

Grant County

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BLACKBURN FOR SILVER.

He is After Secretary Carlisle's Political Scalp.

Senator Blackburn Has Given His Views on the Silver Question to the Public Through the Press.

Senator Blackburn has given the following to the Louisville Courier-Journal:

"If I have heretofore shown any indisposition to be interviewed by you, gentlemen, who represent the daily papers of this city, it has not been because of my purpose to conceal from the people my views upon any public question, but because I was anxious to avoid, if possible, a perversion and distortion to which my utterances have generally (of course, unintentionally) been subjected.

"I never had, have not now, and never intend to have any secrets in politics. I never did and never will ask the support of the people without giving them the fullest information as to my position and sentiments. I am at a loss to understand how anyone, especially in Kentucky, can remain in ignorance as to my sentiments upon the silver question if they feel enough interest in the matter to desire information. For the last 20 years, in congress and on the stump, anywhere and everywhere, I have earnestly and persistently insisted upon the restoration of the silver metal to that place in the money system of the country which it had always held prior to the passage of that disastrous act of demonetization passed in 1873. If there is one man in public life in all the country whose views upon this subject were entitled to be known of all men by reason of his acts and utterances I had reason to believe that I was that man. Upon this subject I have never held an opinion nor made an utterance that I have in the slightest degree altered or modified in all these years. Yet if there are any still uninformed, who desire to know those views, I will reiterate them in the shortest space possible by saying that I am in favor of opening the mints of this country to the unlimited coinage of the silver metal on an equality with gold.

"I am opposed to gold monometallism and just as much opposed to silver monometallism; without reservation or evasion I am a bimetalist. I want and mean to continue to insist upon the use

of both metals on equal terms as the redemption money of this country. I would be glad to see this result brought about by the action of an international conference, provided that it could be done without delay. I am opposed to this government waiting for any such conference to act. Our experience with such agencies has not been such as to give us either confidence or hope of the attainment of this purpose. Upon the contrary, our participation in such conference have in their very barrenness become farcical and ridiculous.

"In 1792 this country, with only 4,000,000 of people, was bold enough to prove itself able to discard the monetary system of Great Britain and establish one of its own, which for nearly 100 years met every demand and stood every strain that the growth and development of the country put upon it. I believe that the destruction (entailed upon us by this demonetization policy) of one-half of our redemption money has contributed more than any cause to the shrinkage of all values, the depreciation of all property, the stagnation of trade, the paralysis of industry—the financial troubles in which we now find ourselves.

"Whilst it may be true that the restoration of silver to its place of unrestricted coinage, and unlimited legal tender function may not prove a panacea for the ills that we now suffer, I am convinced that it will do more and go further in that direction than any one piece of legislation that has been suggested. I have an abiding faith in the capacity of this metal to work out and maintain its permanent parity with gold, provided the oppressive hand of the law is removed and the mints of the country thrown open to its coinage. I believe, and always did believe, that the act of 1873 was an unconstitutional measure. I believe that the act of 1873 would have been so held by the supreme court of the United States had not a partisan spirit dominated the action of that tribunal. This conviction I have stated in debate upon the floor of the senate as broadly as I put it here.

"I agree with Daniel Webster, who, in his day, was always held to be an authority as a constitutional lawyer. He declared that the constitution of the United States made gold and silver the redemption money of this country, and that neither congress nor any state had any rightful power to substitute any

other, nor to destroy either the one or the other of these metals. If congress had the power to demonetize silver it must be conceded that it had the same power to demonetize gold. It has seen fit to exercise this assumed power as to one of these metals. Had it exercised the same power over the other, the anomalous and somewhat embarrassing condition would have obtained that we had not any money at all. If they could strike down half, they could strike down all.

"I am in favor of the restoration of the silver metal at the ratio of 16 to 1, believing, in the light of an experience that covers a century, such ratio will establish and maintain permanently the parity between the two metals. I believe that we should take this action at the earliest day possible, independent of the policies or views of other nations. I have an abiding faith in the ability of my country to establish and maintain its own monetary system as that which I cherish in its ability to defend its own soil from invasion or its institutions from assault.

"In my judgment, we are as independent of foreign dictation or domination in the one as in the other.

"In August, 1893, when the bill proposing to repeal the purchasing clause of what was known as the 'Sherman Act' was before the senate, I said, in a speech then and there delivered, that I wanted the right of coinage for the silver metal, and that without limitation: that if seigniorage was what my opponents demanded, I was willing, not as a matter of fairness, but in a spirit of compromise, that the government should take 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. or 20 per cent. or even 25 per cent. of the silver bullion presented for coinage, or that if the question of ratio was what was troubling, I was willing, not as a matter of justice, but in a spirit of compromise, if 16 was not acceptable, to take 17, 18, 19 or even a ratio of 20 to 1.

"But the opponents of this metal were not to be placated by any concessions, either on the line of increased seigniorage or advanced ratio. They had destroyed the metal by a process that has never been, in my opinion, successfully justified, and from the hour of its taking off until now they have never been willing that it should be reinstated. Let those who will seek to distort and pervert the issue pending, the effort will