The Silver Question: Speech of R. A. Sankey

Robert A. Sankey gave this speech at a meeting of the Peoples Party League in Wichita, Kansas. Sankey supports using silver to help back the U.S. money supply and discusses various arguments for and against the idea. This issue was a major part of the Populist crusade.

Creator: Sankey, Robert A.

Date: April 30, 1892

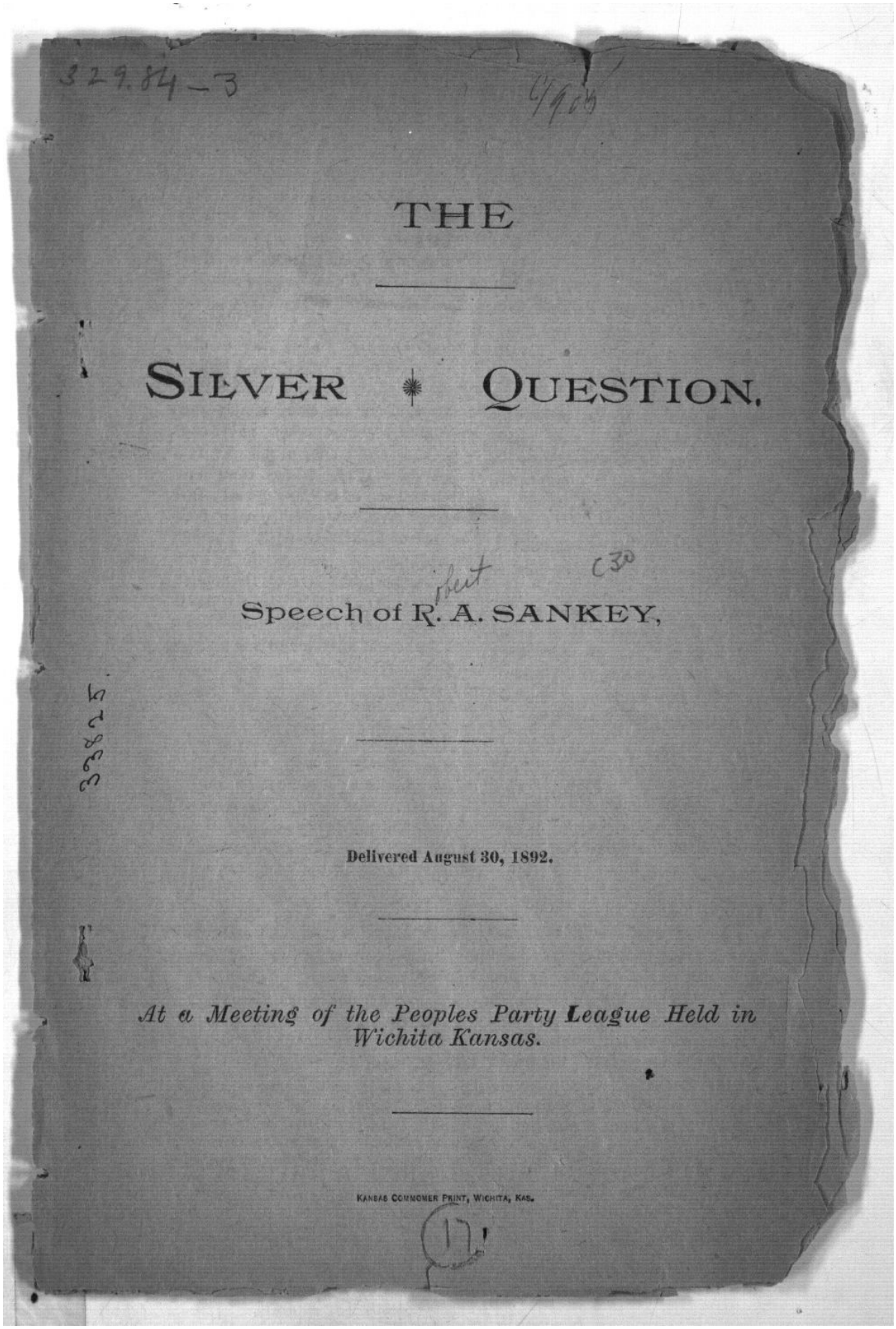
Callnumber: K 329.84 P39 Pam. v. 5 #17

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 208149

Item Identifier: 208149

www.kansasmemory.org/item/208149

The Silver Question: Speech of R. A. Sankey



329.84-3
4905
C30
35845

THE

SILVER QUESTION.

Speech of R. A. SANKEY,

Delivered August 30, 1892.

At a Meeting of the Peoples Party League Held in Wichita Kansas.

KANSAS COMMONER PRINT, WICHITA, KAS.

The Silver Question: Speech of R. A. Sankey

Mr. Sankey said: "Ladies and gentleman. Your worthy president a few days since handed me a copy of a speech on the question of the free coinage of silver, delivered in the United States senate on June 22, 1892, by the Hon. Bishop W. Perkins with the request that I would at the meeting of the League this evening review the arguments contained in the address.

My attention had not previously been called to this address and believing as I do that the financial question is the paramount issue now before the American people and that upon its correct solution will depend our future prosperity, I read the speech with a good deal of interest and a good deal of disappointment.

Knowing that the agricultural interests of the senator's constituents largely outweigh all other interests combined, I expected to find a discussion of the silver question sufficiently broad and intelligent to embrace the the connection between agriculture and the volume of currency and the relation of silver to the world's supply of money. And inasmuch as the chief purpose of the speech appears to have been to combat the financial views of Senator Peffer, I expected to read a logical discussion of the basis upon which the finances of a great and strong government should rest, and satisfactory reasons given why Senator Peffer's views were erroneous and would not stand the test of actual application. I confess I was disappointed. It seems to me our junior senator fails to do himself justice. His speech is not the product of careful thought or wide information on the subject he discusses. It is a mere revamping of financial theories long since exploded, outworn and outrageous. It ignores the present condition of our internal and foreign commerce and of the sources of of our prosperity.

It seems to me that in the outset Senator Perkins mistakes or fails to comprehend the question he seeks to discuss, or is hunting for an excuse to abandon the real question at issue.

In 1873, without a petition, without any agitation, without any request, without warning or a whisper of dissatisfaction or the knowledge of the people or the reputable members of congress, silver was clandestinely and fraudulently demonetized. Silver had been the lawful money of the United States since 1792. It has been the current money of the world since the dawn of civilization, since men first bartered with each other. The oldest recorded financial transaction is that of a stranger in the land of Heth purchasing a burial place for his dead wife, and paying therefor "four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant." The word silver is derived from the Hebrew and means money.

Through the ages, hand in hand with man's advancement and knowledge, with his ever widening commercial pursuits and resultant increase of comfort and prosperity—a part of the history of each nation—interwoven with the history of their achievements, their growth and their success is the record of silver as a medium of exchange, and with their failure and decay is the record of the want of silver, "current money with the merchant."

Senator Perkins after speaking of the importance of the silver question and its effect generally on our business interest, says:

"I have said that if the conditions were as in 1873, that in my judgment no reasonable opposition could be suggested to the remonetization of silver; but they are so dissimilar, so entirely different, that we ought not, in our zeal and demand for silver legislation to be unmindful of these changed

The Silver Question: Speech of R. A. Sankey

conditions, and to overlook and forget this important fact."

If the conditions are different what has made them so? Was it not the demonetization of silver? Considering the manner in which silver as a legal tender money was striken down, would it not be the part of wisdom to restore it to its former place before talking of changed conditions? Be it said to our shame that this country producing forty-one per cent of the world's product of silver was the first (except England) to discredit and outlaw it as money. And still further to our shame, it was done through the power and use of England's money. And yet one of the men who had part and lot in this act, still holds his place and is regarded as a sir oracle on financial matters in the party of which Senator Perkins is a member. And forsooth, because this treacherous, stealthy villainous act succeeded in changing the value of silver bullion, Senator Perkins says we must not demand that silver be remonetized. In other words, we must condone the offense and respect the criminal because complications have arisen by reason of the accomplishment of the act.

Would it not be wiser to first undo the admitted wrong, then endeavor to repair the evils we have suffered because of it? That, it appears to me would be honest and just.

These purchased hirelings who for England's gold took advantage of their official position to deal a cruel blow, not only to the producers of silver bullion, but to the entire laboring and producing classes of the United States, in order to attract attention from their nefarious conduct, have had a great deal to say about the Cobden club and its influence on the politics of the country.

This is simply a part of the scheme concocted by the tools of the money power to keep the people in ignorance of the cause of constantly falling prices, stagnant markets and ever increasing financial disturbances in the country.

Senator Perkins apparently observes the results, without being able to arrive at the cause, and from what follows in his speech it must be apparent to every intelligent reader of his address that he knows but little about the question and is wholly in error as to the supposed changed conditions of which he speaks.

He rests his opposition to the remonetization of silver upon the supposed fact that prior to 1873 no more silver was produced than was coined, and the increase in the production of silver since that time is the cause of the decline in silver bullion. Hence remonetization would not lift silver to its former value. The entire argument rests on this assumption, and if it is erroneous the whole structure falls. Nothing is left of his speech, or the objections to free coinage if the senator has mistaken his ground. In order that you may not misunderstand the senator's position, and that I am doing him no injustice I read what he says:

"From 1792 until 1873, a period of eighty-one years, we had a free and unlimited coinage act upon our statute books, and yet in all that period we only coined in the mints of the United States 7,634,638 silver dollars. Since the 1st of April, 1873, to the 1st of January 1892, a period of eighteen years and nine months, the government has coined in the mints 411,544,340 silver dollars, to say nothing of silver bullion bought and not coined. From these figures it will be seen that iu a period of a little less than nineteen years, and without free coinage the government coined into dollars almost fifty-three times as much silver as it had coined theretofore in the entire history of the government.

These figures taken from the official records, should convince all that the

demonetization of silver did not destroy it as a money metal, but because of these remarkable figures we are asked, why this increase in the coinage of silver since 1873, the period of its demonetization? The answer is a simple one, and should furnish the key to this silver discussion. It is because of the wonderful increase in the production of the white metal since that date. Until 1873 but comparatively little silver was mined in the United States and the estimated average cost of its production was $1.30 an ounce or more. Hence on a ratio of 16 to 1 with gold, there was no difficulty in maintaining the parity between the two metals, and in keeping both substantially at par, although at the time of the demonetization of silver it was at a slight premium over gold."

Aside from the statistics taken from the government records, this whole statement is baseless, in fact it would be hard to crowd more misinformation into the same space than is contained in the senator's deductions. Let us take the key furnished by the senator and see what a different storehouse of information it opens. First, as to the production of silver in the United States prior to its demonetization in 1873, and the cause of its being at a premium, and second, its increased production since and cheapness of production being the cause of its decline in value.

In 1873 (I quote from the official reports of the director of the United States mint) the production of silver in the United States was $35,750,000, almost five times the entire amount coined from 1792 up to that date. In 1872 the production was $28,750,000, almost four times as much as was coined from 1792 up to 1873. The production of silver in the United States from 1792 to 1873 was over $150,000,000. Of this production less than one-twentieth part was coined by our government, a much less proportion of the annual product than has taken place since 1873.

Yet a senator of the United States supposed to have knowledge of the subjects he discusses and upon which he seeks to make and mould public opinion, gravely informs the people that the reason silver maintained its ratio of value with gold up to 1873 was because comparatively little was mined in the United States and the average cost of its production was $1.30 per ounce.

Is it strange that people's ideas are confused on financial questions when such unfounded statements are made by one of their senators? Made, when but a cursory examination of the public records of the government would have shown the want of foundation for the statement. Equally baseless is the statement that because of the cost of production of our silver is the reason it was maintained at a parity with gold. In 1803 France opened her mint to the unlimited coinage of silver at a ratio of $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, and kept it open until 1875.

The reason no more silver dollars was coined in the United States from 1803 to 1873 was because silver bullion was at a sufficient premium to make it profitable to ship it to Europe in payment of debt and to exchange it for their products. The French mint steadied the value of silver bullion the world over, and made $15\frac{1}{2}$ parts of silver equal to one of gold. Our ratio being 16 to 1, silver bullion was constantly at a premium of about 3 cents per ounce; and the owners of silver bullion did not care to have it minted when they could sell it on an open market at a premium. The senator's argument is based on an entire misconception of facts, and a want of knowledge of the financial history of the world.

The cost of the production was not a factor in maintaining the price. France with one half of our popula-

The Silver Question: Speech of R. A. Sankey

tion and less than one-fourth of our internal commerce, for over seventy years maintained the value of silver at above $1.32 per ounce the world over, just as England maintains the value of gold today the world over, by providing that the Bank of England must buy every ounce of gold presented at $20.67 per ounce. It is the price fixed by law and the opportunity to sell that makes the value uniform and constant. And had it not been for the hired Hessians demonetizing silver in the United States, France would today still have her open mints and silver be at a premium.

From what I said you can judge how much basis there is for the senator's statement that but comparatively little silver was mined in the United States until 1873, and the cost of production is the reason it maintained a parity with gold.

The other statement that the increased production of silver since 1873 and the cheapness with which it is produced is the cause of its decline in value, is equally without foundation. Here let me call your attention to the fact that this statement entirely ignores any value because the government stamps it as money. It simply recognizes its value as a commercial product. It ignores the fact that a government can make use of any material it chooses for a medium of exchange, and wherever its sovereignty obtains that medium is valid, regardless of cost. For instance, the government stamps a piece of paper costing less than one cent with a value of $20 and wherever its authority is maintained that piece of paper is worth $20 as a medium of exchange. The financier who fails to distinguish between intrinsic or commercial value and the value placed upon the substance by the government stamp, can be pardoned for ignoring facts, of being oblivious of history and for building air castles out of wind and moonshine.

The production of silver in the United States since 1873 is as follow:

1874, $37,324,594	1876, $38,783,016
1875, 31,324,560	1877, 39,743,573

As silver was then declining in value to estimate at $1.29 per ounce would give a wrong value I give it for the following years in ounces. Our production was as follows:

1878, 34,960,000 oz	1885, 39,910,000 oz
1879, 31,550,000 "	1886, 39,685,513 "
1880, 30,320,000 "	1887, 41,721,592 "
1881, 33,260,000 "	1888, 45,792,682 "
1882, 30,200,000 "	1889, 50,094,571 "
1883, 35,730,000 "	1890, 54,516,300 "
1884, 37,800,000 "	1891, 58,330,000 "

From this statement, and it is official, you will notice that the production has not doubled since 1873. You will further notice that a much greater proportion of the annual product has been coined since 1873 than prior to that period. If the proportion of coinage to the amount produced, as suggested by the senator was the reason of its maintaining its parity of value then it ought still to be at par. Evidently the senator is travelling over unknown ground and is floundering among bogs and stumps.

Here is a statement of the cost of silver production from the statistics of Colonel Ed. F. Brown, author of "The Silver Dollar:"

"Last year the state of Colorado produced $33,548,934 worth of mineral from her metaliferous mines, included in which was 23,102,355 ounces of silver, the balance gold, copper and lead. Hardly any of these metals were mined alone, they were found in conjunction.

If the silver mines should shut down there would be no lead or copper mines in Colorado, and but very few gold mines.

In 1891 15,071 men engaged in mining regularly in Colorado in mines that shipped ore, and were paid $14,503,645 for their labor. The smelters employed 3,405 men who were paid $3,028,475 for their labor. Over 1,000 teamsters

and ore haulers were engaged in hauling ore and supplies and were paid $720,000 for their labor. There are three railroads that run to the mining districts in Colorado, that pay monthly $375,000 to their employes. These roads are built to the mining districts, and two-thirds of their business is connected with metaliferous mining, and I thus charge $3,000,000 of their labor to this form of production.

Thus it will be seen that $21,251,120 was actually paid to laborers and that about 23,000 men are directly engaged in the pursuits incident to the production of the mines, after they have been discovered and opened up. This does not count a dollar for the men who as prospectors frequently spend a life time looking for a mine. This business is one of a speculative nature and I leave it out of my figures.

In addition to this labor in 1891, the mines used $6,876,235 worth of timbers and mine supplies which should be added to the above, and the smelters used over $3,600,000 worth of fuel and supplies in reducing the ore, and fully $500,000 worth of fluxing rock in addition.

Added together it shows that it cost $32,227,355 to produce the $33,548,934 worth of gold, silver, lead and copper in the state of Colorado, with silver figured at 99. With silver figured at 87 the value of Colorado's production would have been $30,777,652 and the whole product of our metaliferous mines would have been obtained at an absolute loss of $1,440,703.

Last year it showed a small profit, but as about $50,000,000 are invested in mines and smelters, it nets hardly 3 per cent under the most favorable circumstances."

Again we have shown that the senator was discoursing upon a matter of which he possessed no knowledge whatever. If his premises were true silver today would be at a premium. If the cost of production is to govern the price, then our ratio is too high instead of too low. But the senator's view ignores both demand and use and places the price of an article alone at the cost of production. There must be a use and a demand for an article before it commands any price at all no matter what the cost of production may have been.

It must be plain to you that neither the increased production, nor decreased cost of silver bullion accounts for its present value.

It must also be plain that the following statement of the senator is as baseless as the random assertions which have preceded, viz: "Logically and necessarily the wonderful quantities mined from the great storehouse of nature, and the great reduction in cost of producing it has caused silver to lose its parity with gold on the old basis of 16 to 1, and the conditions existing today are not the conditions that existed in 1873 when silver was demonetized."

If as a matter of fact there has been no reduction in the cost of producing an ounce of silver, then the entire argument on the cheapness of production accounting for the fall in the price of bullion falls to the ground.

But the most astounding statements of this remarkable speech are yet to come. The senator, in his eagerness to maintain the views of Wall street on remonetization, seeks to befog and mislead the public as to the cost of coining silver dollars and the persons who would be benefited by free coinage. Listen:

"Why should we ignore the actual situation, and why should the mine owners and the bankers of the silver producing states and territories be permitted to take the great quantities of silver mined at a greatly reduced price to the mints of the country and have it coined into standard dollars on the old basis at our expense?

At this time an ounce of silver in the markets of the world is worth 90 cents, but if coined into standard dollars at the old ratio would make 129 cents of standard money, and thus under free coinage the holders of silver bullion would be permitted to take 90 cents worth of silver to the mints

and have it coined at our expense into 129 cents of standard money. We are asked if such privileges are accorded to others, if such rights are granted to the farmers and to the manufacturers of the country. We are asked why such a peculiar and important privilege should be accorded to, and conceded to those who dig in the ground and who bring forth the silver from the mines rather than those who cultivate the fields and produce the products on which we feed and subsist as a nation.

The stamping, then, of a dollar on less than a dollar's worth of silver does enhance its value! At the outset of the argument it was cost of production alone that made the value; now it is the government stamp. And the silver miner, according to this logician, is seeking to take advantage of the government by seeking to have silver restored to its former condition. The senator also asks how under the present law silver is discriminated against; And proceeds as follows:

"My colleage has spoken of the condition of the people of Kansas as well as the condition of agricultural sections of the county generally, and of him I ask in candor and seriousness who, of all the farmers in the United States own and hold silver bullion, and are waiting for the passage of this or some other measure that they may have it coined without expense to them into standard dollars?

The advocates of this measure frankly and honestly confess that the probabilities are that there is not a farmer in the United States who owns one ounce of silver bullion that he would have coined into standard money had we a free and unlimited coinage act upon our statute books. Then who would be benefited by such legislation? Naturally and logically the owners and holders of silver bullion."

As you will observe the entire argument of the senator proceeds upon the theory that the only persons benefited by free coinage are the owners of silver bullion; and that they are trying to rob the government of the difference between 90 cents and $1.29 per ounce. There is also an endeavor to have us believe that free coinage would entail a large expense upon the government, with no resulting benefit except to the owners of silver bullion. Neither of these things are true.

As a matter of fact the government realizes a profit upon every ounce of silver it coins, and if it had sufficient silver to coin it could in time pay the national debt with the accruing profit. Like the the miller, it takes a toll for the privilege of coinage.

The director of the mint reports that there has been made $71,952,390 in seignorage, in coining silver the past thirteen years, almost seventy-two million dollars of profit for the people in thirteen years coinage of silver! Yet this honorable senator endeavors to have you believe that the silver miner is seeking to obtain an advantage from the government at our expense. Partizan allegiance demands a costly service when it requires an effort to mislead and befog, upon an economic question that ought not to be influenced by political partizanship. The advocates of free coinage are neither asking for class legislation, or seeking any advantage at government expense. They say that the opponents of bi-metalism entrenched in the executive departments of the United States, use the present law, requiring the purchase of four million five hundred thousand ounces of silver per month as an instrument to bear down the silver market and beat down its price. That as used, instead of aiding the market, it has the opposite effect. They say to the government take your hands off. If you cannot aid in maintaining the value of silver, refrain from using the power of the government in conjunction with the sharks of Wall street in depressing the price.

The Silver Question: Speech of R. A. Sankey

They simply ask for free coinage and free coinage does not require the government to purchase an ounce of any man's silver. It simply confers the privilege on the holder of silver bullion to take it to the mint and have it coined into silver dollars, and for which the government charges its seignorage.

It leaves with the individual the circulation of his silver dollars, for which the government assumes no obligation and incurs no expense. It leaves to the mine owners and the smelters the privilege of having the product of their mines and smelters coined into dollars to be used by them in the payment of their labor and supplies. And here lies Wall street's objection to free coinage. The money would be put into circulation, and every dollar put into circulation would displace a dollar of gold. As long as the government buys silver bullion or coins silver dollars to store away in the vaults of the government unused, the monometallist cares little about how large or how small are the government purchases, except the more the white metal is discredited the less likely it is to be restored to standard money. How cheap and insincere, then is this talk of the owner of silver bullion wanting the government to do something for him at our expense. He simply wants the government to undo the wrong committed by the bribed legislators of 1873. Nothing more, nothing less.

Again, the senator seems to be oblivious of the effect of the depreciation in value of silver. With him it is wholly a question of whether the few owners of silver bullion shall receive a greater or less price for their product. As a business venture, he thinks it is smart to jew the miner to the lowest point his product will bear.

In the olden time it was thought wrong and oppressive for a government to take more than one tenth of the earnings of the subject for its support, but this modern statesman regards it as shrewd financiering to rob the miner, the producer and the laborer of more than one fourth of their earnings. And why? Solely to enable the man of credit to obtain more of the miners' product, the farmers' produce and the laborers' toil for a dollar.

It is strange that a teacher of finance should have so narrow a view of the question of free coinage of silver. Its effect upon the silver miner, disastrous as that may be, is an exceedingly small part of the injury the people suffer from the demonetizing of silver. Its effects are far reaching and every man, whether producer or laborer is equally effected with the miner. The price of farm products in its downward march keeps pace with the price of silver. Business stagnates, the merchant's profits disappear, and the laborer seeks vainly for employment.

The direct effect of the demonetization of silver in the United States was to rob it of its function and use as money and to reduce it to the level of a a merchantable commodity. When Europe saw one of the largest producers of silver voluntarily discrediting its own production, it took the alarm and began also to outlaw the white metal; and France, which for over seventy years had borne aloft the standard of free coinage and unaided maintained the ratio of $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 the world over, closed its mint and the reign of disaster began.

England, the creditor nation of the world, and to whose interest it was to make money dear and labor cheap, had succeeded in purchasing that which her armies had failed to accomplish. She had succeeded in making the United States her financial vassal. Holding in large amounts the indebtedness of the United States it was to her interest to make money scarce and dear.

The Silver Question: Speech of R. A. Sankey

In 1883 an editorial published in the London Economist declared that England being the chief creditor nation of the world it was to her interest to keep the volume of money as small as possible in countries from which debts were due, in order to get more of their products in payment of interest due to her citizens.

At a meeting of the British and Colonial chambers of commerce held in London in 1866, Sir Robert N. Fowler, a member of parliament, a banker and an ex-mayor of London, said that "the effect of the depreciation of silver must finally be the ruin of the cotton and wheat industries of America, and be the development of India, as the chief wheat and cotton exporter of the world."

And to show that Mr. Fowler thoroughly understood the question he was discussing, I call your attention to the increase in the exports of wheat and cotton from India since the demonetization of silver. I quote from the statistical abstract of British India, and instead of giving the yearly export I give the average in ten year periods.

From 1872 to 1882 the average yearly export of wheat from India to England was 5,419,654 bushels. From 1881 to 1891 it was 31,379,686 bushels. In 1891 it was 58,223,983 bushels. Up to June of this year it was something over 63,000,000 bushels.

From 1872 to 1882 the average yearly export of cotton was 517,705,261 pounds. From 1881 to 1891 it was 620,758,611 pounds. For 1891 it was over 650,000,000 pounds. I do not have the statement for the first half of 1892, but as it has increased each year the presumption is that it is larger than at any previous period.

In addition to the export of raw cotton, in the past ten years India has commenced the exportation of cotton goods, and in the past two years her exportation of cotton goods have exceeded $30,000,000 per year. All of this trade has sprung into existence since the demonetization of silver in the United States and almost entirely since 1876. Prior to that time Indian exportation of wheat and and cotton was so small as to be unnoticed.

Mr. Fowler was correct. India is displacing our products in the English markets. From 1881 to 1885 inclusive the average yearly value of our exports of breadstuffs to England was $140,025,945. From 1886 to 1890 inclusive the average yearly value was $113,215,463, showing a falling off in value that about equals the increase from India. It is only a question of time if our present financial system is maintained until the American farmer and planter will be driven out of the English market.

With all due deference to the intelligent statesmen who can see nothing in the free coinage of silver, except the payment of a bonus to the silver miner and the bullion owner, I assert that this entire Indian trade has grown to its present proportions because of the demonetization of silver. I assert further that the loss to the silver miner and bullion owner by the demonetization of silver is but a minute fraction of the loss the farmers, planters, business men and laborers have sustained by it, and if continued it will end in the bankruptcy of these classes. Not only this, but I maintain that the prices of our farm products are governed by the price of silver. Superficial statesmen may not be aware of this fact, but it is well known to those who are conversant with economic questions. And now to the proof.

What first stimulated the Indian trade? Aside from our obnoxious tariff laws, was it not because of the higher price of silver in India than in

The Silver Question: Speech of R. A. Sankey

the United States? Was it not because the dealer in Indian wheat and cotton could make a profit by exchanging silver bullion purchased in the United States for Indian money, and using that money in the purchase of Indian products?

Now, let us see how this was done and is being done today, and the Indian trade stimulated.

The English dealer in Indian wheat buys silver bullion in New York at 85 cents per ounce. The Indian mints are open, silver being their standard money, at a ratio of 15 to 1, the dealer presents his bullion to the Indian mint and obtains $1.38 cents of coined money for his 85 cents of American silver—a profit of 53 cents on an expenditure of 85 cents. He can do still better and save the cartage to India by buying Indian exchange in London and using the exchange in the purchase of the wheat and cotton.

Now suppose American wheat in London is worth $1.10 per bushel, which would make its value 95 cents to $1 at the seaboard in this country. The wheat dealer in England, buying silver at 85 cents per ounce, could pay $1.50 per bushel in rupees or their equivalent in India; and still meet the price of American wheat in London. While on the contrary, if we remonetized silver, making it worth $1.29 per ounce, wheat would have to drop about 41 cents per bushel in India to enable them to compete with the price of American wheat.

It is this enhancement of price in India that has stimulated the production of wheat, and which unless we are wise enough to cease the discrimination against our silver interests will eventually drive us out of the English markets. The price of our cotton is affected precisely the same as our wheat and the end will be the same.

Again, the loss to the silver miner, and bullion owners is so small in comparison with the loss to agriculture-business and labor, that in an intelligent discussion of the question it is scarcely worth noting. It is puerile to give the profits which would accrue to the miner and bullion owner as an excuse for refusing to remonetize silver.

It is estimated that the farmers of this country last year raised 600,000,000 bushels of wheat. Of this we have exported in wheat and flour equal to 175,000,000 bushels. If it had not been for Indian competition we would have received fully 25 cents per bushel more or $43,750,000. If we had not demonetized silver, its relative value with gold would have remained at $1.29 per ounce, and this whole wheat trade with India would not have commenced.

To show that farm products has followed the depreciation of silver I quote from Col. Ed. F. Brown the price of farm products since 1872 in five year periods.

	Av. price for 5 years end'g 1872.	Av. price for 5 years end'g 1877.	Av. price for 5 years end'g 1882.	Av. price for 5 years end'g 1887.	Av. price for 5 years end'g 1891.
Wheat....	$1 47	$1 25	$1 19	96	87
Corn.....	90	74	55,7	56	52
Cotton....	20	14.8	11	10	9.9
Bacon....	12.7	10.5	8	9.1	8.1
Beef Salted	8.7	8.1	7	8	5.1
Butter....	26.9	23.6	17.7	17	15.4
Sugar	13.½	11	9.3	7	7.6
Tobacco..	10.6	10.4	8.2	8.8	6.6

Compare these prices with silver for the same period:

	5 years ending 1872.	5 years ending 1877.	5 years ending 1882.	5 years ending 1887.	5 years ending 1891.
Silver Per oz.	1 32	1 23	1 15	1 05	98½

Silver is now lower than it has ever been before, and the price of wheat and cotton is lower than it has heretofore been. A few years ago India was not considered a factor in the cotton market; today she has almost obtained control of the China trade and beats

down the price in London.

It has been estimated by careful staticians that the loss to the people of the United States in the past ten years by reason of the demonetizing of silver exceeds one billion of dollars; and this because our foolish financiers refused to coin about $200,000,000 worth of silver.

England hopes to foster her India trade at the expense of the United States, and will gladly spend millions of dollars to prevent free coinage of silver. Yet, we are childish enough to talk of the co-operation of England in restoring silver to its former place as standard money. If the effort was made in sincerity it would be the most humiliating spectacle the American people have been subjected to as a nation. It is but a repetition of the old trick to keep the question of free coinage in suspense until atter another election. When will the people be wise enough to drive these cheap Johns out of public life?

There is only one more point in this remarkable speech that I wish to call your attention to, and I shall then detain you no longer. It is what is said on page 7 in reference to this country becoming "the dumping ground for the silver of the world in case we should establish the free coinage of silver."

When it is remembered that the ratio of silver to gold in the countries in Europe using silver is 15½ to 1, making silver worth over three cents per ounce more than under our ratio of 16 to 1; this attempted scare is far fetched.

All of the silver now in Europe except some in Germany is in active use and to suppose that any person would buy up silver in Europe at $1.33 per ounce and bring it over here to sell at $1.29 per ounce taxes the credulity of the most ill informed.

It is hardly to be supposed even if silver was cheaper in Europe than here that anyone would bring it here to give away. If they did, would we be any poorer because of the gift? But suppose silver was brought over here from Europe to sell or exchange for our products. It could only be exchanged for something we had to spare and how would we be poorer for the exchange?

Nations prosper and grow rich in proportion to the volume of their exchanges. If European money came here to stimulate our exchanges would we not be the richer for it? Would we not be more prosperous and more wealthy if all the nations of the world were bringing their money here to exchange for our products, whether that money was silver or gold? The grown up man that talks about this country being "the dumping ground of the silver of the world in case we establish free coinage of silver," is either an enemy of silver coinage, and uses this booby to frighten other grown up men equrlly as ignorant of political economy as himself; or else he lacks the honesty to give the real reasons of his opposition to free coinage.

Finally it is said we cannot alone maintain free coinage. We must have the co-operation of European nations to preserve the party of value between gold and silver. Is this so? Or is it done for the purpose of frightening the people from making the test?

What are the facts. In 1891 the world's products of silver was 140,685,000 ounces. Of this the various nations including the United States coined $133,288,200 worth computed on the basis of $1.29 per ounce. Aftertaking out the amount used in the arts there was no accumulation of silver in 1891. India coined $5,000,000 more than we did, and was it not for our continued depreciation of silver the surplus would have been absorbed

The Silver Question: Speech of R. A. Sankey

before this time. We produce 41 per cent of the world's supply and yet a steady continuous and persistent effort is made to cheapen and out law the product.

The law of 1890 orders the purchase of 4,500,000 ounces per month, but the secretary of Treasury does not coin it. It is known that both he and the President are determined opponents of silver coinage. Senator Sherman introduces a bill to stop the purchase. A plank in the Democratic platform demands the repeal of the law. Congressman Harter in a speech says the government has purchased $463,000,000 of worthless silver, on which he expects the government to lose $200,000,000.

The bankers of Wall street send out a circular with the following clause therein.

"Public opinion can be aroused and the repeal brought about at this session of Congress if sufficient pains are taken. Will you not write to your representative at once on the subject and also induce the newspaper editors to keep the subject before the people."

This is the kind of word India, Spain, Japan, China and Mexico receive from the United States.

Is it any wonder that there are indications of a panic in India, and that silver is weak on the London market? In the past sixteen years we have sold $160,000,000 millions of silver instead of coining it.

We have apparently taken every known method to depreciate and degrade the white metal, and the effort has produced the most costly results to the producers and laborers of this country that could have happened. If our foreign commerce had been done at a loss of fifty per cent, the loss to the country would not have been one-half the loss to the people occasioned by the demonetization and degradation of silver.

After we have made this persistent and aggressive warfare on silver we send a commission to Europe, to ask them to agree to what we shall use for our domestic currency. I say for our domestic currency, because it is not proposed that they shall agree to take our silver dollars as coined, but simply that they will agree to take silver bullion at so much per ounce.

Never before in the history of the world has an independent nation capable of maintaining its existence submitted the question to other nations what it shall coin and use for its currency. The coining of money is one of the functions of government. A part of its sovereignty, and belongs exclusively to the people and by them alone should be determined. Were it not for our childish reliance upon the financiers of England, we would not think of humiliating ourselves by going to the enemy of silver; to the people who are speculating on it at our expense, and cap in hand ask them for the privilege of making dollars to circulate among our own people. And making them out of the silver we ourselves produce.

If England owned our silver mines would she ask us what the standard value of silver should be. "Did she consult us when she established the value of gold? France for over seventy years maintained the value of silver at par; and cannot we, with double her population and four times her wealth and domestic commerce maintain it at our ratio? Had we the courage of men, were we self-reliant Americans, instead of cowardly imitators and flunkeys we would remonetize silver without consulting any one. That would be American finance, instead of the wasteful English imitation we now boast of as our system.

It is just such lack of information as this speech of Senator Perkins exhibits, by our legislators, which has led to our present muddled financial condition. It will require new blood in our legislative Halls to remedy the evils and establish an American system of finance.

We have been standing up long enough for England suppose we try standing up for America awhile. To do this it will be necessary to relegate to the lumber rooms of the past, "the grand old party" who seem to have no business on hand except like the ancient Egyptians the worship of dead ancestors.

I thank you for your attention.