

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

Vol. 4, No. 29.

Lincoln, Nebraska, August 5, 1904.

Whole Number 185

Mr. Bryan's Speeches During Closing Hours of

Following is Mr. Bryan's first speech on the last night of the St. Louis convention, delivered while Judge Parker's telegram was under discussion:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the convention: I do not know whether I can make myself heard by you. I was informed that some action was being taken here and I came over.

I understand that you have received a telegram from the candidate, which has been read to you, and which I have read, and that a motion has been made to send back a reply, and that the question now is on the resolution directing the sending of this reply.

I wish to state the facts in this matter and then to make a suggestion.

We had a protracted session of the committee on resolutions. For sixteen hours we were in session the last time. When the platform was reported from the subcommittee it contained the gold standard plank of which you know. It was discussed in committee. It was stated by members that it would be unfortunate to insert the plank, and finally, by a vote of thirty-five to fifteen the gold plank was excluded.

I then introduced some separate resolutions. I had previously introduced a resolution reaffirming the Kansas City platform. That was voted down. When we refused to declare in favor of the gold standard and refused to reaffirm the Kansas City platform, we left the question open as to the monetary standard.

I called attention to the fact that there were certain questions before congress upon which we ought to express an opinion. I called attention to the fact that a bill had been reported by a committee authorizing the melting of silver dollars into subsidiary coin at the discretion of the secretary of the treasury. I pointed out that the purpose of the bill was to gradually melt up the silver dollars and recoin them into subsidiary coin of limited legal tender. I pointed out that the purpose of the bill was to decrease the amount of standard money just to the extent of the melting of the coin. But the committee refused to adopt it, saying that, as we had left the gold and silver question out entirely, we ought not by any suggestion to bring any phase of the money question into the campaign.

I introduced a resolution declaring our opposition to any contraction of the currency by the melting or retirement of any of the silver dollars. They objected that that brought in the question. I scratched out "silver dollars" and made it read that we objected to the contraction of the volume of metallic money. They said that the words "metallic money" might bring in the silver question. I scratched out "metallic money" and put in "standard money"—that we were opposed to the contraction of the volume of standard money; but they said: "We do not want to bring the money question in at all."

I then proposed a resolution condemning the asset currency, and called attention to the fact that it had no connection with the silver question, but they said that if we touched on any phase of the money question, it would bring in all of it.

I called attention to the fact that we had to meet this issue; that we had to have either a perpetual debt or an asset currency, if we had the national banks of issue. But they were so anxious to get harmony and bring the party together that we might fight this battle as a unit, that they were not even willing to declare against an asset currency and branch banks.

I then proposed a resolution declaring that the United States notes furnished better money than the national bank notes. I was trying to get a declaration on that principle which has no connection with the silver question, but has a con-

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nection with a vital, living, throbbing question. But they said: "In the interest of harmony we must leave that out," and thus every proposition on our side was voted down, and they put it on the ground that as the gold proposition on their side had been voted down, no phase of the question should be touched.

When we came to read over the final draft I found that, inadvertently, a phrase had been used in the last paragraph which might raise this question. Here is the paragraph:

"But also the active assistance of all of our fellow citizens, who disregarding past differences upon questions no longer in issue," etc.

I moved to strike out "upon questions no longer in issue," on the ground that it was a declaration that the money question was settled, and substantially a declaration for the gold standard. On motion in that committee it was stricken out, and here (exhibiting) is the official draft of the platform with those words stricken out. I find that copies had been given out to the newspapers before this correction was made, and as the platform appears in the papers those words (the words stricken out) are in it.

The committee took every precaution to keep this question out, and now I understand it is proposed that we shall make a declaration in this telegram that:

"The platform adopted by this convention is silent upon the question of the monetary standard because it is not regarded by us as a possible issue in this campaign, and only campaign issues are mentioned in the platform. Therefore there is nothing in the views expressed by you in the telegram just received which would preclude a man entertaining them from accepting a nomination on said platform."

In the committee I asked Senator Hill if he knew Mr. Parker's views on the gold standard. He said he did not; that he had never talked with him on that subject, and that he did not know his views upon it. Now, my friends, if you send this telegram and say that this question is no longer an issue, you simply say it is settled on the gold standard side; and I insist that if you are going to declare for the gold standard, you should be honest and manly and say so in the platform. (Applause.)

Senator Tillman has said that we all know where Mr. Parker stands; that we all knew in the committee. How did we know? Only by his silence. That was the only way. Judging by his silence, I believed he was for the gold standard, and I have insisted for months that he ought to state his position, so that the American people could sit in judgment upon it, and not enter a convention blindfolded on this subject. (Applause.)

If this convention will adopt a plank declaring that the gold standard has been established in this country and is accepted, I shall offer no objection to the plank except to vote against it. (Applause.)

But I appeal to you to be candid with the voters of this country. (Applause.) I appeal to you to take them into your confidence. If there is any objection to our saying this plainly, why should we say it by inference; and if you say that you are willing to say this in regard to the gold standard because it is settled, then I insist, that having entered upon the money question, you shall say in the platform whether or not the party favors the melting up of the silver dollars, wheth-

er it favors the asset currency, the branch banks, and the national bank currency. (Applause.) And if the convention does not want to do this; if it wants simply to send this telegram, then I insist that if we are going to tell Mr. Parker that his views are unimportant on this question, because it is not an issue, we shall tell him that his views are important on these other phases of the financial question which are before the country. (Applause.)

Mr. R. F. Pettigrew of South Dakota: May I ask the gentleman from Nebraska a question?

Mr. Bryan: Certainly.

Mr. Pettigrew: As I recollect the telegram of Judge Parker, it practically says that the gold standard is irrevocably established and he would veto any bill to disturb it. I want to know if his language would admit of any other interpretation?

Mr. Bryan: The words "firmly and irrevocably" may mean that there is no—

Mr. Pettigrew: He says he will act accordingly if he is elected.

Mr. Bryan: Yes—"irrevocably established, and (I) shall act accordingly." If he means that it is established beyond the power of the American people to change it, I would deny it, for the American people have the right to fix their standard and to change it whenever they please. (Applause.) If, however, he simply means that, so far as he is concerned, he is opposed to any change, and that he wants to go into the office with the understanding that all the influence of the executive will be used to prevent any change in the standard, then I understand it to mean that if president, and having the veto power which enables him to override anything less than two-thirds of both houses, he will use that power even if the majority of the people want to change the standard. (Applause.)

I am sorry that this question ever arose. I joined in the report of the platform committee because I wanted harmony. I joined in it because I wanted to put a united party back of our candidate. I think it is a manly thing for a man to express his opinion before the convention adjourns; but it would have been manlier to have expressed it before the convention met. (Applause.) It is a manly thing to express his opinion before the delegates act finally upon his position, but it would have been a manlier thing had he expressed his opinion before the voters throughout the country went to their caucuses and their primaries and sent instructed delegates here. (Applause.)

We can not be blamed for the injection of this question at this time. It is the judge's fault that he did not speak sooner, and not our fault. He has been invited to speak on numerous and sundry occasions. It is not our fault that this question was ever raised. His friends brought the gold plank into the committee and tried to make it a part of the platform; but, having been offered and having been stricken out and the convention having acted, I am not willing to send this naked statement to him, and thereby write into our platform a plank that we intended to leave out of the platform. (Applause.)

I shall, therefore, oppose this telegram, or possibly as amendments must be acted on first, I will propose some amendments to the telegram, and then if the motion to send the telegram is defeated, you can propose your gold standard plank and let the convention vote upon it. If the gold standard is right, why run from it? (Applause.) If it is good, why be afraid of it? and if it is bad enough to scare you out of putting it in your platform, it is bad enough to leave out, either directly or indirectly. (Applause.)