

Silver.

---

"Tariff Reform" and want of confidence in the Democratic Administration the principal causes of present financial troubles.

---

REMARKS  
OF  
HON. GEORGE W. HULICK,  
OF OHIO,  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
*Friday, August 25, 1893.*

---

The House 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. HULICK said:

Mr. SPEAKER: Until yesterday it was not my intention to engage in the discussion of the issue that is now brought before this extra session of Congress. Having listened, however, during this debate with intense interest, I had hoped that I could come to a conclusion that would be satisfactory to my mind when I should be called upon next Monday to cast my vote. But I regret to say, Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of this House, that I doubt whether the result of the repeal of the purchasing clause of the so-called Sherman law will be what the people of this country hope for.

This discussion, so long continued, does credit to this House and to the gentlemen who have engaged in it. It has proven a revelation to our people that will give them new ideas, new thoughts, new inspirations, and will educate them to better understand the financial system not only of our own country but that of foreign nations as well.

I can not, at this stage of the discussion, at this late hour of the night, and within the limited time allotted me, enter into a consideration at length of the questions of "facts, figures, ratios, and rates," and of the principles that should govern in the settlement and solution of the great questions of finance that are agitating the minds of the American people, and which are exciting an intense interest throughout the civilized world. Nor will I give data or quote from tables of finance. They have been furnished by those more skilled and better versed in finance,

and are published to the country in the reports of the proceedings of this House.

If, now, at this late hour I were satisfied that, when the vote shall be taken, the result and the effect would be what the President hopes it may be, what the people of this country without reference to their party affiliations hope it will be; if I could be satisfied that, when the vote repealing the Sherman law shall be published to the world, the machinery now idle will be started, the unnumbered thousands who are now out of employment will be given labor; that the banks will open their doors to their depositors and invite them to come and get their money and their business accommodations; if thereby confidence in the Government will be restored and the terrible forebodings of the unemployed shall be changed to hope, then can we go home and feel that this extra session of Congress has not been called in vain. I fear, however, that such will not be the result.

When that law shall be repealed, as I have no doubt it will be, what then? The President has called this extra session to repeal that law, but has suggested no substitute, and no other remedy for the evil times that are upon us; why, we can not tell. It will be for Congress, in its wisdom, to determine, unaided by any suggestion of the Chief Executive, to provide a remedy.

The radical difference of opinions and contrariety of sentiment expressed upon the floor of this House by the party that will control legislation for the next two years gives little hope for satisfactory results. And why? Mr. Speaker, I, in common with very many of my countrymen, do not believe the Sherman law is the primary cause of the panic that now prevails so alarmingly in this country. I do not think the President thought so when he was elected in November last. He certainly did not think so when he was inaugurated, else he would have said something about it in his inaugural address, and would have called the attention of the country to the threatening cloud of distress that was fast settling down upon this country.

During the Presidential campaign the people were warned by the Republicans of the danger of placing in power a party with the record the Democracy had made and the threatening pledges in their platform concerning the repeal of the "robber tariff," as they designated it. In the great State of Ohio, protection to American industries was the all-absorbing issue. In the Sixth district of Ohio the Sherman law was not mentioned in the press or on the stump during that campaign.

Our people were not disturbed about the money they had in their pockets, whether it was gold, silver, or greenbacks. The great question uppermost in their thoughts was how to honestly make money, how to keep that money good, how to keep it on a parity in its purchasing power, and with which of the two great political parties, the Republican or Democratic, should be intrusted the administration of this great nation; with which of these two organizations we should intrust the welfare of the poor and the rights of the rich; with the interest of the miners of the West and the rights of the manufacturers and bankers of the East; with the interest of the corn and wheat growers of the North and those of the cotton-growers of the South; and above all, with which of these two parties should be intrusted the pensions of our noble, brave, worthy, and never-to-be-forgotten soldiers, who saved our country from defeat and ruin.

These, and not the Sherman law, were discussed. Nine-tenths of the people did not know that such a law was on the statute book and the other tenth who did know had no fears about it.

The Democracy had declared in the Chicago platform, that—

We denounce the Republican protection as a fraud, a robbery of the great majority of the American people for the benefit of the few. And further, that the Federal Government had no constitutional power to impose and collect tariff duties.

Every Democratic newspaper and every Democratic stump orator emphasized these assertions and made their party followers believe that they were being robbed by a fraudulent and unconstitutional tariff law, that was the "culminating atrocity of class legislation." They made their appeals to the poor working people, exciting their prejudices, and promised them "its repeal as one of the beneficent results that would follow the action of the people in intrusting power to the Democratic party."

They further declared that—

Since the McKinley tariff went into operation there have been ten reductions of the wages of laboring men to one increase. We deny that there has been any increase of prosperity to the country since that tariff went into operation.

And at the very hour when that platform was written the country was never before in so prosperous a condition, and had been since the enactment of the McKinley law and so continued until the first Tuesday of November, in the year of our Lord 1892, closed with the election of Grover Cleveland as President, and placing in full power in this Government the Democratic party.

Then, and not till then, did confidence give way to distrust. From that hour came forebodings of disaster; business men began to take on a serious look; they started later and walked slower to their places of business. Thoughtful men everywhere began to seriously examine the record of the party that was so soon, ah, Mr. Speaker, too soon, to enter upon the administration of this Government. They began with Sumner and followed it to Appomattox. They reviewed it from 1861 to 1892; they sought in vain among the statutes of our land for any law that party had ever enacted, or any measure it had ever advocated for the good of our country. They found nothing but ante-election platforms, that opposed every measure for putting down the rebellion, or furnishing money to prosecute the war, and to pay the soldiers their pensions, and, last of all, when the principles and pledges upon which that party came into power was considered, distrust took the place of confidence, and for the first time in thirty years did the business men of this country realize the perilous situation in which the business interests of this country were placed. The shadows of a Democratic Administration were beginning to fall upon the people, and they became nervous: failures followed failures; banks were suspended; men who were rich to-day were paupers to-morrow: distrust on every hand.

Still, there were those who had faith to believe that all was not lost. "The wish was father to the thought." No one seemed more hopeful than President Harrison, who had given this country one of the very best administrations on record—clean, honest, free from all scandal, dignified, statesmanlike, and for which "future generations will rise up and call him blessed." In his message to the last Congress, in December, he says:

In submitting my annual message to Congress, I have great satisfaction in

being able to say that the general conditions affecting the commercial and industrial interests of the United States are in the highest degree favorable. A comparison of the existing conditions with those of the most favored period in the history of the country will, I believe, show that so high a degree of prosperity and so general a diffusion of the comforts of life were never before enjoyed by our people.

\* \* \* \* \*

There never has been a time in our history when work was so abundant or when wages were as high, whether measured by the currency in which they are paid or by their power to supply the necessaries and comforts of life. \* \* \* And this brief exhibit of the growth and prosperity of the country will give us a level from which to note the increase or decadence that new legislative policies may bring to us. There is no reason why the national influence, power, and prosperity should not observe the same rates of increase that have characterized the past thirty years. We carry the great impulse and increase of these years into the future. There is no reason why in many lines of production we should not surpass all other nations as we have already done in some. There are no near frontiers to our possible development. Retrogression would be a crime.

Such was the condition of our country under Republican administration of protection to American labor and encouragement to American industries. The great force of these utterances consists, not in the fact that they were made by the President of the United States, but because they were true as Holy Writ.

In his message to Congress on the 8th day of August Mr. Cleveland confirms what ex-President Harrison said. Mr. Speaker, I will read what he says:

Our unfortunate financial plight is not the result of untoward events, nor of conditions related to our natural resources, nor is it traceable to any of the afflictions which frequently check national growth and prosperity.

With plentiful crops, with abundant promise of remunerative production and manufacture, with unusual invitation to safe investment, and with satisfactory assurance to business enterprise, suddenly financial distrust and fear have sprung up on every side.

Mr. Speaker, what caused this financial distrust and fear to "suddenly spring up on every side?" It could not have been the "robber tariff," for Mr. Cleveland says there was "unusual invitation to safe investment," and with satisfactory assurance to business enterprise." The President, however, unwittingly, in his message, gives the cause:

It may be true—

Says he—

that the embarrassments from which the business of the country is suffering arise as much from evils apprehended as from those actually existing.

I ask gentlemen on the other side of the House, whether there were not in fact just grounds existing for apprehension and distrust? A party that never before had full power intrusted to them—that party had asked "a change of Administration and a change of party, in order that there might be a change of system and a change of methods."

Mr. Speaker, the change did come, and, Oh, my countrymen, what a change! From prosperity to adversity, from riches to poverty, from remunerative wages to starving penury, from employment to idleness, from happiness to misery, from enterprise in business to stagnation in every industry, from the humming spindle to the silent engine, from investments in saving societies by the laborer to wrecked banks and disappointed depositors, from the cheerful (unbegrudging) allowance of well-earned pensions to a mean, despicable scheme to rob the old soldiers of their just dues. Ah, yes, a change had come, from a want of confidence in the Democratic party, "from evils apprehended."

The so-called Sherman law had been in force about two years and a half under a Republican Administration and no panic occurred. Evils were not then apprehended. The Republican party had a proud history, and patriotic leaders in whom the people had confidence. What brought on the panic was the fear the people had that the Democratic party would do what they said they would do if they were placed in power—that they would repeal the McKinley tariff and inaugurate free trade.

Mr. Speaker, while I do not believe the Sherman law was the primary cause of the panic, notwithstanding, I will vote for its repeal, for two reasons: First, because the people have been led to believe that it is responsible for the business disturbance, and its repeal will, to some extent, tend to restore confidence; and, secondly, I am not in favor of the Government being compelled to purchase 4,500,000 ounces of silver every month at a loss to the Government of millions of dollars annually.

Now, the people of this country are satisfied with the money they have. The people of my district and of my State are in a position to do equal and exact justice to all sections of our country in the settlement of these troubles that are upon us. They have no prejudices against, nor special favors for, any industry in any section of the country. They are ready to do exact and equal justice to the miner of the West and to the banker and manufacturer of the East.

They want to see that the farmers of the North shall be protected alike with the cotton-growers of the South. They have no disposition to do otherwise. My constituency are equally interested in the prosperity of all the varied industries of our whole country, and favor those laws and policies that will result in the greatest good to the greatest number; and especially are they wedded to the principles of protection to American labor, American skill, American genius, American enterprise, and to the best interests of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency are not so much disturbed about the money they have in their pockets as they are about how they can honestly by their labor and skill make more.

I hold in my hand a silver dollar that has the United States stamp upon it. I hold in my hand a paper promise that a dollar shall be given the holder for it. I also hold in my hand a coin that I offered to the barber this morning to get shaved, and he said, "No," shaking his head, "I do not want it." And why did he refuse it? Simply because that coin was used eighteen hundred years ago, and, while it bears the stamp of the government that issued it and was the coin of that time, it is worthless to-day because there is no government behind it to redeem it.

The Roman Empire has long since passed away, and that coin which has been carried for twenty-five years as a pocket piece is valueless. On the one side it has the impression of the palm leaf, on the other the burning incense that was intended to carry the thoughts of the holder to Heaven as an indication that he would trust in that money and the Government that issued it.

I hold in my hand a silver dollar issued by this Government, the intrinsic value of which to-day is about 55 cents. But the Government stamp is upon it, which declares it to be "one dollar." And then, as if this were not sufficient security to the holder, the further inscription is added, "In God we trust." When the people have money indorsed by the United States Government,

with all its vast resources, developed and undeveloped, "a Nation whose God is the Lord," whose administration is republican, and Ben Harrison its President, then it is the people have implicit confidence in its money and finance, and peace, prosperity, and happiness reign supreme. [Applause.]

No legislation should be had that will demonetize silver; on the other hand, there should be no special legislation in its behalf at the expense of the Government, or to the detriment of other industries. The product of the mines, until it is coined into money, should be regarded in legislation like the product of every other industry in the land: and because silver is used, out of which the Government coins money, is no reason why the silver mine owner, or the workers in them, should have special legislation in their behalf.

They should be placed on equal footing with the owners and workers in the lead mines and other similar industries. Nevertheless, such legislation should be favored that will encourage and foster our silver industry consistent with the general good of the whole people.

In other words, the value of silver should not be artificially enhanced by special legislation and the Government compelled to purchase and store it away in the vaults of the Treasury.

Nor is it to the interest of the country to coin silver bullion into dollars of less intrinsic value than a gold dollar. Bimetallism is what our country needs; my constituents believe in it, the people of Ohio believe in it; they have become wedded to both gold and silver. The Republican platform on which Governor McKinley is a candidate for reelection declares for it and demands that the currency shall consist of gold, silver, and paper, all of the same purchasing power on a parity with each other. The great majority of the business men of this country believe in this doctrine.

The business interests of this country do not require that the volume of circulating medium be decreased by having gold drive silver out of circulation, nor by having silver drive gold out of circulation, but they do demand both to circulate on an equality which will give every producer for his products and to every workman for his labor a full, sound dollar, whether it be gold, silver, or paper.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is decreed that silver shall remain as part of our currency. If you will only insure the people sound, honest currency they will be satisfied.

[Here the hammer fell.]

Mr. MEIKLEJOHN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the time of the gentleman from Ohio be extended for five minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. HULICK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and the House for this courtesy. I will promise not to trespass over the time suggested by my friend.

Mr. Speaker, what should this Congress now and here do in the premises? The answer is plain: repeal the purchasing clause of the so called Sherman law and put an end to the purchase of silver bullion at an annual loss of millions to the Government, a theory that can not be supported by reason, or defended in practice. The law ought to be repealed (in fact it should never have been enacted) for another reason: the people think it is the

cause of all these hard times, and the imaginary is as oppressive as the real cause.

As I was passing out of this Capitol building the other day, a lady nervously asked me "if the Sherman law had been repealed." "No, not yet," I answered. "Well," she said, "I am sorry for that. I don't know what in the world we are all going to do if something ain't done very soon."

Before I left home an Irishman said, "Well, Judge, when will Congress mate?" "On next Monday at 12 o'clock, Pat." "Well," said he, "do you think they will repale the Sherman law?" I answered I did not know. The Democrats are in control and no telling what they will do. "And, sure," he continued, "I have been out of work for two months and do you think they will repule it by Saturday night so I can go to work on Monday morning, sure?"

Now, Pat and that nervous little woman are representatives of tens of thousands of just such as they, and nothing will satisfy them but the repeal of that terrible Sherman law. And many actually believe that Senator JOHN SHERMAN was instrumental alone in the passage of that law, and he alone is responsible for all these troublous times. One year ago that same Irishman believed he was being oppressed by the "robber tariff." These are the "apprehended dangers" of which President Cleveland speaks in his message.

To the extent that these fears will be removed, the repeal of this law will do good. And this, with the stopping of the purchase of silver bullion, will justify such action on the part of this Congress.

These may be and doubtless are to a large degree imaginary evils, nevertheless they are as if they were real to the people.

Mr. Speaker, we have all heard of the college students who played a joke on the professor. One student met him, asked him how he felt. "Oh," says he, "I never felt better in my life." The student told him that he looked very pale. Another met him and said, "Why, professor, what is the matter; you look pale; are you sick?" "Well," he said, "I don't feel very well, but I guess there is nothing serious." Another met him and said, "Why, professor, what in the world is the matter; you certainly are sick." "Well," replied the professor, "I am very sick, I don't think I can live long without I get better. Will you send for the doctor while I go home and go to bed." The doctor, who was in the secret, was sent for. With a long face and wise look he felt of the patient's pulse, looked at his tongue, took the condition of respiration, sounded his lungs, and tested his heart, then put hot bricks to his feet, ice bags to his head, mustard plasters on his chest, and gave him a dose of flour pills, with the doctor's benediction upon the remedies. Next morning the professor was fully restored to his normal condition. [Laughter.]

If the repeal of the Sherman law will do as much to restore the people to their normal condition the remedy is worth trying. It is really more of a faith cure than anything else. But, Mr. Speaker, is the repeal of this law all that is to be done now? The President has asked only that. But will the party that is responsible for the legislation in this body think that nothing more is demanded? I address myself to the other side of the House, and say that you can not shift the responsibility.

This side of the Chamber will assist you in all wise measures

looking to the restoration of confidence on the part of the people that in the judgment of the Republican minority will accomplish that end. These are questions that "rise above the plane of party politics," as the President says in his message. The Democratic party that elected him will have to heed this injunction and rise above their politics and their party before the people will have confidence in what they do.

A gentleman on the other side asks "What would the Republican party do if it were in power?" I answer, Mr. Speaker, that it would only do as Moses was commanded when he was leading the children of Israel out of bondage, "Stand still and see the glory of the Lord." The Republican party, if it were in power, would have to do nothing. The history and achievements of the Republican party are "known and read of all men." Out of rebellion it brought forth peace, out of chaos it established order, from the curse of slavery it converted four million bondsmen into freemen: out of almost irretrievable bankruptcy and ruin it established one of the best systems of finance known to the nations of the world, from a "wild-cat" currency it gave us the "greenback" currency. Place this party in power in this Government, and distrust and doubt and fear will give way to faith and hope and confidence, [applause.] And now, with only eight months of Democratic rule, the people of this country are sighing for the good old Republican times, when peace and plenty and happiness reigned. "When the righteous rule the people rejoice; when the wicked reign the people mourn" is as true now as the day Solomon wrote it.

But, Mr. Speaker, I must not digress; one word and I have done.

Let Congress provide for the appointment of a monetary commission. Let it be composed of the very best financial talent to be found in our country, nonpartisan and nonsectional. Let every commercial, agricultural, mechanical, manufacturing, and mining interest of our whole country be represented by men of broad mind and liberal views as to the needs of our people, with favors for none but blessings for all. Let them be authorized to sit during the recess of Congress. Let them take testimony and perfect a financial system that will establish a just and fair ratio between gold and silver, that will meet the demands of commerce and trade, that will develop our mines, and at the same time inspire the people with confidence. Let this commission report to the regular session the results of its deliberations. Congress can then be enabled to intelligently enact such laws as will give stability to our currency, encouragement to financial enterprise and industrial pursuits, and establish a monetary system that will at once command the confidence of our people and challenge the admiration of the world. [Applause.]