CHAPTER XIV

THE CONTROVERSY OVER SILVER

The economic collapse of the early nineties fastened public attention anew on the monetary question. According to spokesmen of the depressed classes the breakdown was due primarily to a shortage of circulating medium. According to business and financial leaders it was the result of silver inflation. The government's vaults were stuffed with silver and, under the terms of the Sherman silver-purchase act, passed in July, 1890, the treasury was obliged to buy each month 4,500,000 ounces of bullion against which it was to issue legal-tender notes redeemable in either gold or silver.[1] Previous to this, since 1878, it had been purchasing $2,000,000 worth of silver bullion a month under the requirements of the Bland-Allison act.[2] This amount was coined into silver dollars and, as a rule, silver certificates issued for them; the dollars themselves were stored. The result by 1893 was that the treasury had in its keeping about 380,000,000 silver dollars and over

[1] U. S. Statutes at Large, XXVI, 289-290.

[2] See Allan Nevins, The Emergence of Modern America (A History of American Life, VIII), 372. The practical effect of the Sherman act was that nearly twice as much silver was acquired annually by the government as under the law of 1878.

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157,000,000 ounces in bullion. All together, about 4900 tons of silver were in the treasury vaults.[1]

As the accumulation grew its value decreased in the eyes of the world. The silver certificates and Sherman notes were not accepted by foreign countries as money: exchange had to be paid in gold. Even Mexico and the South American countries, all on a silver basis, required payment of debts ~~to them~~ in gold. As a result gold began to leave the country, nearly $60,000,000 being exported in the first five months of 1893.[2] Moreover, the business classes at home felt increasingly uncertain as to the solvency of the government, and people everywhere rushed to get their Sherman notes redeemed in gold.

The drain fell directly upon the treasury. Though the government possessed the legal authority to redeem the Sherman notes in silver, it did not dare do so because of the weakened state of public confidence. According to the law then in force the treasury was obliged to suspend the issue of gold certificates when the gold reserve fell below $100,000,000. This happened in April, 1893. At once President Cleveland announced that he and his cabinet were determined to maintain the parity

[1] "The Silver in the Treasury Vaults," Harper's Wkly., XXXVII, 670 (July 15, 1893).

[2] F. W. Taussig, The Silver Situation in the United States (Questions of the Day, no. 74; 2d edn., N. Y., 1896), 134.

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between gold and silver and to discharge all the financial obligations of the government. In August he called Congress in special session to repeal the silver-purchase act. A pitched battle resulted, for the members from the West and South demanded more, not less, silver. "Free silver" was the dream not only of the farmers and laborers, but also of the silver-mine owners in the Far West who opposed any curtailment of the big and steady market for their ore, which the government had been providing. When the repeal came to a vote in the House at the end of August it had a majority of one hundred and thirty-one. But the upper chamber was in a more recalcitrant mood. Not until November 11 did the bill pass and receive the President's signature.[1]

Politically it proved a costly victory, convincing the silverites that Cleveland was a tool of Big Business and Wall Street. With every month after the repeal, agitation against the government's monetary policy spread. Organizations were formed,

[1] Cleveland also faced the heartbreaking task of replenishing the $100,000,000 gold reserve. This he finally accomplished by a series of bond issues, the last in January, 1896. One of these, in February, 1895, aroused bitter criticism on the score that it yielded excessive profits for the Morgan-Belmont syndicate which handled it. See J. F. Rhodes, History of the United States from Hayes to McKinley, 1877-1896 (N. Y., 1919), 429-438.

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speeches made, books and pamphlets written. In 1894 appeared the most skillful piece of printed propaganda on the silver side: Coin's Financial School, written by W. H. Harvey. The author, a Virginian about forty years of age, had tried his hand at ranching and silver prospecting in the Far West and, after making money, had lost it all in the Panic of 1893.[1] In free silver he saw a panacea both for his own and his country's ills.

The book began by picturing the distracted state of the country: "the cry of distress is heard on every hand; business is paralyzed; . . . riots and strikes prevail throughout the land."[2] In order to clarify the popular mind as to the source of the troubles, Coin, the hero of the tale, opened a school of finance in Chicago to which he invited the nation's leading financiers, business men, newspaper editors and professors of political economy, indicating them by name. They asked questions and presented arguments against free silver, each of which Coin invariably refuted. The little book contained many caricatures, crudely illustrating the points which Coin set forth. The people, especially those in the West and South, could not but be influenced when they saw a picture of Western farmers feeding

1 F. E. Haynes, Third Party Movements since the Civil War (Iowa City, 1916), 295.

2 W. H. Harvey, Coin's Financial School (Chicago, 1894), 3.

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loads of hay to a cow while Eastern bankers and stockjobbers milked her, or pathetic personifications of monometallism in the form of men with one eye or one arm or one leg. By May, 1895, three hundred thousand copies had been sold at twenty-five cents apiece. Though there was a flood of literature answering Harvey, it had little influence on those who acclaimed him as their prophet.

Popular anger was further inflamed in 1895 by a Supreme Court decision declaring the income-tax provision of the Wilson-Gorman tariff unconstitutional.[1] In 1870 the court had unanimously upheld the validity of the income tax levied during the Civil War. Now this decision was reversed by a final vote of five to four. In arguing the case against the tax Joseph H. Choate had denounced the law in question as "communistic in its purposes and tendencies . . . ." Mr. Justice S. J. Field in his opinion voiced a similar view ~~replied in kind~~. "The present assault on capital," he asserted, "is but the beginning. It will be but the stepping stone to others . . . more sweeping until our political conditions will become a war of the poor against the rich . . . ."[2] To the protesting groups the decision offered clear

1 Pollock v. Farmers' Loan and Trust Co., 157 U. S. Reports, 429; 158 U. S. Reports, 601.

2 C. A. Beard, Contemporary American History (N. Y., 1914), 154-155.

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proof that the government was being run by and for the wealthy to the utter misery and despair of the poor.

The Populists, who in 1892 had secured a firm footing in Congress and captured many states of the South and West, actively pressed the issue of free silver. Their vote in the elections of 1894 disclosed a gain of forty-two per cent. In that year they elected six United States senators, seven congressmen and four hundred and sixty-five members of state legislatures.[1] They faced the presidential election of 1896 strong, determined, aflame with zeal for the common man. The campaign ~~for free silver~~ had become something more than a campaign for free silver. It was a fight against the "money power" in all its manifestations." "There are but two sides in the conflict that is being waged in this country today," declared one of their manifestoes,

> On the one side are the allied hosts of monopolies, the money power, great trusts and railroad corporations, who seek the enactment of laws to benefit them and impoverish the people. On the other side are the farmers, laborers, merchants and all others who produce wealth and bear the burdens of taxation. The one represents the wealthy and powerful classes who want the control of the Government to plunder the people. The other represents the people, contending for equality before the law, and the rights of man. Between these two there is no middle ground.[2]

[1] Haynes, Third Party Movements, 281.

[2] Silver Knight and National Watchman, Oct. 22, 1896.

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The portentous strength of the Populists made it impossible for the major parties to ignore the monetary issue. Their choice before them was an unhappy one, however. They must recognize silver if they expected to carry the West and South. They must advocate the gold standard if they were to hold the conservatives of both parties. The Republicans were the first to make a decision. For some months before the national convention in St. Louis on June 16 it had been certain that William McKinley would be the nominee. For two years his devoted friend, Mark Hanna, an able business man of Cleveland, Ohio, had been giving his time and money to persuading the country that the "Major" was the "advance agent of prosperity." As President he would give the people a tariff bill which would undo the mischief wrought by the monstrous Wilson-Gorman act; he would open their factories, set men to work. Up to the convention Hanna believed that this cry of "Bill McKinley and the McKinley Bill" was all that would be needed to carry the election.

For a time Hanna seems to have been able to juggle the gold-and-silver issue so adroitly that the East saw under McKinley's leadership gold, the West silver. When the convention assembled, however, the senators from the silver states, recognizing that the gold sentiment was going too strong for them, demanded pledges from Hanna that silver be restored as a standard. One of the silverites cornered him in his hotel room

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at breakfast, still in his night shirt, a harassed and tormented man. "Did the Silver Senators want to see another panic?" a bystander later reported Hanna ~~him~~ as saying. "Didn't they know that, back east and as far as Chicago, able workmen were starving and shopgirls going on the streets?" However, he promised that there should be a commission to negotiate with other nations on the subject and also that "the major would do what he could for Silver."[1]

The silver delegates had prior reason to trust McKinley on silver. He had voted for the Bland-Allison act of 1878 and for the Sherman law ~~bill~~ of 1890, and they probably saw in the approval he gave Cleveland's repeal bill in 1893 a surrender to the needs of the moment rather than a desertion of the cause. But the plank which the convention adopted soon after the morning interview with Hanna was too much for their faith. It declared opposition "to the free coinage of silver except by international agreement with the leading commercial nations of the world, which we pledge ourselves to promote, and until such agreement can be obtained, the existing gold standard must be preserved."[2] Thus it left silver to the mercies of a future problematical international

[1] Thomas Beer, Hanna (N. Y., 1929), 145-146.

[2] T. H. McKee, ed., The National Conventions and Platforms of All Political Parties, 1789 to 1900 (3d edn., Balt., 1900), 301-302.

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commission. When the minority tried to substitute a plank declaring for the "use of both gold and silver as equal standard money," the convention voted overwhelmingly against them. Thereupon thirty-four delegates solemnly withdrew in protest. As Hanna had foreseen, McKinley was chosen as the candidate.

On July 7 the Democrats held their convention in Chicago. A great majority came charged to vote for the free silver. Their mood was belligerent, that of crusaders rather than politicians. A minority favored the single gold standard, but they knew their chance of a respectful hearing was small. The ~~question~~ consideration of the platform caused a long and bitter debate. As finally adopted, it made the silver question the chief issue, declaring: "We are unalterably opposed to monometallism, which has locked fast the prosperity of an industrial people in the paralysis of hard times. . . . We demand the free and unlimited coinage of both silver and gold at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1 without waiting for the aid or consent of any other nation."[1]

In the speaker replying to Senator David B. Hill of New York, who stoutly defended a gold declaration, the delegates and the party found their leader: a young lawyer, well known both in his state and in Congress as a tariff reformer, William Jennings

[1] McKee, National Conventions and Platforms, 293.

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Bryan. When the thirty-six-year-old Nebraskan rose to his feet, no one apparently expected anything unusual from him. Yet before he had spoken long he excited the fifteen thousand persons in the convention hall to a frenzy of enthusiasm. The fight for silver he called "a cause as holy as the cause of humanity." The speech, on which he had been working most of the previous night, voiced the incoherent but deep emotions of the plain people. Bryan said better than anybody else had said what they had been feeling for years and he said it at a moment when it struck a strongly responsive chord.

Countering the charge that bimetallism would disturb the country's business interests, he declared that the accepted definition of a business man was too limited in its scope:

> The man who is employed for wages is as much a business man as his employer; the attorney in a country town is as much a business man as the corporation counsel in a great metropolis; . . . the farmer who goes forth in the morning and toils all day -- who begins in the spring and toils all summer -- and by the application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of the country creates wealth, is as much a business man as the man who goes upon the board of trade and bets upon the price of grain, . . . We come to speak for this broader class of business men. [1]

Nor was it relevant to argue that the great cities favored the gold standard. "The great cities," he thundered, "rest upon our

[1] W. J. Bryan, The First Battle (Chicago, 1896), 200.

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broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms, and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."[1] It was in the his peroration that he made his indelible impression on both the audience and the nation:

> Having behind us the producing masses of the nation and the world, supported by the commercial interests, the laboring interests, and the toilers everywhere, we will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.[2]

The convention went mad. "Bryan, Bryan, Bryan," ~~went~~ rang the interminable cry.

The head of the Chicago Times-Herald, H. H. Kohlsaat, has told how, as he sat in his office that day, the chief of his editorial staff burst in excitedly, declaring that he had just heard the greatest speech of his life and that he felt certain the maker of it would be nominated for the presidency. Kohlsaat, at once sending his best pen-sketch artist to make a five-column drawing of Bryan, printed the picture on the front page under a streamer caption reading: "Probable Nominee Today's Convention." About five o'clock the next morning Bryan's supporters secured five thousand copies and, pinning them on

1 Bryan, First Battle, 205.

2 Bryan, First Battle, 206.

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their breasts and fastening them to brooms, marched round and round the convention hall, yelling, "Bryan, Bryan, William Jennings Bryan."[1] The Times-Herald's prophecy was fulfilled. Bryan was nominated on the fifth ballot.

As it turned out, the Populists made a capital mistake by delaying their convention until after the gatherings of the major parties. When they met on July 22 they found themselves stripped by Bryan and his followers of their principal issue. Most of the delegates were poor men, veterans in the long struggle with adversity. Henry D. Lloyd, as he went among them, learned that not a few had walked to Chicago, others had no money for beds if they bought food, and many were hungry. Among them were railroad men, blacklisted since the Pullman strike, hopeful of swinging the convention to Debs.[2] Should the convention indorse the Democratic candidate?

Senator W. V. Allen of Nebraska, permanent chairman of the gathering, ~~expressed~~ pointed out the only practical course when he told the delegates that he did not want people to say that the Populists had been "advocates of reforms when they could not be accomplished, but when the first ray of light appeared . . . the

[1] H. H. Kohlsaat, From McKinley to Harding (N. Y., 1923), 49-50.

[2] Caro Lloyd, Henry Demarest Lloyd, 1847-1903 (N. Y., 1912), I, 258-265.

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party was not equal to the occasion, . . ."[1] And the convention, the wind out of its sails, accepted what the farseeing among them realized was to be their end as a militant party.[2] James B. Weaver, their candidate in 1892, nominated Bryan in a rousing speech. "This country," he said, "has recently witnessed a new Pentecost, and received another baptism of fire. . . . From the very beginning our organization has made party fealty subordinate to principle. We will not here reverse ourselves and refuse to accept victory now so easily within our reach."[3] The Republican irreconcilables, calling themselves the National Silver party, also gave Bryan their indorsement.

Although the vast majority of voters, conservative and radical, were able to justify their course in joining either the Republicans or the Democrats, a considerable group of gold Democrats found themselves homeless, unable to accept free silver and equally unable to accept tariff protection. Accordingly they held a convention in September and framed a platform pronouncing unalterably against unlimited coinage and in favor

1 Bryan, First Battle, 270.

2 J. D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt (Minneapolis, 1931), 356-367.

3 Bryan, First Battle, 277-278.

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of historic Democratic principles. They nominated for President General John M. Palmer of Illinois.[1]

The Republicans began their campaign on the assumption that the tariff would be the predominant question. "In thirty days you won't hear anything about silver," McKinley is reported to have said shortly after the Republican convention, and Hanna as McKinley's manager planned his fight on that basis.[2] But he was not long in seeing the futility of trying to divert the mind of the country from the issue Bryan had raised. He at first also underestimated the extent and effectiveness of the educational machinery that the Populists had built up and which the Democrats were now utilizing. They had developed an army of experienced speakers; they had an extensive literature; and they had mastered the art of wedding argument to melody.

Some of the songs sung in 1896 had done service for the Populists in the elections of 1890, 1892 and 1894. Baptized in these emotional struggles, they could easily be adapted to the moment. In every community of the South and West there were singers who made up in vigor and conviction what they may have lacked in tune and ~~a sense of time~~ rhythm. One song to catch the

1 Edward Stanwood, A History of the Presidency from 1788 to 1897 (Boston, 1898), 557-561.

2 C. S. Olcott, The Life of William McKinley ~~(American Statesmen, ser. 2, VII,~~ (Boston, 1916), I, 321.

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popular ear was titled, "The Reps and the Demos, the Shylocks and the Pops." Its fourteen stanzas told the story of the war between the classes and the masses, and voiced the charge of the Populists or "Pops":

> They have stolen our money; have ravished our homes;
> With the plunder erected to Mammon a throne;
> They have fashioned a god, like the Hebrews of old,
> Then bid us bow down to their image of gold.

But a happy ending was in sight:

> The people are waking from dreams of the past;
> They're arousing from slumber to duty at last;
> And the sun shall not shine on a Shylock or slave,
> In the land of the free and the home of the brave. [1]

Going about among the farmers of the Northwest, James J. Hill wrote to J. P. Morgan that the free-silver epidemic raged not only among them but also among many of the wage and salary earners of the towns. The Reverend Newell Dwight Hillis of Brooklyn, delivering lectures in the West during the campaign, gave a graphic description of the propaganda carried on in country schoolhouses. On a blackboard it was proved, at least to the satisfaction of the audience, that while a farmer worked eight months to produce a thirteen-cent bushel of oats, the railroad in a single day and night received seven of the thirteen cents. Of these seven cents the first destroyed the farmer's hopes of paying the interest on his mortgage; the second cent

[1] H. F. Johnson, Poems of Idaho (Weiser, Idaho, 1895), 117-120.

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deprived his wife or daughter of a new warm dress for the winter; the third kept the boy and girl out of school; the fourth took away the newspaper or a book. After this demonstration, remarked Hillis, no amount of argument, however well founded, could convince the hearers that the single gold standard did not account for their misfortunes and that free silver was not an unfailing cure for their ills.[1]

When Hanna realized the strength of the movement, he went to work with characteristic energy to match, check and defeat it. This could be done only by counter-propaganda. Under his direction the Republican national committee marshaled a body of one thousand four hundred campaigners, paid their expenses and sent them wherever their services were most needed. Hand in hand with these meetings went an equally thorough circulation of campaign literature. Over a hundred million documents were shipped from the Chicago office of the national committee; twenty million more were sent out from New York.[2] To finance these activities Hanna collected campaign contributions of unprecedented size from business men, bankers and the big corporations.[3]

[1]N. D. Hillis, "An Outlook upon the Agrarian Propaganda in the West," Am. Rev. of Revs., XIV (1896), 304-305.

[2]Herbert Croly, Marcus Alonzo Hanna (N. Y., 1912), 217-218.

[3]See A. M. Schlesinger, The Rise of the City (A History of American Life, X), 405-406.

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The campaign was hardly underway before both sides began showing signs of hysteria. The Republicans, alarmed by the support well-known radicals like Altgeld and Debs were giving Bryan, began to cry revolution. A fairly complete vocabulary of ~~vituperation~~ invective might be compiled from the names applied to Altgeld alone -- such appellations as "anarchist," "communist," "serpent," "hoodlum," "traitor," and "murderer."[1] Bryan came in for such epithets as "wretched, rattle-pated boy," "dishonest dodger" and "slobbering demagogue."[2] Nor was language of this kind employed only by the uneducated and irresponsible. "Messrs. Bryan, Altgeld, Tillman, Debs, Coxey and the rest," shouted Theodore Roosevelt in a speech urging the election of McKinley, "have not the power to rival the deeds of Marat, Barrère, and Robespierre, but they are strikingly like the leaders of the Terror of France in mental and moral attitude."[3] But the Popocrats, as the Populist-Democratic combination was known, were quite as inventive when it came to vituperation as well as more experienced. "Plunderers,"

1 W. R. Browne, Altgeld of Illinois (N. Y., 1924), 286-288.

2 Mark Sullivan, The Turn of the Century, 1900-1904 (same author, Our Times, N. Y., 1926-1935, I), 291-293.

3 H. F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt (N. Y., 1931), 153.

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"Shylocks," "tools of Wall Street," "asses," "liars," "plutocrats," "robbers," were among their favorite terms.

These intemperate attacks represented the surface ripples rather than the deeper currents of the campaign; and deeper currents there were on both sides. Aligned with McKinley were many liberal and high-minded men who saw in the Democratic platform a betrayal of national honor. They had no sympathy with reactionaries or with selfish economic exploitation, but they saw less danger in them than in the breakdown of controls which they believed Bryanism threatened. Nearly all the large daily papers were for "sound money" as were also most of the professional economists.

As for Bryan, youth followed him. Owen D. Young, then a student in the Boston University Law School, asked years later why he voted Democratic in 1896, answered that it was "not because I was enthusiastic about all of the things which Bryan stood for, but because I was then opposed and am now to the things which McKinley stood for. In addition to this, . . . I would have voted for him on almost any platform because I believed in his sincerity and honesty."[1] The main body of Bryan's support, however, came from the discontented and the debtor classes. "They're hungry," a young man told G. W.

[1] Ida M. Tarbell, Owen D. Young, a New Type of Industrial Leader (N. Y., 1932), 208.

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Steevens, correspondent of the London Daily Mail:

> What's the good of talking sound finance to a man when he's hungry? Feed him first, and then he'll listen. They haven't forgotten Homestead, and they're sore. They know that they can't be worse off than they are, and so they go in for any change. If it's not free silver, it'll be something else.[1]

As the campaign drew to a close, the business and financial interests began to employ what Steevens called "political blackmail" to insure McKinley's success. Manufacturers made contracts contingent upon a Republican victory, and wage-earners were told that the factories would close should Bryan win.[2] At the same time the Republican cause was helped by an unexpected rise in the price of wheat, due to crop failures in Russia, the Argentine and elsewhere. The outcome was decisive. McKinley received 7,107,822 popular votes to 6,511,073 for Bryan. His preponderance in the electoral college was far greater: 271 to 176.[3] In general, the industrial and older grain-growing states supported McKinley as against the cotton, prairie and silver-mining states.

1 G. W. Steevens, The Land of the Dollar (2nd edn., Edinburgh, 1897), 36-37.

2 Steevens, Land of the Dollar, 168-169; Bryan, First Battle, 617-618; M. R. Werner, Bryan (N. Y., 1929), 102.

3 Bryan, First Battle, 609, 611.

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The stability of the gold standard, however, was probably less insured by this outcome than it was by other forces working in its behalf. The world's annual production of gold, which had averaged between five and six million ounces from 1860 to 1890, reached nearly eleven and a half million in 1897, with the upward trend unchecked. This increase was due partly to the opening up of mines in South Africa, Australia and later Alaska, and partly to the new cyanide process of extracting the metal from low-content ores.[1] At the same time the volume of paper currency was enlarged through the purchase by national banks of Spanish-American War bonds and a liberalization of the old national banking act. With all reasonable fear of the scarcity of money removed, the argument for silver inflation collapsed. The farmers' condition was further alleviated by a tremendous wheat crop in 1897-1898, the greatest in years, and that at the moment when there was a wheat shortage in Europe, India, the Argentine and Australia. In July, 1896, wheat had brought but fifty-eight cents a bushel; two years later the price was nearly double, thanks to the foreign demand.[2] ~~a demand paid for in gold to swell the already heavy increase in the domestic production of the metal.~~[2]

[1] Sullivan, Turn of the Century, 296-299.

[2] For still other reasons for the decline of militant agrarianism, see Schlesinger, Rise of the City, 428.

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When the new Republican administration entered office it gave its first attention to the tariff, not to the monetary question. Immediately after his inauguration on March 4, 1897, McKinley called an extra session of Congress for the purpose. A bill was ready. The Republican House, elected in the fall of 1894 and first organized in December, 1895, had placed at the head of the ways-and-means committee a serious, methodical protectionist, Nelson Dingley of Maine, who probably knew more about tariff schedules than any other living man. In Congress since 1881, he had made himself by patient toil an encyclopedia of information on the workings of a system, in which he believed as devoutly as McKinley himself. Dingley's bill, adopted by the House on March 31, was a moderate protectionist measure, based on the idea that the duties should be lower than those provided by the McKinley act of 1890.[1]

The finance committee of the Senate was also agreed that the people demanded reductions. When its chairman, Nelson W. Aldrich of Rhode Island, reported the bill in May, he told the Senate that it was "thoroughly understood throughout the country in the last political campaign that if the Republican party should be again entrusted with power, no extreme tariff legislation would follow." He added: ~~that~~ "Industrial conditions in

1. Ida M. Tarbell, The Tariff in Our Times (N. Y., 1911), 239-244; F. W. Taussig, The Tariff History of the United States (7th edn., N. Y., 1923), 326-327.

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this country with a very few exceptions do not demand a return to the rates imposed by the Act of 1890." This was because the bitter contest "among the leading nations of the world for industrial supremacy has brought about improvements in methods and economies in production to an extent which was not thought possible a few years ago."[1] But Dingley and Aldrich counted without the Industrial League, the sugar trust, the National Wool Growers' Association, the National Association of Wool Manufacturers, the Iron and Steel Association and their like. Soon Aldrich was complaining of the trooping of the beggars of high protection through his committee room. When the bill became a law in July, the duties were higher than they had been under any previous tariff.[2] The new law, like its Republican predecessor of 1890, was the outcome of an aggressive protectionist spirit.

Before the economic effects of the Dingley tariff had become fully evident, the battleship Maine was blown up on February 15, 1898, in Havana Harbor. America's resentment at Spain's treatment of Cuba was of long standing. McKinley had

1 Nathaniel Stephenson, Nelson W. Aldrich (N. Y., 1930), 141-142; Tarbell, Tariff in Our Times, 244.

2 Edward Stanwood, American Tariff Controversies in the Nineteenth Century (Boston, 1903), II, 391; Taussig, Tariff History, 328-352. The new act revived the principle of reciprocity, which the Democrats had abandoned in 1894, but it did so in so complicated a form as to be virtually unworkable. Taussig, Tariff History, 352-354.

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inherited from the previous administration a war party which it had taken all of Cleveland's determination to hold in check. "Mr. President," McKinley had said to the outgoing President the night before his inauguration, "if I can only go out of office, at the end of my term, with the knowledge that I have done what lay in my power to avert this terrible calamity, with the success that has crowned your patience and persistence, I shall be the happiest man in the world."[1] But the destruction of the Maine was like the firing on Sumter, the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajavo in 1914. It stirred a long-smoldering fire and on April 19 war was declared.[2]

The conflict that followed was no small contribution to the restoration of prosperity. Again there was work for everybody; factories busy canning foods, making uniforms, turning out guns and ammunition; a demand for civilian workers in building camps, stocking up coal for ships, and the like. The war was short, lasting in all one hundred and thirteen days. It cost the United States some $300,000,000, including pensions and the $20,000,000

spell out

1 G. F. Parker, Recollections of Grover Cleveland (N. Y., 1909), 249-250.

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2 For the part played by the yellow press in bringing this about, see Schlesinger, Rise of the City, 190-191.

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paid to Spain for giving up all claim to the Philippines, Porto Rico and Guam.[1] As a by-product of the nation's new interest in the Pacific the United States, during the course of the war, also acquired Hawaii.[2] Thus at the close of the twenty-year period the flag flew over a territorial area larger by some 124,000 square miles than at its beginning. These possessions offered new markets for American goods, new concessions for American industries. The hard times of the 1890's seemed a bad dream well forgotten.

1 See H. U. Faulkner, The Quest for Social Justice (A History of American Life, XI), 308. In addition, it eventually cost the government nearly $170,000,000 to subdue the Philippine insurgents. J. F. Rhodes, The McKinley and Roosevelt Administrations (N. Y., 1922), 111-112.

2 See Schlesinger, Rise of the City, 419 .

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.