during that year, business was in a normal condition in all parts of the country, no changes had been made in the monetary systems of the world for many years, the United States was using gold as the measure of value, just as it is now, except that there was no legal tender silver in circulation as there is now, the people were prosperous, and the prices of commodities and the wages of labor were fairly adjusted with relation to each other. At the time when this investigation was made all the legislation in regard to silver now specifically complained of had been accomplished, and if prices or wages had fallen there was as much reason to attribute the reduction to that legislation then as there is now. Ample time had been afforded for its effects, if it had any, upon prices and wages to be felt, and the fact that the investigation was not made for the purpose of influencing legislation upon the silver question adds to the value of its results.

Wages and Cost of Living.

The results of the investigation establish three facts which have an important bearing upon the present controversy. The first fact established is that the prices of articles of food which are the products of the farms, gardens, orchards and dairies of the country were about 4 per cent higher than they were in the year 1860, long before the silver legislation now complained of; the second is, that the fall in the prices of these farm products since the year 1873 has been much less than the fall in the prices of the commodities the farmers have to buy, and the third is, that the reductions in prices have not been uniform, either as to particular articles or groups of articles, and therefore cannot be attributed to one and the same cause—to the appreciation of gold, for instance.

The conclusion is inevitable that various influences have operated to produce these changes in prices, some affecting one group of articles and some another and doubtless some affecting all, but to no one influence can the whole result be attributed. Cotton and wheat are the commodities most frequently referred to by those who contend that the fall in prices is due to the appreciation of gold, but there is nothing whatever in the methods of producing those articles, or in transporting or selling them, or in the character of the money received for them, which would make the appreciation of gold affect their prices more than it would affect the prices of other commodities produced by our people.

In addition to the various causes which have more or less affected the prices of all articles, the prices of these two products have been seriously affected by the enormous increase in their production since the year 1872, which was the last crop year preceding the legislation in regard to silver. The production of cotton in this country in 1872-3 was 2,974,351 bales, containing an average of 439 pounds net weight, while the production in 1893-4 was 7,549,817 bales, containing an average of 474 pounds net weight, or an increase of nearly 200 per cent in this country alone, besides the great increase that has taken place in competing countries, and in 1894-5 the production here was much larger, being nearly 10,000,000 bales. According to the statistics of the agricultural department, the production of wheat in this country in 1872 was 249,997,100 bushels, and in 1894, 460,267,416 bushels, or nearly twice as much, and there has also been an enormous increase of production in competing countries. But, gentlemen, notwithstanding the great increase in the production of cotton and wheat, here and in other countries, and the consequent decline in their prices, a given quantity of either of them will now purchase in our own markets and in the markets abroad a larger share of many other useful commodities than it would have purchased in 1872 or 1873, so that, in fact, as compared with many other things, the values of cotton and wheat have appreciated.

Supply and Demand.

The one thing which has been less affected by the changes in the relation between supply and demand, by improvements in the methods of production and distribution and by the other influences which produce fluctuations in prices of commodities generally, is labor, and it is by far the most important single source of income possessed by our people, a much larger amount of money being expended every year in the payment of wages than for any other one purpose. The cost of labor in the manufacturing and mechanical industries alone during the census year 1889 was $2,283,216,529, which was nearly 2½ times the value of all the wheat and cotton produced in this country, and if we add to this the amounts paid for farm labor, for clerical and other work in mercantile establishments, for domestic service and for work on railways of all kinds, on water craft, on streets and other improvements in the cities, and in the many other occupations which give employment to our people, we would have a sum almost, if not quite, equal to the value of all our agricultural products. It is evident, therefore, that if the alleged depreciation of gold alone has caused a reduction of prices, the wages of labor, the greatest commodity in the market, should have fallen since 1873, but exactly the reverse is true. The investigations of this subject by the subcommittee covered a period of 52 years and embraced all the occupations in which our people were engaged, and the fact, unanimously found, was that, although 18 years had elapsed since the silver legislation, the wages of labor were higher than in 1872 or 1873. Wages were found to be nearly 61 per cent higher than in 1860, which was 13 years before the silver legislation, and more than 8 per cent higher than in 1873, when that legislation was adopted.

The argument that the reduction of prices is due to the appreciation of gold is necessarily based upon the further assumptions that the legislation in regard to silver has produced a scarcity of redemption or metallic money in the world, and that prices are fixed and regulated by the amount of such money in circulation or available for circulation. Neither of these assumptions is justified by the facts. The policy of maintaining, or rather attempting to maintain, the so called double standard never succeeded in keeping so large an amount of full legal tender silver in circulation in the world as there is at this time, and one of the principal reasons for this is that the effect of the policy was to drive first the coins of one metal and then the coins of the other into the coffers of the hoarders or into the melting pots because they were undervalued in the coinage laws and would not remain in use as money.

One of the most effective arguments made by the advocates of free coinage, in some parts of the country at least, is that the people are in debt, and that it is the duty of the government to relieve them by such legislation as will enable them to procure cheap money for the purpose of discharging their obligations, and in support of this argument the most exaggerated statements are made as to the depressed and suffering condition of our farmers, wage earners and other producing classes. This argument concedes that under the proposed system of free coinage at the ratio of 16 to 1 all the various kinds of currency in use by the people, including the silver dollar itself, would be worth less than it is now, for of course if this is not to be the result money would be no cheaper than it is now. To assert that the people are in debt is simply to say that they have traded with each other on credit; that one part of our fellow citizens, relying upon the integrity and financial standing of their neighbors and acquaintances, have lent them money on time and sold property to them without demanding immediate payment in cash, and that in this way they have enabled many people to carry on a useful business and live in comfortable homes who otherwise could not have done so. If it is a crime to lend money to a man who wants to borrow it or to sell property on credit to a man who wants to purchase it and has no ready money to pay for it, let the perpetrators be properly punished, but let us not involve the whole country in confusion and disaster and immolate the innocent and guilty alike in order to punish the real offenders. If our people are in debt, they owe each other, and consequently about as many would be actually injured as would be apparently benefited by scaling the obligations down to a silver standard.

No Distinct Debtor Class.

The indebtedness of the farmers, mechanics and other laboring classes of our people, although large in the aggregate, is quite small in comparison with the whole indebtedness of the great railroad and manufacturing corporations, the national and state banks, savings institutions, trust companies, insurance companies, building associations and other organizations engaged in financial and commercial enterprises. These various organizations are indebted to the people to the extent of many billions of dollars, and while it is true that many of the people are also indebted to them their debtors and creditors are not the same persons, and therefore the debts cannot be set off against each other and extinguished in that way. I deny that there is any such thing as a distinct "debtor class" in this country, for, while nearly every one owes some debts, large or small, nearly every one has also some debts owing to him—in other words, he is both debtor and creditor.

The laboring people, as a general rule, owe very little at any one time, while their employers are always indebted to them, because wages are not paid in advance, and, besides, many of them have small deposits in savings and other banks, in trust companies, in building associations, and large numbers of them have their lives insured for the benefit of their wives and children, and consequently they are creditors of the banks and the insurance companies.

The savings bank depositors in this country last year numbered 4,777,687, and the wives and children of the depositors who depended upon these accumulated earnings for future support doubtless numbered 10,000,000 more. There were 1,925,340 depositors in the national banks last year, and 1,724,077 of them had deposits of less than $1,000 each, while state and private banks and loan and trust companies held deposits for 1,436,638 people.

The building and loan associations had nearly 2,000,000 members, all of whom had paid their money in as required by the rules of the body to which they belonged. Here, then, are about 21,000,000 of our people, generally poor or at least people of moderate means, who have given credit to these great corporations and companies, and, in my opinion, it would be a grievous wrong to adopt any policy which would deprive them of the legal right to demand and receive just as good money as they parted with when they made the deposits in the banks or paid the premiums on their insurance policies. The hard earned savings of the poor ought not to be sacrificed to the avarice of the wealthy mine owners or the ambition of aspiring politicians, and if the people who have a substantial interest in the welfare of the country and a just appreciation of their responsibilities as citizens will exert their proper influence in public affairs this great wrong can never be perpetrated.

Preserve the Standard of Value.

Mr. President, but little remains for me to say before bringing these remarks to a conclusion. It is not my purpose to discuss upon this occasion the various propositions which have been made from time to time for the improvement of our banking system or for the retirement of United States notes, because the questions involved in them are so important and so large that they cannot be properly considered in connection with the subject to which my time has been devoted. We have an abundance of money in this country for all the purposes of trade, and the disturbances and hard times of 1893 and 1894 were not caused by a scarcity or contraction of the currency, but by a contraction of credit resulting from a loss of confidence in the stability and value of our currency.

So far as the mere volume of our currency is concerned, we had then and have now an ample supply for all necessary purposes, but under the existing system it is not properly distributed and is not sufficiently elastic to meet all the changing requirements of business at different periods of the year. The United States should go entirely out of the banking business by the withdrawal of its arbitrary and compulsory issues of notes and afford the people an opportunity to supply their own currency based upon their own means and credit, thus enabling every community to utilize its own resources when necessary and adjust the circulation from time to time to the actual demands of legitimate commerce.

In what way this shall be accomplished is a question which has already engaged the serious attention of the people and public authorities, and it will no doubt continue to be investigated and discussed until a plan is formulated which, if not perfect, will at least have the merit of being a great improvement upon the existing system.

In the meantime our highest duty is to preserve the present standard of value, maintain the parity of the two metals, and keep all the money in circulation among the people, whether it be gold and silver coins, or paper based upon them, equal in purchasing power, so that no discrimination will or can be made between those who receive silver or paper and those who receive gold.

A great government should do nothing to discredit its own obligations or diminish the value of the money in the hands of its citizens, nor should the people of a great country ever consent to the adoption of a policy, through experimental financial legislation or otherwise, which would vitiate the obligations of their contracts, interrupt the regular course of their business and destroy the foundations upon which their industrial and commercial systems have been constructed. The spirit of conservatism is still strong among our people, and, notwithstanding the delusive promises and selfish appeals that are now largely influencing their opinions in some parts of the country, the truth will ultimately prevail and I have no doubt of the result when the time for final action comes.

PUBLIC SALE.

By virtue of an order of the Orphan's Court there will be sold on the premises of the late Robert A. Hall, in the township of Union, about four miles northwest of Unionville Borough, on

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 1895,

at one o'clock, p. m., all that certain messuage tenement and tract of land situate in the township aforesaid: Bounded on the north by lands of George F. Hall, on the east by lands of Reef & Rush, on the south by lands of George Newman and on the west by lands of R. L. & W. M. Scholl, containing

EIGHTY-FIVE ACRES

more or less. Thereon erected a two story frame dwelling house, barn and other buildings. Forty acres cleared and in a good state of cultivation, good fruit and an excellent supply of spring water.

TERMS OF SALE—One-half of the purchase money on confirmation of sale and balance in one year to be secured by judgment bond and mortgage with interest on the premises. Inquiry concerning the property can be made of the undersigned.

GEORGE F. HALL, Adm'r,
May 16, 1895. Fleming P. O.
D. F. FORTNEY, Atty.