

Butte Department

TO A BUTTE AUDIENCE

Mr. Weed Vigorously Applauded by 75 Auditorium Republicans.

MANY QUESTIONS ASKED

The Speaker Frequently Interrupted by Men Anxious to Obtain Information on the Questions of the Day.

Hon. E. D. Weed of Helena delivered a McKinley address in Department II of the district court rooms last night and was given most respectful attention by the audience, but there were so many embarrassing questions asked that the speaker was frequently compelled to ask for quarter. Altogether the meeting was most interesting. It was about half-past 8 o'clock when Mr. Weed began speaking and at that time there were only about 75 or 100 men in the room and they were nearly all Auditorium Republicans. Before Mr. Weed had talked more than half an hour, however, the court room had been pretty well filled and subsequent events indicated that the late arrivals were nearly all silver men. One of the noticeable things about the meeting was the almost entire absence of well-known or prominent Republicans. C. R. Leonard, the national committeeman, of course, was there, and introduced Mr. Weed. Dr. Leavitt was also there, as was also Absolom F. Bray, who frequently came to Mr. Weed's rescue with exclamations of approval when he made a point or succeeded in giving a satisfactory answer to the questions first in him.

In the beginning of his talk Mr. Weed said he had no harsh word of criticism to give for those Republicans who, on the single question of silver, were withholding their support from the national ticket, but he thought they were mistaken in their judgment. He also thought there was a great deal of unnecessary confusion existing in the minds of Republicans as to the issues involved in the campaign. He said that really the only question was whether the incompetent democratic party should be kept in power four years longer or whether the Republicans should again be placed in power, which was the most prosperous year in the history of the republic. Laboring men were better employed and could buy more for their labor. Within three months after Cleveland was inaugurated the country entered upon one of the greatest periods of business depression ever known, and the ruin came upon the land, etc. To-day 40 per cent. of the laboring men are out of employment and their wives and babies are hungry for bread, while in 1892 they had an abundance of all they wanted. Mr. Weed roasted the present democratic administration, which has been endorsed by the Republican party, and said that when Cleveland went into power the public debt had been reduced to \$58,000,000, and was decreasing at the rate of \$75,000,000 per annum. Now it has been increased to an amount of \$262,000,000, and is increasing at a rate of \$50,000,000 to \$100,000,000 a year. He said the present party was the same old democratic skeleton, which brought out the first applause from the 75 Auditorium people. The same democratic party, he said, promised free coinage in its platform four years ago, and broke the promise and it will do so again. "As sure as the sun rises, McKinley will be elected by a majority greater than Grant had over Greeley," and then the noble 75 cheered, and Mr. Leonard applauded. The financial system in 1892 was as wrong as it is to-day and yet prosperity was on every hand. Four years ago the democratic platform declared as plainly and unequivocally for free silver as the platform of 1896, said Mr. Weed.

"And Grover Cleveland went back on it," said the first interrupting voice. "Yes, my friends," replied the speaker; "he went back on it and so did the democratic party." Mr. Weed spoke of the Sherman law as a good thing pushed along by the Republican party. "Why did the Republican party give us the Sherman law?" "Because they thought it would be a benefit to the people. It advanced silver from 80 cents to \$1.21." "The voice—"If silver was a good thing then, why is it not good now?" "It would be a good thing and we would want it, but—" Mr. Weed was interrupted by derisive laughter and applause and then continued: "We can't trust the democratic party." He said it was the same party that it was four years ago except that it "lost some of its respectability, and had taken on more of the disreputable element, more Ignatius Donnelly's, J. B. Weavers and other men with wheels in their heads."

A voice—"Are not the same men who assisted in repealing the Sherman law now trying to elect McKinley?" "A few of them—no, no, they are supporting a part of the same old democratic party." (Laughter.) Mr. Weed declared that if Bryan is elected this country will witness the most disastrous panic ever known and the United States will be farther from free coinage than ever. "No party can ever give us the benefit of free coinage that has not the respect of the business interests of the country." "Of Europe, you mean," said a man in the audience, and then there was applause and laughter and a voice "That's right."

John Maguire happened to be in the audience and he asked Mr. Weed: "Outside of the silver Republicans what has that party ever done for silver?" Mr. Weed admitted that it had done nothing and said he was not defending John Sherman. A voice—"Then what are you doing?" "I am here to show up the record of the democratic party," said Mr. Weed, and the audience laughed. Maguire—"Do you entirely blame the Democrats for the fight on silver?" Weed—"Yes, sir."

Maguire—"Will you allow me to read from McKinley's letter of acceptance?" Weed—"I don't want to divide my time with you, Mr. Maguire."

you what has been said on the silver question during the past 23 years by the next president of the United States," continued Mr. Weed and somebody yelled "Bryan."

"Major McKinley," said Weed. "Hurrah for Bryan," yelled the man in the audience.

Mr. Weed read numerous extracts from speeches, public statements and letters from McKinley to prove the well known fact that up to 1894 he was a sound free coinage man.

A voice—"How about Mark Hanna?" Weed—"Mark Hanna has no more to do with this campaign than—(Groans, laughter and cries of "Oh, oh"), than Coxy or Tillman."

Mr. Weed read something about what McKinley said in 1892. A voice—"Where is McKinley now?" Weed—"McKinley to-day is a better silverite than Coxy, Tillman or Ignatius Donnelly." (Applause, groans and laughter.) Mr. Weed read about some McKinley utterances in 1892.

A voice—"Where is he now?" Weed—"Compose your souls; we'll get to that after while." The speaker said free coinage and free trade could not go together and said McKinley favored free coinage with protection and that it could be brought about only through the Republican party.

A voice—"Is there such a thing as free trade under the constitution?" Weed—"Not literal free trade, but tariff for revenue only means the same thing." Mr. Weed read more about McKinley's silver record, and a man in the audience wanted to know why he did not advocate silver now, and he was told that Mr. Weed would come to that later.

A voice—"Can we expect free silver under the republican platform if McKinley is elected?" "Yes, sir," said Mr. Weed without blushing or turning a hair, and the audience roared with laughter. He said the Republican party was pledged to international bimetallicism and it never broke a pledge of "England alone," he said.

"I stood out against it and the United States could form an alliance with Russia, Germany and France and force England into it."

A voice—"What's the matter with forcing them by independent action?" Mr. Weed said that would be all right, but it could only be brought about through the protection policy and not through free trade, and the audience had another opportunity to laugh. The laughing made Mr. Weed angry and he declared with great vengeance that he yielded to no man in Montana in his loyal advocacy of free coinage. The 75 Auditorium people applauded the earnestness of the speaker more than the silver sentiment expressed. Mr. Weed said this country wanted free coinage because we needed more money, because it would increase prices and because it would increase the wages of laboring men.

A voice—"Why then—" "Hold on," cried Mr. Weed. He then said that free coinage without protection would place the laboring men of the United States on a level with the workmen of Japan and China. He gave an illustration to prove this and spoke of Japanese shoemakers, for instance, getting 10 cents a day and American shoemakers in factories getting 40 and more a day. Before he got far into his illustration some one in the audience wanted to know of a single shoe factory in America where the employees were paid \$3 per day.

"That's only an illustration," said Mr. Weed with evident vexation over the repeated interruptions.

"If it is not a fact why use it as an illustration?" insisted the man in the audience; "it's misleading."

"Well," replied Mr. Weed, "if you can't understand that I don't wish to argue the question with you."

A voice—"How is it—" "Hold on, hold on," begged the speaker. "Just wait a minute," Mr. Weed talked for several minutes without interruption about equalizing wages, about Chinese laborers, and said it was the democratic theory to let foreign production in free.

Some one wanted to ask another question. "Just wait a minute; let's be fair in this," pleaded Mr. Weed, but some one else put in and asked the gentleman if he was not contradicting himself.

"A moment ago you said free coinage would increase prices and raise wages, and now you say free coinage would reduce the laboring men to the condition of the Chinese," said the questioner.

"It will, it will," replied Mr. Weed, "but free coinage with free trade will kill the benefit of it."

A voice—"How about the Minneapolis platform?" Another—"If the Republican party is the only friend of silver, why was the last platform adopted?"

Weed—"The platform did not do for silver what I wanted it to do, but it pledged the party to bring it about by an agreement with Russia, Germany, France and England, and it never broke a pledge."

A voice—"Do you mean to hold that the party of Grover Cleveland and Bryan are the same?" Weed—"Yes, sir."

A voice—"What is the real difference between the schedule of the McKinley and Wilson tariff bills?" Weed—"About 3 to 5 per cent."

Half a dozen voices—"No, sir; only 2 per cent."

A voice—"The income tax would more than have made up the difference in revenues."

Weed—"I can ask a hundred million questions that no man can answer."

A voice—"Who repealed the free coinage law in 1873?" Weed—"The congress of the United States."

A voice—"What party?" Weed—"The Republicans, I believe, were in control, but the present leaders of the free silver movement voted for it."

A voice—"How about the Minneapolis platform?" Mr. Weed said that the platform did not pledge itself for silver, but said something about maintaining a parity between the two metals and something about an international agreement. Mr. Weed said there were other things in the Chicago platform besides a shallow declaration for silver. It asked the people to vote for free trade, state rights and to strike a blow at the roots of the tree of liberty and declare against the rights of the president to protect the laws of the nation and said that the government was the sport and the jeer of the rabble and mob. Mr. Weed had not been interrupted with embarrassing questions for almost five minutes and he began to grow eloquent.

"As has recently been said by one of the greatest men of the country, Archbishop Ireland—" But he got no further, for he was stopped by groans and laughter. "Well, you know what he said," resumed Mr. Weed, after the groaning had ceased, and then he spoke of three things of assistance in this country and referred to the message sent to

John C. Calhoun by President Andrew Jackson.

A voice—"And he was a democrat." After the audience got through applauding, Mr. Weed said that though Jackson was a democrat, he would, if alive to-day, be ashamed of and repudiate the Chicago platform and so would George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. (Applause by Mr. Leonard and the 75.) The very issue raised by the Chicago platform relative to the right to send federal troops into a state was settled by the civil war, said Mr. Weed, and a million men died for it.

"And they were all Republicans," suggested an ironical voice in the audience.

A man wanted to know what was the difference between the platform of Lincoln and the one on which Bryan was running, and the speaker said there was as much difference as between black and white. He then began to soar about patriotism, but the man who was seeking information pulled him down and asked for an answer to his question. Mr. Weed said he did not have the two platforms, but would read them if some one would provide him with them. J. W. Shannon volunteered to find them and while he was out looking for them the speaker went over the old fake about the Chicago platform attack on the supreme court.

He was again interrupted by a man who wanted to know if he considered the supreme court infallible, and if it was infallible how it was that it reversed itself on the income tax law. Mr. Weed said the court was not infallible but was composed of leading lawyers and he would as soon doubt his mother as their integrity, a statement that was received with hisses. He was asked how about injunctions to keep a man from quitting work, and he said he did not believe in them. Judge Jenkins might have been mistaken, but not dishonest. Mr. Weed did not know the injunction case had been taken to the supreme court and reversed, and a man in the audience informed him of the facts. In reply to a question as to the imprisonment of Debs without a trial, Mr. Weed said Debs had been justly punished for disobeying an order of the court.

After two hours of crossfiring between the speaker and his audience, Mr. Weed finally reached the state ticket and said he hoped the people of Montana would not take up populism after it had been repudiated by Colorado, Kansas and Oregon, and said the administration of Wallace Colorado cost that state \$300,000,000 in property depreciation and loss of credit. A Mr. Cummings who happened to be in the audience said that he knew that the entire taxable property of that state was not a fraction of that sum and Mr. Weed said that the Denver board of trade had said so.

Mr. Shannon had returned with the Lincoln and Bryan platforms and offered to read from both on the question of sending troops into states, and dared Mr. Weed to say which was the platform of Bryan and which that of Lincoln. Mr. Weed would not have it that way and offered to give the floor to Shannon. There was such a cry for the platforms that Mr. Weed finally read the two and found them about identical. He got around them by saying the Lincoln declaration referred to an armed invasion of Kansas by "democratic bushwhackers" from Missouri and the Bryan platform referred to the Chicago strike, two very different things.

The meeting ended with cheers for Bryan.

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