

THE SILVER DEBATE.

Synopsis of the Discussion in the United States Senate.

On the 19th a lengthy discussion was had on a proposition by Mr. Voorhees for a set time when a vote should be taken on the repeal bill. Mr. Voorhees gave notice that he would ask the senate to remain longer in daily session, perhaps at night.

Mr. Mills (dem., Tex.) then spoke, advocating repeal. The Sherman law was an unwise law and as such should be repealed. It had been said in this debate that (according to the president) we stood face to face with bimetallism against a single gold standard. That statement was not accurate. The president had not made the issue. The fact had made the issue; and this was for congress to determine between bimetallism on the one side and a single silver standard on the other. The president had been charged with having deserted the democratic platform.

The president stood squarely with both feet on the platform of the party that had elected him and was ready to execute the pledges which his party had made to the people. The men who were attacking the president were the men who were of the platform.

There was a demand in the country for the repeal of the Sherman law—for its unconditional repeal. The democratic party had demanded the Sherman law as an unwise law and declared that it should be repealed.

The democrats were pledged to review the McKinley act.

Was the senate to wait before it repealed the McKinley act?

Was the senate to wait before it repealed the Sherman law until the house of representatives acted upon the tariff?

It was said that Arizona and New Mexico should be admitted as states. Was the senate to wait until this was done before it relieved the distress of the people?

Mr. Mills then proceeded to argue that bimetallism could not exist when intrinsic value and money value were not precisely the same. If they were not the same, how could they be made the same, except by international agreement? He was in favor of the free and unlimited coinage of gold and silver, but free and unlimited coinage would result in bimetallism. And bimetallism would not be the result of the United States alone of all nations of the earth opening their mints to coinage. In conclusion, Mr. Mills said he was going to vote for the repeal, and he would vote against every amendment to it that human ingenuity could suggest. He could not conceive of any amendment that could be offered that would not impeach the integrity of the president, and would vote against every one.

Mr. Stewart (rep., Nev.) protested against any closure proposition. If the silver men went down they would go down protesting.

On the 21st the senate remained in continuous session six hours and a half, the longest session since the repeal bill was taken up. Mr. George (Miss.) addressed the senate in opposition to repeal. He read his remarks to a silent audience and several times roll had to be called to develop the presence of a quorum. Mr. Gray (Del.) spoke in advocacy of the repeal bill.

On the 21st Senator Platt (rep., Conn.) offered an amendment to the senate rules providing for closure. He said the rules of the senate, as of every legislative body, ought to facilitate the transaction of business, while as a matter of fact it could not be denied that they made it impossible to transact business. When the necessity and propriety of a change of rules so as to reasonably facilitate the transaction of business was brought to the attention of the senate, it was the best plan to enter upon that work. He knew it would be said that in the present condition of affairs in the senate such a rule could not be adopted, but he believed it could be adopted by a vote just as easily and quickly as the repeal bill could be passed. While he had not consulted senators upon the republican side, he thought a large number on that side favored the adoption of that rule. Senator White (dem., La.) then spoke on the repeal bill, claiming that there were other causes for the financial panic besides the Sherman act.

On the 22d Senator Allen (pop., Neb.) introduced a bill making the dollar (which may be coined of 41 2/3 grains of silver or 23 8/10 grains of gold) the unit of value. The bill also repeals the Sherman act and provides that owners of silver bullion may deposit it in the mint, and such silver, less 20 per cent (to be deducted for seigniorage and coined into silver dollars and put in the treasury), shall be coined into standard dollars for his benefit.

The resolution of Senator Platt (rep., Conn.) for closure rule in the senate was then taken up, and Senator Wolcott (rep., Col.) addressed the senate.

Although he said that he would vote against the resolution he declared that no factious opposition would be made to it, and that a vote upon it could be reached much sooner than a vote upon the repeal bill could be. If the senate desired a vote on the closure resolution it could have been without much debate. He would not interfere with the slightest objection. If there was a failure to reach a vote then criticism on the senators opposing the repeal bill would have to cease.

The debate on the repeal bill could be stifled by the closure rule, but it could not be stifled otherwise.

Senator Teller (rep., Col.) declared that he would resist by every method, obstructive and otherwise, the adoption of a rule in the senate which would limit or restrict debate.

On the 23d the closure resolution was further discussed. Messrs. Turp (dem., Ind.) and Call (dem., Fla.) speaking in opposition to the same, after which the resolution was referred to the committee on rules. An effort to take up the repeal bill was made by Mr. Voorhees, who afterwards moved an executive session, which was agreed to.

On the 25th Mr. Stewart (rep., Nev.) addressed President Cleveland for alleged violation of the constitution by seeking to influence the legislative department of the government, speaking of his resolution declaring that the independence of the coordinate departments of the government must be maintained and that the use of the power and influence of one department to control the action of another is in violation of the constitution and destructive to our form of government."

Mr. Stewart began with a citation of the president's speech on the occasion of commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the laying of the corner stone of the capitol. This speech had been made by a president having more than 100,000 federal officers to dispose of his veto power which had been designed only for extraordinary occasions, backed by conceited and capricious and encouraged and flattered by a venal press.

Mr. Cleveland on that occasion was sternly faced toward the senate wing of the capitol and in angry and menacing tones using the following language: "If the representatives who here assemble to make laws for their fellow countrymen forget the duty of broad and disinterested patriotism, and legislate in prejudice and passion, or in behalf of sectional or selfish interests, the time when the corner stone of the capitol was laid and the circumstances surrounding it will not be worthy of commemoration."

This declaration, Mr. Stewart said, had been cited and exaggerated by a venal press as a rebuke to the senate.

He charged that the president, in disregard of his oath of office to execute the laws, had permitted the secretary of the treasury to violate the order which made the purchase of 4,000,000 ounces of silver bullion per month mandatory, by exercising an unlawful discretion in purchasing a smaller amount.

He said the president of the United States had no exalted opinion of the senate or the house. He regarded it, doubtless, as an appendage to the executive department. Senator Stewart then read from a letter written by the president accepting an invitation to attend the centennial celebration of Wichita, in which he said he soon expected a "grave session of congress on his hands." A session of congress on my hands," repeated Stewart. Stewart simulated seriousness. "That remark spoke volumes in interpreting how the president regarded the coordinate branches of the government. Would a man who fully appreciated the responsibility of his office even by accident make the remark that congress would be on his hands?" Congress has assembled as an independent branch of the government, and was on nobody's hands."

Mr. Stewart yielded the floor to Mr. Cameron (rep., Pa.), who made a speech in which he indicated that if the silver people are driven to the wall by the tariff-reformers they will never

permit a tariff bill to pass the senate. He urged that there ought to be no attack upon the industries of one state or section, for if this was insisted upon the result would be a situation in which there could be no legislation in the senate without unanimous consent. In concluding his remarks, Mr. Cameron said: "My propositions are these: I propose a gold loan of so many hundred million dollars as congress may decide to be bought at the market rate and held in the treasury as the gold reserve is held in the bank of France and by the governments of the Latin American republics to our mints to the free coinage of American silver, imposing a duty on the import of foreign silver."

I propose, further, to repeal the tax on state bank circulation. I would also press once more for action in favor of our shipping.

To meet the deficit in our income tax for next year I would reimpose the duty of two cents a pound on sugar and repeal the bounty. Then I would wait a year to see how the system worked and how far we were affected by foreign influence."

Mr. Bate (dem., Tenn.) denied the claim that the Sherman law was responsible for the stringency, and said that the real cause of the trouble was the republican tariff. That was the main issue of the last national campaign, and the democrats had made a mistake in not pushing tariff reform with the same vigor that they had manifested to repeal the silver purchase law.

Mr. Stewart again took the floor. He criticized the use of the word "intrinsic" as applied by the president to the value of gold and silver, and said that the president did not know what he was talking about. He read from newspapers various articles as to the attitude of the president, finally coming to the published telegram from the president to Chairman Wilson, of the ways and means committee, congratulating him on the passage through the house of the repeal bill. In the hundred odd years of American independence, said Mr. Stewart, there was no precedence for such action. It seemed from that dispatch, he said, that the president regarded congress as his servant, and was thanking it as a good and faithful servant for doing his bidding.

Mr. Mills then proceeded to argue that bimetallism could not exist when intrinsic value and money value were not precisely the same.

If they were not the same, how could they be made the same, except by international agreement?

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And bimetallism would not be the result of the United States alone of all nations of the earth opening their mints to coinage.

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