be remedied it ought to be remedied.

But I want to say at the outset that the proposition has never been supported, so far as I have observed, by a single scintilla of proof. The burden is on those who declare the appreciation of gold to show it, or at least make it more than probable that it is true: but I have read in vain the arguments of the ablest of those who have opposed repeal, and I have nowhere found one of them who has been able to adduce a single circumstance or a single fact or to create a single argument to prove that most important proposition.

I know how difficult it is to find a standard for a standard. Gold is the world's universal standard, and it is very hard to get anything by which to measure it that will be satisfactory all around. Senators point us merely to the fact that since 1873, or about that epoch, when the general demonetization of silver took place, there has been a gradual fall in the prices of commodities. That is admitted. There has been a fall in the price of commodities which in one sense is an appreciation of gold. That proposition is proved if that is all you have to point to, for the lowering of the prices of commodities which gold buys is in one sense an appreciation of the gold which buys them. There is no doubt about that. But is it true that relatively to those commodities gold has appreciated in the sense that the commodities have remained stationary and have been produced by the same amount of effort, or require no more effort, or the same amount of effort to obtain them, while gold requires a great deal more? I say it is not: and not only is it not proved that this is so, but I think it can be shown affirmatively that it is not so.

Mr. President, the Senator from Texas [Mr. MILLS] yesterday called attention in a somewhat passing way to this very important topic. I wish he had dwelt upon it more at length. If gold has appreciated really then we must find a remedy for it: if it has not, then we must consider what the condition of the country is and what accounts for these falling prices.

The theory that the fall in prices for the last twenty years has been occasioned by the appreciation of gold leaves out of sight the enormous advance which has been made in the capacity of production all over the world, and to which I alluded in the opening of my remarks. It leaves out of sight Bessemer steel; it leaves out of sight the improvements of the steam engine; it leaves out of sight improvements in communication by telegraph; it leaves out of sight the greater efficiency that gold has obtained in the use of all of these improvements; it leaves entirely out of view the fact that a given amount of gold to-day is enormously more efficient than it was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago; that the gold you have in your bank here in Washington may be made more efficient than ever before by the electric telegraph within two hours from the time you have made up your mind to use it.

I heard a gentleman say the other day—and I think it was repeated here in the Senate—that he was riding with a gentleman from Boston, who told him that before he left home he had telegraphed to his agent in China or India, I forget which, to buy a certain amount of gunny bags, many thousand dollars worth; to

get a ship, and load them for Boston; and by the time he got to his rooms in Washington a telegram was here that the whole transaction had been completed, that the gunny bags had been bought, the bill of exchange drawn, the ship chartered, and the loading had commenced.

Compare the efficiency of the money required to make that transaction to what it would have been forty or fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. That is only one result of the advance in modern civilization; but are we to disregard it all, and are we to go back on our tracks, point to a less complicated civilization, and point to the time when transactions were more simple as the golden age to which we should direct all our efforts?

There is one measure of value of commodities, of gold and silver, which has been adopted by all the economists as the most certain and least variable, and the one most likely to tell us a true story when we ask the question of it, and that is the labor it takes to produce a given quantity of commodities or of wealth.

I find, measured by labor, measured by the labor cost of commodities, measured by the wages of the artisan and the toiling people of this country as well as of Europe, that gold has not appreciated, and I have yet to hear why that test is not the best test which can be applied to ascertain whether it be appreciated or no.

I find here compiled by the same Mr. Walker to whom the Senator from Mississippi alluded to-day, a table in addition to the one read by the Senator from Texas showing what the principal commodities in use by the farmers cost in the grain which he raises. While it is a little aside from the point I was on it recalls a most interesting statement made by him as to what the farmer could do with the money he received for his crops even at the decreased price that we all admit he receives for his products. The table contains a list of some twenty or twenty-five articles, principally farming implements, things that the farmer must have. The table is as follows:

Prices agreed upon by Messrs. Kingsland & Douglas, successors of Kingsland, Ferguson & Co., Simmons Hardware Company, and Mansur & Tibbells' Implement Company, all of St. Louis, Mo.

Implements.	Money in—		1889, in bushels of—			1873, in bushels of—		
	1880.	1873.	Wheat.	Corn.	Oats.	Wheat.	Corn.	Oats.
One-horse steel plow (wood beam).....	\$2.75	\$6.50	3.8	8.5	11.5	6.4	19.1	27.0
Two-horse steel plow (wood beam).....	12.00	20.00	16.4	37.5	50.0	19.6	58.8	83.3
One-horse iron plow (wood beam).....	2.00	5.00	2.7	6.2	8.3	4.9	14.7	20.8
Two-horse iron plow (wood beam).....	8.00	13.00	10.9	25.0	33.3	12.7	38.2	54.1
Two-horse side hill or reversible plow.....	10.00	18.00	13.7	31.2	41.7	17.6	52.9	75.0
One potato-digger.....	7.50	20.00	10.2	23.4	31.2	19.6	58.8	83.3
Old-fashioned tooth harrow.....	5.50	15.00	8.9	20.3	27.0	14.7	44.1	62.5
One-horse cultivator.....	3.50	7.00	4.7	10.9	14.5	6.8	20.5	29.1
Two-horse corn cultivator.....	15.00	23.00	20.5	46.8	62.5	27.4	82.4	116.6
One-horse mowing machine.....	45.00	85.00	61.6	140.6	187.5	83.3	250.0	354.1
Two-horse mowing machine.....	50.00	90.00	68.5	156.2	208.3	88.2	264.7	375.0
Horse rake (sulky).....	20.00	30.00	27.4	62.5	83.3	29.4	88.2	125.0

Prices agreed upon by Messrs. Kingsland & Douglas, etc.—Continued.

Implements.	Money in—		1889, in bushels of—			1873, in bushels of—		
	1889.	1873.	Wheat.	Corn.	Oats.	Wheat.	Corn.	Oats.
Common Hunt rake (horse).....	\$3.50	\$6.50	4.8	19.9	14.5	6.3	19.1	27.0
Common iron garden rake (10-tooth steel).....dozen.....	3.75	12.00	5.1	11.7	15.6	11.7	35.2	50.0
One-horse horse-power.....	25.00	45.00	34.2	73.1	104.1	44.1	132.3	187.5
Two-horse horse-power.....	35.00	65.00	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Reaper.....	75.00	95.00	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Binder.....	135.00	184.9	421.8	562.5	277.7*	769.2*	857.1*	
Corn-sheller (one hole).....	6.00	11.50	8.2	18.7	25.0	11.2	33.8	47.9
Fanning mill.....	15.00	25.00	20.5	46.8	62.5	24.5	73.5	104.1
Common hoes (cast-steel socket), per dozen.....	3.50	6.50	4.7	10.9	14.5	6.3	19.1	27.0
Common rakes (wood), per dozen.....	2.00	3.00	2.4	6.2	8.3	2.9	8.8	12.5
Scythes (Ames' grass), per dozen.....	7.50	16.00	10.2	23.4	31.2	15.7	47.0	66.6
Do.....	9.50	21.00	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Scythe snaths (patent), per dozen.....	4.50	11.00	6.1	14.0	18.7	10.8	32.3	45.8
Shovels (Ames), per dozen.....	9.50	18.00	13.0	29.6	39.5	17.6	52.9	75.0
Spades (Ames), per dozen.....	10.00	18.50	13.7	31.2	41.6	18.1	54.4	27.0
Crowbars (steel).....	.06	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Crowbars (iron).....	.05	.10	.06	.15	.2	.09	.29	.46

*For 1880.

Now, I wish to call the attention of the Senate to the wage matter, and I have here a table showing the amount of wages in this country between the years 1860 and 1885, compiled by Hon. J. H. WALKER, of Massachusetts:

Wages in 1860 and in 1885 in dollars and in weight of gold and in grains.

Workmen.	Wages in dollars.		Wages in grains of gold.		Grains of gold, percentage of increase.
	1860.	1885.	1860.	1885.	
Factory hands:					
Dyers.....	\$0.62	\$1.00	16.0	25.7	61
Giggers.....	.62	.82	16.0	21.1	32
Shearers.....	.69	1.00	17.8	25.8	45
Plain weavers.....	.65	.85	16.7	21.8	31
Spinners.....	1.10	1.26	28.3	32.5	15
Miscellaneous:					
Leather factory, beam and yard hands.....	1.10	1.67	31.0	43.0	39
Leather factory, whiteners and skivers.....	1.83	2.75	47.2	70.8	50
Common laborers.....	1.00	1.50	25.8	38.7	50
Blacksmiths.....	1.50	2.00	38.7	51.6	33
Blacksmiths' strikers.....	1.00	1.50	25.8	27.0	50
Carpenters.....	1.67	2.00	43.0	51.6	33
Machinists.....	1.75	2.25	45.1	57.7	28
Locomotive engineers.....	2.40	3.20	62.0	82.4	33
Locomotive firemen.....	1.20	1.75	31.0	45.2	46

Average percentage of increase in weight of gold, 38.

The wages in 1860 of factory hands: dyers, was 62 cents a day; in 1885, \$1; giggers, in 1860, 62 cents; in 1885, 82 cents; shearers, in 1860, 69 cents a day, and in 1885, \$1; and so on, giving the wages in leather manufactories, the wages of blacksmiths, carpenters, machinists, locomotive engineers, and locomotive firemen. The wages of blacksmiths in 1860 was \$1.50 per day; in 1885, \$2. Then the wages are given in grains of gold. It seems to me that ought to be a pretty fair test.

In 1860 the wages in grains of gold of blacksmiths was 38.7 grains, and in 1885 51.6 grains. That does not look as if gold had appreciated, measured by the wages of labor; and what better test is there, or can there be, or ought there to be, than what labor is able to procure in order to sustain the laborer and those who are dependent on him? It means that much more of the comforts of life! It means, as we have shown, that inasmuch as more grains of gold are obtained for a day's labor and those grains of gold will buy more commodities which are necessary to the comfort of life, the wages of labor have been increased at both ends; the laborer gets more gold, and the gold will buy more. If these commodities have decreased in price just as silver has decreased in price, because the greater facilities of production have lowered the cost of production, as the greater production in proportion to the demand has decreased the price, then it seems to me that we have proven the proposition that gold has not appreciated; and we do not rest merely upon the negative proposition that the other side have failed to sustain the burden of proof, which, I think, was upon them.

Mr. President, what does civilization mean, and what does its progress mean, if it does not mean that each year and each decade we who toil for our daily bread should be able with the wage of labor to procure more and more of the comforts and necessities of life? What other test under Heaven can you apply which shows the progress we all boast of so surely, so beneficently, as that the wages of labor as the years roll by will buy more and more of those things which are absolutely necessary for the welfare and comfort and well-being of those who must live on wages?

Mr. GEORGE. Would that result be accomplished by the free coinage of silver by international agreement?

Mr. GRAY. Yes; but I am not talking about free coinage by international agreement. I want to say to the Senator from Mississippi that these great forces which have lowered the cost of production and have made cheaper the necessities of life, which have given to labor an increased reward, lie outside of the domain of bimetallism or monometallism. They are the great forces which govern the civilization of the world, and while they may be retarded by blundering legislation their mighty current can not and never will be entirely obstructed or stopped.

Mr. President, I should like anybody to tell me in what practical way—do not let us deal in abstractions—a civilized people can become better off if it is not by being able to buy more with the rewards of their labor?

Mr. LINDSAY. That applies to the farmer, too.

Mr. GRAY. And the farmer, too. How can a civilized people become better off, except by becoming able to buy more of the comforts of life with the rewards of their toil? I leave the question for some one of my friends in his own time to answer.

If their money incomes, from labor of all kinds, labor of the hands, labor of the brain, go further in the purchase of commodities, then I say we have an index, and a sure one, that civilization is not retrograding but advancing; but yet I hear it gravely argued here by friends of my own political faith that it is wise statesmanship to obstruct this mighty progress, to throw obstacles under the wheels of the car of civilization in order that it may not proceed upon the magnificent pathway upon which it is proceeding for the betterment and blessing of mankind.

I hear them say that we ought to resort to some legislation that will cheapen money and raise the prices of commodities which are necessary for the comfort and enjoyment of life—that is, though they may not mean it, make it harder for the poor man to feed his family and clothe his wife and daughters in the respectable manner in which he wishes to clothe them, and has a right to wish to clothe them. I hear them using the same argument that my friends on the other side used two years ago, when they said that things were too cheap, and they proposed obstructions in another way. They said we will place a barrier on our shores; we will prevent the commodities, the goods of the world coming in; we will make things higher, and we will bring greater rewards to the manufacturers of this country. Things are too cheap, said a President of the United States; it is not respectable to wear a cheap coat. So, by a strange transformation, we find the arguments of 1890 on the other side repeated upon this side of the Chamber.

I say that no man can properly interfere with this grand progress, which I have so imperfectly described. You can not interfere with the operations of economic laws; you can not by legislation clog the wheels of this magnificent progress. You may interfere with it temporarily, you may run athwart its passage, but you will find that your laws will go down, and the eternal and immutable laws which govern human intercourse and human traffic and human business will vindicate themselves and assert their potency and sway, notwithstanding the pigmy efforts which are intended to thwart them.

Mr. MITCHELL of Oregon. Will the Senator allow me to ask him a question?

Mr. GRAY. I am nearly through. The Senator can take the floor, if he will just wait a moment. I do not wish to be short to my friend, but I really meant that.

Mr. MITCHELL of Oregon. I may take the floor later.

Mr. GRAY. In support of what I said, if it needed authority, if what I said does not appeal to the intelligence and knowledge of my friends, especially on this side of the Chamber, let me read to them what a very thoughtful observer, a very patient student of economic questions, one whom we all respect—we do not believe him to be infallible—but whose declarations on any such subject are entitled to the greatest weight and consideration. I mean Mr. Edward Atkinson. In an entirely different connection, long before this silver question was brought to the front, writing in a book called the Industrial Progress of the Nation—surely a theme noble enough and worthy enough to occupy his best thought—he says in the chapter on The Struggle for Subsistence:

By drawing from every source as yet available, the writer has recently presented statistics which can not be gainsaid, proving, so far as figures

suffice for proof, that greater progress than ever before has been made during the present generation dating from 1865, when this nation first truly attained its independence. In providing for the means of subsistence, shelter, and clothing, and in organizing the machinery for distributing the necessities of life. Computations have been given which go far to prove not only that since the dangers, difficulties, and destruction of the civil war were surmounted, and since slavery was abolished, there has been a more equal distribution of the necessities of life among the masses of the people of this country, but also that there has been a more equitable distribution since the standard of value of the country was reestablished on a specie basis.

No attempt has yet been made to compile or to compare the statistics of the hours of labor, but figures are not needed to prove to anyone who has even a moderate faculty for observation that the hours of labor as a whole have been diminished, while much of the hard handwork has been displaced by labor-saving mechanism. In the factory, either by way of legislation or in spite of legislation, it matters not which for our present purpose, ten hours have become customary in place of eleven or twelve; the usual hours of work in textile factories forty or fifty years ago having been thirteen and even fourteen. In the building trades, either by way of trade unions or in spite of them, nine and ten hours have become customary in place of eleven and twelve, or even more. In all the great retail shops and wholesale warehouses in which goods are distributed, the hour of closing is earlier and the hour of opening is later than it used to be. In the factory the rooms are better lighted, better ventilated, and in winter more uniformly heated than ever before.

Attention to sanitary conditions has become necessary even to pecuniary success. In the field the farm laborer rides upon the plow or upon the mowing machine, the hay-rake, or the tedder, freed from the hard labor of guiding the plow by hand, mowing the hay with the scythe, or reaping the harvest with the sickle. The steam harvester and thresher have rendered the work of saving the grain crop vastly more effective and much less arduous to each person. In the building trades the small hoisting engine lifts the men and the materials to the tops of the highest buildings, while much of the heavy work of preparing the timber and other materials, which formerly required long and arduous work by hand, is done by steam or water power in the factory.

The optimist can thus find on every side facts which sustain his view that the general struggle for life is becoming easier and not harder, while the statistics of the life-insurance companies prove that the duration of life is lengthening.

I am sure the Senate will excuse me when I read anything from David A. Wells. He says in his book on Recent Economic Changes, published three or four years ago:

If there is a progressive fall of prices without a corresponding fall of wages, profits must fall progressively, and interest also, since the rate of interest is governed by the profits which can be made from the use of capital. Now this is exactly what has happened in recent years. Profits and prices of commodities have fallen, but wages have not fallen, except in a few special departments.

Mr. Wells is one competent to speak by authority, because he is an original investigator and statistician. He continues:

Consequently the purchasing power of wages has risen, and this has given to the wage earning class a greater command over the necessities and comforts of life, and the purchases of all this great class have supplemented any forced economizing of the employing and well-to-do classes. "The latter are the ones who make the most noise in the newspapers and whose frequent bankruptcies most fill the public eye. But they are not those whose consumption of commodities most swells the tonnage of the railways and steamships. They occupy the first cabin and their names are the only ones printed in the passenger lists, but the steerage carries more consumers of wheat, sugar, and pork than all the cabins together."

Mr. President, I have spoken of the evidence which goes to sustain the affirmative of the proposition that gold has not appreciated, but that, on the contrary, as I have shown, the increase in the amount of wages which has gone on steadily in these thirty years and the increase of the purchasing power of those wages show a condition that we ought not to change if we could, and which I am almost sure we would not if we could.

There is another matter that I intended to speak of in speak-

ing of the tremendous forces which have governed these economic changes, or the evidence of those immense forces, and that is the railroad extension of the United States. In 1868 one of the great trunk lines of the United States running east and west, one of the great grain, provision, and transporting lines, received 2.743 cents per ton per mile and in 1888 received .77 of a cent per ton per mile; and another great trunk line in 1868 received 1.906 of a cent per ton per mile and in 1888 received .634 of a cent per ton per mile.

Now, think of what that means to the business of the country! Think what that means to the hungry mouths which are to consume the crops of your great prairies and steam-plowed fields of the West! The fall from 1868 to 1888 in the cost of transportation is from over 27 cents per ton per mile to a little over one-half of a cent per ton per mile—.634 of a cent per ton per mile. That has made the purchasing power of these millions of dollars that much more valuable to them when they are translated into the wages the people receive, into the bread and meat and clothes and wool, and all the products which are raised in the great agricultural districts of the country.

Mr. President, I have spoken somewhat longer than I intended, rising as I did merely to speak in the line of thought suggested by the interesting and able speech of the Senator from Mississippi, but I want to say before I sit down that I do not belittle or disregard the arguments in favor of bimetallism; I do not depreciate the force of the eloquent advocacy which has been heard in this Chamber. I have desired to address myself as respectfully and as intelligently as I was able to what seemed to me the issue and the only issue of vital importance which had been evoked in this discussion. In what lawyers call their pleadings, they seek to arrive at an issue, and in seeking to arrive at an issue which I could discuss in this argument, it seemed to me that the one deserving the utmost attention I could give, and the best attention that the ablest Senator in this body could give, was the one to which I have alluded, that gold had been in all these years so appreciating as to depress the prices of commodities and deprive labor of its just reward.

I think, even in the short time I have given to it, I have been able to present something of argument which will deserve the attention of those who still differ with me upon that subject. I do not believe that there is a Senator within the sound of my voice who could gain his own consent to knowingly embark upon a scheme of legislation which would destroy or even diminish the purchasing power of the wage of labor. We must proceed, then, very cautiously in the line pointed out by those who are opposed to this repeal if we would not interfere with this grand result of all the ages to which we are the heirs.