

# THE PLEA OF SENATOR HILL.

## His Speech at the Chicago Convention.

### MISTAKES IN THE PLATFORM

### A Question of Business, Not of Courage.

#### In His Denunciation of the Silverites He Tells Them They Plot For Defeat—A Defense of the Administration—Plea For International Bimetallism.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Convention:

I do not know that it is necessary that I should reply to the distinguished senator from South Carolina [Tillman]. And I trust that in any reply I may make I shall not fail to accord to him my profound respect.

I would say at the outset I am a Democrat, but I am not a revolutionist. I will say further that, no matter what the provocation, you cannot drive me out of the Democratic party.

Without intending to specially reply to the remarks of the distinguished senator from South Carolina, I will only say that it was a waste of time upon his part to assume that we were so ignorant as not to know that it was his state that attempted to break up the Democratic party in 1860.

#### Democratic Party Will Live.

But the party has survived the attempts of every section of the country to divide it, to distract it. It lives today, and I hope it will long survive.

My mission here today is to unite, not to divide; to build up, not to destroy; to plan for victory, and not to plot for defeat.

I know that I speak to a convention which, as now constituted, probably does not agree with the views of the state that I especially represent upon this occasion. But I know that, notwithstanding the attack which has been made upon that state, you will hear me for my cause. New York makes no apology to South Carolina for her situation. We get our Democracy from our fathers. We did not need to learn it from those whom my friend represents.

Need I defend New York? No. It is not necessary. She defends herself. Need I defend the attacks made upon her and her citizens of wealth, men of intelligence and character? No. It is not necessary.

Need I remind this Democratic national convention that it is in the great state of New York and in its great city where the wealth that he inveighs against is situated? But it is that great city that never but once in its history gave a Republican majority. When other cities failed to respond, New York was the Gibraltar of Democracy.

The question which this convention is to decide is which is the best position to take at this time upon the financial question. In a word, the question presented is between international bimetallism and local bimetallism. If there be gold monometallists, they are not represented either in the majority report or in the minority report. I therefore start out with this proposition:

That the Democratic party stands today in favor of gold and silver as the money of the country. We stand in favor of the proposition of a single standard either of gold or silver, but we differ as to the means to bring about that result. Those I represent and for whom I speak—the 16 members of the minority committee—insist that we should not attempt the experiment of free and unlimited coinage of silver without the co-operation of other great nations. It is not a question of patriotism. It is not a question of courage. It is not a question of valor. The majority platform speaks of the subject as though it was simply a question as to whether we were a brave enough people to enter upon this experiment.

#### Safest and Best Course.

It is a question of business. It is a question of finance, a question of economics. It is not a question, notwithstanding, which men ever so brave can solve.

Mr. President, I think that the safest, the best course for this convention to have pursued was to take the first step forward in the great cause of monetary reform by declaring in favor of international bimetallism.

I am not here to assail the honesty or sincerity of a single man who disagrees with me. There are those around me who know that in every utterance made upon this subject I have treated the friends of free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1 with respect. I am here to pursue that course today.

I do not think that we can safely ignore the monetary systems of other great nations. It is a question about which honest men may differ. I believe we cannot ignore the attitude of other nations upon this subject any more than we can their attitude upon the other questions of the day. I know it is said by enthusiastic friends that America can mark out a course for herself. I know that it appeals to the pride of the average American to say that it matters not what other countries may do, we can arrange this matter ourselves. But I beg to remind you that if this suggestion is carried out to its legitimate conclusion you might as well do away with international treaties; you might as well do away with commercial treaties with other countries; you might as well do away with all the provisions in your tariff bills that have relation to the laws of other countries. In this great age, when we are connected with all portions of the earth by our ships, by our cables and by all methods of intercourse, we think that it is unwise to attempt this alone.

#### Silver Men Go Too Far.

Mr. President, I want to call your attention to this single point. I think it is unwise further for this convention to hazard and this contest upon a single ratio. What does this silver platform provide? It should have contented itself with the single statement that it was in favor of the remonetization of silver and the placing it upon equality with gold, but instead of that your committee have recommended for adoption a platform which makes the test of Democratic loyalty to hang upon a single ratio, and that 16 to 1.

I doubt the wisdom of having entered into detail. I doubt the propriety of saying that 15 1/2 or 17 is heresy and 16 is the only true Democratic doctrine. Permit me to remind you I see distinguished senators before me who, in the senate of the United States, friends of free silver, have introduced bills for the free and unlimited coin-

age of silver at the ratio of 80 to 1. I beg to remind this convention that some of your candidates proposed for nomination are men whom I accept, and whose Democracy is admitted, who have voted time and time again in congress for other ratios than 16 to 1, and yet you are proposing to nominate silver men upon a platform that limits and restricts them to one single ratio.

With all due respect, I think it is an unwise step. I think it is an unnecessary step, and I think it will return to plague us in the future.

I think we have too many close business relations with the other great nations of the world for us to ignore their attitude. Your proposed platform says that the policy of gold monometallism is a British policy.

#### Gold Not England's Policy Alone.

Mr. President, they forget to tell the people of this country that it is a French policy also; they forget to tell the people of this country that it is a German policy also; they fail to remind you that it is a Spanish policy also; they fail to tell you that it is the policy of the whole number of governments represented in what was called the Latin union. Therefore, I think it looks a little—just a trifle—like Demagoguery to suggest that this is the policy of a single nation alone. Mr. President, I regret also to see that your platform contains not a single word in favor of international bimetallism, not necessarily inconsistent with this platform, and there is no declaration whatever that it is the policy of this government to attempt to bring it about. The minority platform declares expressly that it is the policy of this government to make steady efforts to bring this about. It would be safer to do it. It would be wiser to do it. We run no risk upon the great question of the finances of this republic. I do not intend, in the brief time allotted to me, to enter into any elaborate argument upon this question.

#### What If the Experiment Fails?

I assume that this convention desires, as the people of this country desire, that every silver dollar coined shall be the equal of every other dollar coined.

I find no words in this platform in favor of the maintenance of the parity of the two metals. I find no suggestion of what is to be done in case the experiment fails.

I object to various provisions of this platform, and I think if the wise, level, cool headed men, far-sighted men, such as is the distinguished senator from Arkansas, who addressed you, had prevailed, that platform would have been different.

#### Other Mistakes in the Platform.

What was the necessity for opening up the question of greenback circulation? What was the necessity for putting in this platform an implied pledge that this government might issue greenbacks and make them legal tender? The Democratic party is opposed to paper money. The Democratic party, from its earliest history, has been in favor of hard money.

The Democratic party thinks that the best way for us to do is to eliminate United States notes and treasury notes from your currency. They are a drag upon your metals. You have to constantly keep supplied a fund for their redemption, unless you propose to repudiate them. Therefore, when my friend from South Carolina and my friend from Arkansas say that this platform says what it means and means what it says, I would like to have some one who follows me tell what this platform means upon the subject of the issue of paper money hereafter.

I am not violating, I think, the secrets of the committee room when I say that it was avowed that this government might desire to pursue that course, and this is an attempt at this late day to commit the Democratic party to the suicidal policy of the issuing of paper money.

You say you wanted a clear and distinct platform. You have not got it upon that question. It cannot be defended successfully.

Another suggestion permit me to make. What was the necessity for putting into the platform other questions which have never been made the tests of Democratic loyalty heretofore? Why, we find the disputed question of the policy and constitutionality of an income tax. What! Has it come to this, that the followers of Samuel J. Tilden, who during all his life was the opponent of that iniquitous scheme which was used against him in his old age to annoy him and harness him and humiliate him—why, I say, should it be left to this convention to make as a test of Democratic faith belief in the propriety and constitutionality of an income tax? Why was it

branded proposition that for no purpose, whether to protect the currency or not, whether to preserve our national credit, or for any other purpose—there shall not be a bond issued.

Why, how surprising that would be to my Democratic associates in the senate, who for the last two or three years have introduced bill after bill for the issuing of bonds for the Nicaragua canal and other purposes.

No, no, my friends, this platform has not been wisely considered. In your zeal for monetary reform you have gone out of the true path—you have turned from the true course, and in your anxiety to build up the silver currency you have unnecessarily put in this platform provisions which cannot stand a fair discussion.

Let me tell you, my friends, without going into a discussion of the bond question proper, which is somewhat foreign to this subject—let me tell you what would be the condition of this country today if the discharge of the public duty that is conferred upon him had not seen fit to issue bonds to protect the credit of the government.

#### Bond Issues Were Unavoidable.

The Democratic party has passed a tariff bill which unfortunately has not produced a sufficient revenue as yet to meet the necessities of the government. There has been a deficit of about \$50,000,000 a year. It is hoped that in the near future this bill will produce ample revenues for the support of the government, but in the meantime your greenback currency and your treasury notes must be redeemed when they are presented if you would preserve the honor and the credit of the nation.

Where would the money have come from if your president and your southern secretary of the treasury had not discharged their duty by the issuing of bonds to save the credit of the country?

Let me call your attention to the figures. There has been issued during this administration \$262,000,000 of bonds. What amount of money have you in the treasury today? Only just about that sum. Where would you have obtained the means with which to redeem your paper money if it had not been produced by the sale of bonds? Why, my friend Tillman could not have had money enough out of the treasury from his salary to pay his expenses home.

Mr. President, I reiterate to the convention that this has brought into this country an unnecessary, a foolish issue, which puts us on the defense in every school district in the state.

#### An Issue Which Divides the Party.

I do not propose to detain you by any other criticism of this platform at this time. It is sufficient that you have entered upon an issue on which the Democracy is largely divided.

In addition to that you have unwisely brought into this platform other questions foreign to the main question and made the support of them the test of Democracy. I do not think that this was the course that should have been pursued.

Mr. President, there is time enough yet to retract those false steps. The burdens you have imposed upon us in the eastern states in the support of this platform in its question relating to silver is all that can reasonably be borne. But in addition to that you have put upon us the question of the preservation of the public credit. You have brought into it the question of the reconstruction of the supreme court. You have brought into it the question of the issuing of paper money. You have brought into it the great question of life tenure in office.

And this platform is full of incongruous and absurd provisions which are proposed to be made the test of true Democracy.

Mr. President, it is not for me to review any question of sectionalism, and I shall not do it. This country is now at peace, all sections of it, and let it so remain. I care not from what section of the country the Democrat comes, so long as he is true to the old fundamental principles of our fathers. I will shake him by the hand and express my friendly sentiments toward him.

#### The Question of Sectionalism.

The question of sectionalism will creep in in spite of the efforts of our best men to keep it out. I oppose this platform because I think it makes our success more difficult.

I want the grand old party with which I have been associated from my boyhood to be—I have looked forward to the day when it should be securely entrenched in the affections of the American people. I dislike all their tenets. I have no sympathy with their general principles, but I do think that we are here today making a mistake in the venture which we are about to take. Be not deceived.

Do not attempt to drive old Democrats out of the party that have grown gray in its service to make room for a lot of Republicans and old Whigs and other Populists that will not vote your ticket after all.

Do not attempt to trade off the vote of little New Jersey, that never failed to give its electoral vote, and take the experiment of some state out west that has always given its vote to the Republican ticket. I tell you that no matter who your candidate may be in this convention, with possibly one exception, your Populist friends, upon whom you are relying for support in the west and south, will nominate their own ticket, and the silver forces will be divided.

#### Mark the Prediction Which I Make.

Who are authorized to speak for the Populist party here in a Democratic convention? I saw upon this platform the other day an array of terms, giving countenance and support to this movement; men who never voted a Democratic ticket in their lives and never expect to. They have organized this party. They are the men who attempted to proscriber Democrats all over this Union. They are the men who were crying against us in the days that tried men's souls during the war. My friends, I thus speak more in sorrow than in anger. You know what this platform means to the east. You must realize the result. But, calamitous as it may be to us, it will be more calamitous to you if after taking all these risks you do not win this fight.

My friends, we want the Democratic party to succeed. We want to build it up. We do not want to tear it down. We want our principles—the good old principles of Jefferson and Jackson, of Tilden, of hard money, of safe money. We want no greenback currency on our plates. We want no paper currency whatever. We want to stand by the principles under which we have won during the history of this country and made it what it is. If we keep in the good old paths of the party, we can win. If we depart from them, we shall lose.

#### The Difference.

"Was your husband good to you during your long illness?" inquired the kind lady who was making a charity call.

"Oh, yes, indeed, ma'am," replied the poor woman, "as good as could be—he was more like a friend than a husband."—London Tit-Bits.

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If not, what you want is to get there.

A great deal of sickness begins with loss of fat. You know this. When your friend is in good flesh, you say, "How well you look!" and when he is thin you don't say what you think, but you worry about him.

Apply this to yourself. Don't let yourself get thin.

The diseases of thinness that we fear most are scrofula in the child and consumption in the adult. If you keep your child and yourself plump, you do not fear these diseases.

It will be useful to you to know the exact reason for this.

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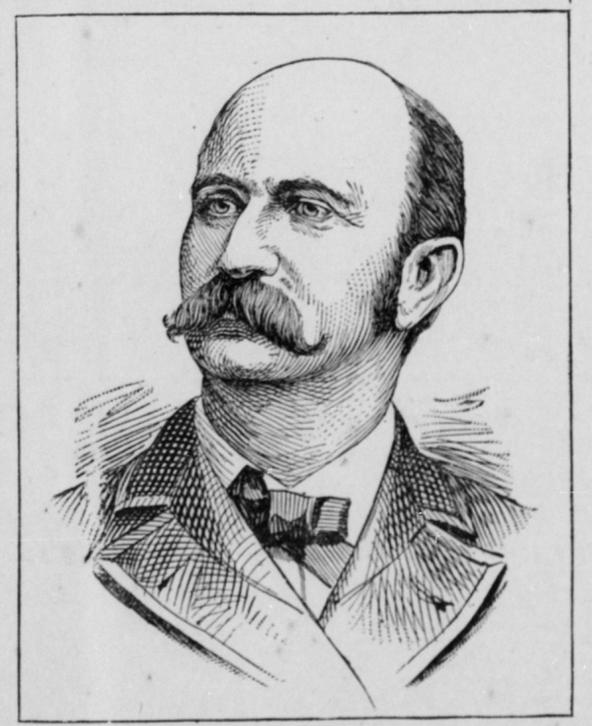
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DAVID B. HILL.

I find no suggestion of how you are to brace up this new depreciated currency.

Everything is risked upon the mere fact that it shall be given free coinage at the mints. I beg to call your attention to this fact—that, in my humble opinion, the very policy condemned by this platform is the policy that has kept your greenback currency and your silver dollar at a parity with gold during the past years. We think that times and conditions have changed.

We think that you cannot ignore the fact of the great production of silver in this country. We think that you cannot safely ignore the fact in the preparation of a financial system that the cost of the production of silver has greatly fallen. Why, it is the very pregnant fact that confronts all the world in the solving of this great question—of the immense discovery of silver everywhere.

The great fact confronts the world that the cost of silver production has been reduced nearly one-half.

#### Not a Question of Bravery.

If the American people were brave, were courageous, if they had the spirit of 1776, as this platform says, could they, singly and alone, make copper the equal of gold? Could they make lead the equal of gold? Must you not take into consideration the great fact of production, the great fact of the lessening of the cost of production in the last 15 and 20 years?

If bravery, if courage, could produce these results, then you could make any metal, no matter what it might be, a money metal. But I tell you it is a question of economics, a question of business judgment. It is a question of resources, and upon that it is the judgment of the minority of the committee that the safest course is to take the first great step in favor of international bimetallism and stop there.

I know it will be said that in some particulars this platform agrees with our Republican friends. It is to me neither any better nor any worse for it. I call your attention to the fact that your plank upon pensions, that your plank upon the Monroe doctrine, that your plank upon Cuba, that your plank upon territories, that your plank upon Alaska, that your plank even upon the civil service, are exactly like the Republican planks. Therefore I do not think that that criticism will detract from the value of the suggestion.

Mr. President, I said a few moments ago I thought the safest course for this convention to have pursued was simply to have said this government should enact a statute in favor of placing gold and silver alike as the currency of the country and stop there.

I do not think, I said—and I will repeat it—that it is wise to hazard everything upon a single number. Let me go farther.

wise to assail the supreme court of your country?

#### The Attack on the Supreme Court.

Will some one tell me what that clause means in this platform? If you meant what you said and said what you meant, will some one explain that provision? That provision, if it means anything, means that it is the duty of congress to reconsecrate the supreme court of the country. It means—and it was openly avowed—it means the adding of additional members to it, or the turning out of office and reconstructing the whole court. I said I will not follow any such revolutionary step as that. When, ever before in the history of this country, has devotion to an income tax been made the test of Democratic loyalty? Never. Have you not undertaken enough, my good friends, now, without seeking to put in this platform these unnecessary, foolish and ridiculous things? What further have you done?

#### Policy of the Fathers Upset.

In this platform you have declared, for the first time in the history of this country, that you are opposed to any life tenure whatever for office. Our fathers before us, our Democratic fathers whom we revere, in the establishment of this government gave our court judges a life tenure of office. What necessity was there for reviving this question? How foolish and how unnecessary, in my opinion! Are Democrats whose whole life has been devoted to the service of the party—are men whose hopes, whose ambitions, whose aspirations all lie within party lines—to be driven out of the party upon this new question of life tenure for the judges of our federal courts?

This is a revolutionary step; this is an unwise step; this is an unprecedented step in our party history.

Another question, I think, should have been avoided, and that is this: What was the necessity, what the propriety, of taking up the vexed question of the issue of bonds for the preservation of the credit of the nation? Why not have left this financial question of the free coinage of silver alone?

#### Repeals the Resumption Act.

What have you declared? You have announced the bold policy that, under no circumstances, shall there ever be a single bond issued in time of peace. You have not accepted anything.

What does that mean? It means the virtual repeal of your resumption act—it means repudiation per se and simple.

This statement is too broad; the statement is too sweeping; it has been carefully considered. You even oppose congress doing it; you even oppose the president doing it; you oppose them doing it either singly or unitedly, you stand upon the

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