

**FIXING PRICES BY STATUTE.** In 1896 the populist party advocated fixing the price of silver by statute. We have not yet recovered from the baneful influence of this agitation to create values by legislative enactment. Senator Cullom has introduced a bill to give the interstate commerce commission power to fix the price of transportation.

If the interstate commerce commission can fix the price of transportation, it can, as logically, fix the price of the commodity transported. If we admit the principle involved in the proposed amendment, we must admit the power of congress to delegate to this or a similar commission the power to determine the price at which Nebraska products shall be sold after being transported. The power of congress to regulate commerce applies to sales as well as transportation. If this power of regulation, then, includes fixing prices it must apply alike to both sales and transportation.

**PRESERVATION OF RECORDS.** Representative Stokes of South Carolina has introduced in congress a bill which ought to become a law. There is probably not another country that has, in proportion to age, such a large volume of valuable documentary history, as the United States. And there is probably not another country that is so careless and negligent in its methods of preserving both state and national records. Nearly everything in this line is done by political contract. A little while ago congress entrusted the compilation of the messages of the presidents to one of the members, who sublet the work to a cheap book agent. The publication is not unlike the character of its compiler. Work of this kind should be in charge of specialists who have a wide range of information upon historical subjects and possess powers of discrimination.

Mr. Stoke's measure aims to systematize the collection of public records. It empowers the American Historical Association to investigate the public records and other valuable historical material of the various states and territories and report the result to congress, together with recommendations as to needful legislation. It is expected to secure in this way the cooperation of the various state historical societies with the national association and thus secure greater uniformity in methods. It is a commendable measure and deserves the support of congress.

#### DUTY OF THE GOLD DEMOCRATS.

The question is now asked with some interest, What do the "Gold Democrats," or, more properly, the supporters of the Indianapolis convention of 1896, propose to do at the coming election, if the regular candidates, as seems prob-

able, are again McKinley and Bryan? One of your contemporaries has made formal inquiry on this point of some of these persons. Having had its inquiries addressed to me, having taken some part in the Indianapolis convention, having spoken for Palmer and Buckner in many large cities, and having been honored by the gold democrats of Massachusetts with their nomination for governor in 1897, I may properly give my views at length.

They are the views of one man. Independents and mugwumps, gold democrats and Palmer men, are by those names men who think and vote for themselves. The significance of their movement in 1896, the curiosity as to their intentions now, come from their individual and untrammelled stand. The bond of their convention was the individuality of its delegates. They had the courage to act together, because they had not been afraid to act separately.

#### Chicago Platform Undemocratic.

It is sometimes alleged that these men voted against Bryan solely because the Chicago convention declared for 16 to 1, and "that issue being settled," there is nothing to prevent their returning to the fold of the democracy, and supporting Mr. Bryan or any other regular candidate. To begin with, Mr. Bryan has never agreed that the silver issue was settled, or that if he was elected president, he would not fight as vigorously against the act of 1900 as ever he did against the "crime" of 1873. But, secondly, the silver plank was very far from being the only one in the Chicago platform which disgusted the bolting democrats. To name a single other point, the utterance about the judiciary was alone thoroughly repellent to those who nominated Palmer and Buckner. They felt that there ran through all the proceedings and speeches of the convention a strain of demagogy, miscalled democracy, an appeal to the galleries, to local prejudices, to one-sided and ignorant visionaries, to "every one who was discontented and every one who was in debt;" the Adullamites, who were ready to upset everything, if only their own pet grievance might be promised its pet redress.

We objected to the platform and its candidates, not merely because this or that plank was contrary to our idea of what was real democracy, but because the entire proceedings were held at the time and supported afterwards in a spirit subversive of law, order, and peace at home and abroad.

#### A Populist Candidate Not a Safe Leader.

When Mr. Bryan exhibited himself on the stump throughout the country, the tone of all his speeches seemed most dangerous. The gold democrats did not think him merely unsound on the question of money, but unsound on the

fundamentals of national and international policy. They dreaded a return, on a larger scale, of what had happened when a very similar agitator was elected governor of Massachusetts, in virtue of his promises to those whom he called the oppressed. In five months he had thoroughly broken the peace of the commonwealth; every man felt as if a fight was imminent with his next neighbor.

And the Palmer men in 1896 felt that the Chicago candidate's election portended a like breach of the peace. He not only avowed a pernicious theory of money, but he supported it with arguments and advocated methods which showed, in our opinion, a temper never to be trusted with the presidency on any platform. He was the populist candidate then; he is the populist candidate now. Can a populist candidate be a safe leader for those who respect the traditions, I do not say of illustrious democrats or illustrious statesmen of any party, but of the peace, honor and safety of the United States?

#### McKinley Has Disregarded Constitutional Authority.

It was from this deep conviction that the Chicago candidate was dangerous that many gold democrats voted for McKinley as the less of two evils. To the like vote they are now courted by the republicans, and ordered by the Bryan democrats. They were told in 1896, and they should be told now, that McKinley was in his way, and is still, no more to be depended on than Bryan; that his complaisances are as much a storm signal as the other's threats. In spite of all such warnings, their fears prevailed, and the republican candidate received the votes of many men who said they liked Palmer better, but could not "throw their votes away," as if an honest and righteous vote was ever thrown away!

Never was a speedier or bitterer disappointment. The president has from the outset cast away the constitutional authority of his office, whether for advice or action, and has bowed not merely to the opinions of congress, but to its whims and passions. He obeyed their tumultuous mandate for war, when diplomacy was far from exhausted; solemnly repudiated all thought of acquiring territory, and then consented to its acquisition in every mode, whether of possession or protectorate. He has allowed the war office to be dragged through the mire of nepotism and jobbery, and given the merit system the heaviest blows, to the encouragement of the spoilsmen, that have been since Garfield's murder. He has raised the flag of imperialism and rivalry with the war powers of Europe, in defiance of all national tradition, and eaten his own words about the Porto Rico tariff, in true fealty to the act which has made his name immortal as a legislator. It is