Silver Republican movement in Montana

Robert Earl Williams

The University of Montana

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Preface

The Rocky Mountain states have a peculiar economy. Divided in most instances among livestock, agriculture, mining and lumbering operations, the region's economy is primarily extractive. That is, the area produces the basic raw materials or natural resources rather than the finished product. With sparse population and few major enterprises willing to set up production plants in the area, almost every livelihood depends upon the natural wealth for the immediate income of the citizens. This has lead to demands for support by the Federal government in almost all phases of the basic economy.

The demands for Federal government support was as evident in the latter portion of the nineteenth century as it is today. Perhaps the economic area needing the most direct government assistance in the 1890's was the mining industry. Most of the early gold strikes in the Rocky Mountains had already been worked to exhaustion or, where gold wealth still existed, the ore was too deep in the earth to encourage wholesale production on a profitable basis. Mining interests turned their attention to silver and copper. Silver mining at first was far more important than copper. Entire states such as Nevada, Colorado, Idaho and Montana depended upon the well-being of the silver mines. In turn silver mining interests leaned heavily upon support of a sound government market.

After the demonetization of silver by the Federal government in 1873, silver interests in the Rocky Mountain states and Territories were caught in the chasm of declining prices on one side and the loss of a market on the other. As a result the silver interests of the West began a concerted effort to have the government restore a bimetallic system in
which silver dollars would be minted and circulated at approximately a sixteen to one ratio with gold.

By the mid 1890's silver interests, harried by the lowest market prices for silver in decades and hampered by a severe depression in 1893, were able to turn their demands for federal aid into a definite popular cause in the mining states. The drive for the free coinage of silver at a sixteen to one ratio with gold immediately assumed wider political support in the mining sectors. The state of Montana provided ample ground for a case study of a specifically depressed mining area and the overt political actions taken by the affected residents of the state.

By 1896 a strong cohesion of economic and political interests coalesced in the state in an effort to persuade the Congress of the United States to pass legislation favorable to silver. Heading the political element was a group of men known as Silver Republicans. Their speeches and overall attempts to promote the silver cause were somewhat typical of similar groups in other Rocky Mountain states. The election year of 1896 proved to be the Silver Republicans' zenith. By joining efforts with the Democrats and Populists, Silver Republicanism was successful on the state level in the election.

The Silver Republicans, although pledged to several cardinal principles of the Republican Party, especially high tariff policies, were ostracized by their former colleagues because of the silver issue and their support of William Jennings Bryan. The 1896 election in Montana was a serious setback to the state Republican Party for it had been dominant for the preceding decade. Likewise, a seemingly definite trend became established
following the election of 1896. In that year the Silver Republicans received most of their support from the western and south-central portions of the state. The north-central and eastern regions of Montana staunchly supported the drive to maintain a single gold monetary system.
Chapter I

The State and Its Problems

Montana suffered from many diverse problems during the 1890's. The more serious ones were high unemployment, business failures, crop failures, low prices for agricultural produce, and an absence of a market for a surplus of silver. The north-central, central and eastern two-thirds of the state fall into the general classification of plains area. Rich soil and sometimes ample moisture encouraged agriculture, especially the growing of wheat and other grains. The highly nutritious native grasses of the region provided a natural grazing land for large herds of cattle and sheep. To the west lay a mountainous region, speckled with valleys suited for agriculture and livestock on a reduced scale when compared to the eastern section of the state. Great primeval forests in the western third enticed a thriving lumber business and, even more important in the 1890's, the area possessed deposits of mineral wealth which were so rich and plentiful that they are not exhausted after a century of mining. Also the western one-third of the state had the highest concentration of population. The state was divided not only geographically but also economically, with each sector having its own economic problems in the 1890's. The livestock industry for example suffered severe price losses in the early years of the decade. Nature dealt the first crippling blow to the livestock business. Destructive winter blizzards between 1886 and 1888 literally annihilated the enormous herds of cattle in Montana and Wyoming which had been allowed to roam over the range between the fall and spring roundups. Cattle either starved or froze to death. Those that survived the ordeal were, in all probability, so gaunt and withered that they could not be placed on a market. The winters proved the open range
hazardous and even more important, unprofitable. The cattle raiser after 1888 had to fence in his ranges and cattle. He was also forced by nature to cultivate crops of hay and other fodder and to stock-pile it for the oncoming winter. Pressing close behind the wrath of nature was the fate of a slow market. Needless to say, the rancher's investment was lost along with his anticipated profit.

In 1888 the Montana cattleman received a top price of $4.97 for his cattle. The low for the year was $4.43 and the average was $4.70.

Eighteen eighty-nine recorded a top price of $4.10, a low of $3.75 and an average of $3.95. A slight pickup occurred in 1890 when the market for Montana cattle showed a high of $4.42\frac{1}{2} per hundred weight and a low of $4.02. A decline came again in 1892 when prime beef brought $4.51 as a high and $4.12\frac{1}{2} as a low. And then, as the Panic of 1893 gripped the nation, the lowest prices in six years faced the cattleman. Another hard winter had caused a lack of ample fodder and therefore a weight loss. The summer months yielded a poor grass crop, thus preventing any heavy cattle. Cattle buyers paid only $3.50 as a ceiling in Chicago. After seeing his herds destroyed by blizzards, paying the expenses in growing and storing feed for his cattle and then watching the prices decline, the stockman must have tightened his belt to the last notch, only to add another hole when he paid the freight for shipping his cattle to market. In 1895, with the price for Montana cattle at $3.50, the cost of shipping the cattle was $7.50 per head.

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Montana's cattlemen, writhing under the lash of poor times that seemed endless, had another related problem, that of the hired hands' wages. With his own income diminishing the stockgrower did the only logical thing possible, cut wages. In 1893 a ranch foreman earned on the average of $75.00 per month, room and board included. By 1894 the average income a foreman might expect to receive each month was $56.69, room and board included. A year later, the average wage was $55.99 per month with meals and lodging. Other ranch and farm employees received the economic hatchet in similar fashions. The following chart illustrates the general trend of wage cutting in Montana between 1893 and 1895.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Employee</th>
<th>1893</th>
<th>1894</th>
<th>1895</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreman</td>
<td>$75.00</td>
<td>$56.69</td>
<td>$55.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herder or Range Rider</td>
<td>$40.55</td>
<td>$31.26</td>
<td>$31.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Hand.</td>
<td>$31.66</td>
<td>$35.09</td>
<td>$29.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sheep herders underwent an ordeal comparable to the cattlemen's. In 1883 a sheepman could expect $.30 per pound for top quality wool purchased at Montana shipping points. The following decade brought a steady decline of prices until the 1895 low of $.11 per pound of high grade wool was reached. Prices were high, however, in Boston, the main outlet for Montana wool. Still when the expenses of shipping were considered the profits were probably no higher than had the wool been sold to buyers in the state. Price differences of various grades of Montana wool in Boston are shown in the following chart.

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Prices of Montana Wool in Boston January 1, 1889 to December 31, 1895.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fine Grease</th>
<th>Medium Grease</th>
<th>Course Grease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January, 1889</td>
<td>20-24¢</td>
<td>24-26¢</td>
<td>19-22¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, 1895</td>
<td>13-15¢</td>
<td>13-16¢</td>
<td>12-14¢</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fine Scoured</th>
<th>Medium Scoured</th>
<th>Course Scoured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January, 1889</td>
<td>58-65¢</td>
<td>55¢</td>
<td>42-44¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, 1895</td>
<td>38-40¢</td>
<td>33-37¢</td>
<td>28-30¢</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A fluctuating tariff on foreign wool following 1889 appears to have been the major cause for the sheepman's plight in the 1890's. Although the tariff on wool was not lifted until August 1, 1894, the duty rate generally declined, therefore permitting Eastern textiles industries to purchase wool from foreign markets at a cheaper price than they would have to pay for home grown wool. The following excerpts of a letter from Fenno Brothers and Childs Wool Market in Boston to James H. Mills, a commissioner of the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Industry of Montana, clearly indicates the competition Montana woolgrowers were facing:

"It is, of course, less expensive for a manufacturer on the Eastern seaboard to get his wool from the London or Liverpool, or even the French and Belgian markets, than it is from Montana... ocean freights being so much less than rail freights."  

Those people dependent upon the sheep industry also felt the economic squeeze. Sheep shearers, most of whom were migrant workers, ran the gauntlet of hard times. A migrant shearer wrote to Mills expressing the conditions in his line of work. The letter stated that previous to the

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3 Department of Publicity of the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Industry, of the State of Montana, Montana, p. 279.

removal of the wool tariff a shearer could receive $.08 per head plus his meals. After the duty was taken off, sheepgrowers were not willing to pay more than $.06 per head.

Mining interests came under a fate comparable to the one livestock and grain enterprises were coping with. From 1862 to 1881 gold provided the bulk of value in mining. After 1881, however, the gold ore became scarce and where there were lodes or rich veins of the yellow mineral the expense was too enormous to provide lucrative operations. From 1862 to 1881 the value of silver mined in the state was eleven million dollars. By 1890 the value was $20,363,656, almost a one hundred per cent increase. Eighteen-ninety two saw the value more than double the 1862-1881 figure. Silver production reached the high water mark of the 1890's in 1895 when the market value was $22,886,992. What the amounts indicate is this: In order to produce the 1895 amount ($22,886,992), the silver mining operations had expanded, in fact, overexpanded, in their production efforts in order to make up for profit losses due to low silver prices. The continuous drop in prices, however, finally proved too great for the mining magnates to overcome. There existed a difference of sixty-seven cents between the 1873 price of $1.30 per ounce of silver and the 1894 price of sixty-three cents per ounce. The sixty-seven cents drop in prices coupled with the fact that there was no government market following the legislation of 1873 until the Blend-

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5 Ibid.
Allison Act of 1878 indicates an overexpansion of the silver industry. Thus, the mining interests had, like agriculture and various other industries overexpanded. In 1889 Montana alone produced almost as much silver as the minimum amount purchased by the government under the Bland-Allison Act. The problem of surplus seemed solved for mine owners when the Sherman Silver Purchase Act was passed. However, the bill's repeal in 1893 left the mining interests stranded.

Along with agriculture, Montana mining slipped into the chasm of economic distress. Butte, Anaconda, Phillipsburg and Great Falls all depended upon the mining of silver as a chief source of economic stability. In fact, the population of these major mining and smelting areas was almost totally dependent upon the miners' or smeltermen's income. As mines closed because of loss of profit or cutback on the number of workers, merchants, and other groups rendering services to the miner or smelterman, necessarily were affected by the subsequent decline of business. Unemployment resulted. An abstract published in the Bulletin of the Department of Labor contained the following figures dealing with unemployment in the state as reported on June 30, 1896. Out of an estimated employable force of 51,070 men in the state 7,448 were unemployed, about 14.3% of the men available for work. Statistics of railroad employees, farm owners and stockgrowers or male members of their families over

Montana produced $19,393,939, worth of silver in 1889. The federal government, provided it followed its policy of purchasing the minimum amount of silver per month, purchased $24,000,000 in 1889. Refer to: Department of Publicity of the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor, and Industry, of the State of Montana, Montana, pp. 285-286; Fred Wellborn, "The Influence of the Silver Republican Senators, 1889-1891" Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 14, (1928) p. 463.
eighteen were not reported. A more specific breakdown of statistics is shown in the accompanying table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industries</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming, Stockraising</td>
<td>7,589</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>8,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver mining</td>
<td>10,590</td>
<td>1,955</td>
<td>12,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milling and Smelting</td>
<td>7,126</td>
<td>1,232</td>
<td>8,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal mining</td>
<td>2,168</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>2,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placer mining</td>
<td>1,391</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumbering</td>
<td>1,978</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood chopping</td>
<td>1,725</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11,055</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td>13,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>45,622</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,448</strong></td>
<td><strong>51,070</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Had the number of unemployed on June 30, 1896 been only temporarily unemployed, the problems which found root in unemployment would not have been so widespread or intensified. The real unemployment situation for the state must be considered in a different perspective, however. Ordinarily, an unemployment rate will decline by April or May each year because of the increased activity on not only seasonal work but also because of expanded operations in mining, transportation and building construction. Should this be true, the 1 1/2% figure of unemployed on June 30, 1896, was probably a low figure when compared to the winter months of 1895 and 1896. Furthermore, statistics compiled by the Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Industry of Montana for the year ending November, 1894, indicates that unemployment was usually for long periods of time. A survey of the state’s principal laboring counties (Cascade, Deer Lodge, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow) indicated that blacksmiths in Cascade and Silver Bow Counties lost 105 and 188 days of work respectively for the year ending November 1894. Carpenters in Cascade lost 1 1/4 days while

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men of the same trade lost 136 days in Lewis and Clark and 122 days in Silver Bow. Coal miners in Cascade lost 109\frac{1}{2} days of work while in Park County the figure ran at 97\frac{1}{2} days. Common laborers were, as usual, the hardest hit of the unemployed. Cascade laborers lost an average of 170\frac{1}{2} days. In Lewis and Clark the figure was 150.6 days with 136 being the reported days lost in Silver Bow County. Machinists in Cascade lost 11\frac{1}{4} days of work. Silver Bow's silver miners lost an average of 148\frac{1}{2} days of work. In Lewis and Clark hardrock miners lost an average of 91\frac{1}{3} days.

Losses of such purchasing power as indicated in the above figures of unemployment was made even more manifest when the number of property and chattel mortgages for the state along with the 2.71% of business failures is considered. Real estate mortgages in 1894 totaled for Montana 2,504, with Silver Bow and Cascade Counties having the highest local figures of 11% each. Lewis and Clark recorded 8%. Chattel mortgages for the year totaled 4,461. Again Cascade and Silver Bow Counties had the highest percentages with 10% and 8% respectively. Within a year the number of mortgages on real-estate increased to 2,989. By the end of 1896, 2,005 families in Montana had mortgaged their farms. 1,136 families had placed their homes in mortgage. The prime rate of interest for the period was 12% but in three cases the rates were as high.

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10 For the percentages of business failures in the Western States refer to: Ibid., pp. 142-145.
as 60%. Under the prevailing conditions Montanans, for the most part believed that the loss of the silver market was the reason for dullness in the economic sphere of the state. There can be no doubt that the mining areas were justified in the belief. The free coinage of silver would also place a cheaper and more plentiful type of money into the economy for the agrarian.

As early as 1895 the public of Montana had joined in the tide of free silver advocates. A questionnaire circulated by the State's Bureau of Agriculture, Labor and Industry in 1893 asking the reasons for the depression and possible remedies inevitably resulted in a majority declaring for the free and unlimited coinage of silver at a 16 to 1 ratio with gold. A Great Falls machinist commented, "The closing down of mines, smelters and concentrators owing to the demonetization of silver has thrown so much labor of all kinds on the market that there is a large surplus; remedy: the free coinage of silver." In similar fashion painters and decorators, railroad clerks, salesmen and even book keepers believed that silver was the elixir of life for Montana.

The general unrest of Montana's residents manifested itself in various forms of protest movements and political actions concurrent with the rest of the nation. As early as 1894 Coxeyism and industrial
armies served as one sensational form of protest.

The armies of the unemployed created a major problem for American society. Tramps and vagabonds wandered throughout the land seeking work or perhaps more accurately, seeking food and a place to rest without being harassed by law enforcement agents and told to keep going. The casual observer of the American scene may have believed the nation was becoming a land of tramps and vagabonds. But to condemn or admonish the unemployed drifters as being shiftless and lazy could be, for the most part erroneous. Granted that beyond any doubt a portion of the unemployed were always unemployed, some lacked initiative and were outright shiftless. That type of person is found in any society but never in large portions. The only reason why the number of tramps or hoboed in 1893 and 1894 was so high was because of the existing economic, social and industrial orders of the nation. The ranks of unemployment soon found leadership in the person of Jacob Coxey. Coxey was described by Josephson as a "patriotic and apocalyptic spirit, formerly a Greenbacker and always an enthusiastic reformer." Coxey believed the best way to awaken the nation's leaders to the existing conditions was by mass protest. His plan was to recruit as many unemployed men as possible and then march to Washington D.C. as a commonwealer's army in protest against the economic conditions. The idea spread like a wind-whipped prairie fire among the destitute sections of the nation and soon "General" Coxey's army had divisions and regiments from almost every area of the country hastening to join the main body of the army for the assult on

Coxey's commonwealers received support from the states of the West.

Washington, California, Oregon, Colorado and Montana all had contingents striving to catch up with the main army. Some groups may have been successful but by and large the entirety was not, mainly because of the distances to travel and the lack of good organization and transportation. Those westerners who joined various divisions or regiments did so in order to present a problem particular to their own section of the nation before the national leaders. Of course, the Western states suffered all the economic abuses as did the Eastern, Midwestern, and Southern sectors of the nation. Agriculture had similar problems and unemployment was frequently at a high rate. Those who were employed worked under conditions comparable to those under which the Eastern laborer toiled. The Westerners, like the other areas of the nation clamored for more and cheaper money, especially for the free coinage of silver at a sixteen to one ratio with gold. Discontent in Montana like other Western states, gave rise to an army of dissatisfied citizens. Most of the members of the "army" were employees of the Great Northern Railroad who determined to voice their grievances at the nation's capitol.

Originally James Hill, founder of the Great Northern Railway, believed his line could return a lucrative profit by getting Easterners and Midwesterners to homestead in the plains region of Northern Montana, North Dakota, Idaho and Northern Washington near the Great Northern right of way. With large plots of relatively cheap land available, Hill lured

\[\text{Ibid. p. 560.}\]
persons into farming and stockraising on large scale operations, anticipating heavy and continuous freight traffic rather than passenger travel over his line. By the 1890's the plight of the agrarians, could hardly bring fulfillment to Hill's dream. As a result, Hill paid his employees on a wage scale lower than other lines and, to add salt to already open wounds, initiated several cutbacks on the existing sub-standard wages. Resulting from the low wages and cutbacks was a labor strike of the entire line from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Coast. James Hogan, director of the American Railroad Union in Butte, rallied the Montane strikers to the mining city and formed an industrial army of 500 men, hoping to obtain a train, ally with a similar group from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and eventually join forces with various Mid-western regiments of Coxey's army. Hogan, with his army assembled and anxious to embark, decided not to wait for the Coeur d'Alene group because of reports that it was not well organized and indefinite about their arrival. The Great Falls Tribune stated that he also was aware that his army could become a burden to Butte if kept there too long. Hogan on April 19, marched his troops to a transfer switch of the Montana Union Railroad to the Northern Pacific Railroad and waited for a Northern Pacific freight train. When the freight stopped the men boarded the engine, tender, caboose and box cars. Since there were only five boxcars many of

James Hill's vision for lucrative profits from an agrarian empire and his devices to insure such profits are clearly illustrated in Joseph Kinsey Howard, Montana, High, Wide, and Handsome, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959) pp. 167-177; Information concerning the strike was obtained from the Great Falls Tribune, April 18, 1894.
the soldiers were left grounded. The army's standard was reportedly planted in the tender's coal bin. The train conductor and crew were helpless until an order from the yards dispatcher came, telling them to back the train into the yards, which they did. The anxiety of the N.P. officials intensified when rumors were circulated to the effect that armies had been formed in Seattle and Spokane, Washington and were preparing to march on Washington via Northern Pacific trains.

Fully one thousand people assembled in the Butte yards to watch the festivities. The Coxeyites at first refused to surrender the captured train. They then took possession of a switch engine and, so as not to leave the grounded troops out of the action, proceeded in a strict military manner to make up a longer train using empty freight cars that were in the yards. While the train was being assembled the sheriff and several deputies arrived on the scene and made abortive attempts to persuade Hogan to give up the train. Railroad officials pleaded with the Silver Bow county attorney for aid in protecting company property, but received no help primarily because of the high amount of sympathy in Butte for the soldiers and their cause. In fact, such sympathy was well illustrated when Butte's mayor and county commissioners conferred with N.P. officials about hiring a train for Hogan's army. The superintendent of the N.P.'s Rocky Mountain Division petitioned Governor Rickards for aid. Rickards, according to the Tribune report, chose not to become involved. Instead he referred the case to the federal courts and county law enforcement agencies. A federal judge issued an injunction restraining the army from either taking or interfering with N.P. property. The United States Marshal at Butte had other
ideas on how to solve the problem. He planned to deputize as many men as possible, take a special train to Logan and intercept the renegade army as they switched to the N.P.'s main line.

Later in the day news reached Butte that James Hill of the struck Great Northern was willing to pay wages equal to the N.P.'s. But Hill's action did not dampen the enthusiasm, for they were inspired by word that three thousand Coxeyites had begun to march from Omaha, Nebraska. Provisions were then loaded aboard the insurgents' train, guards posted, and the remainder of the troops bivouacked in the Montana Union Railroad yards. Hogan then received another court injunction restraining him from capturing a Union Pacific train as rumored. During the day's proceeding a soldier had been arrested for being "too free with his mouth." When searched he was found to be carrying a "big pistol." The army quickly countered the move by capturing one of the permanent deputy marshals. "A riot is imminent", cried a Butte report to the Tribune.

The anticipated riot did not blossom, however. Hogan, reversing his tactics, sent a raiding party into the N.P. yards after midnight on the 24th of April. An unemployed engineer was in command. The party stole an engine from the roundhouse, made up a new train (switched provisions) and by two o'clock a.m. was loaded with three-hundred and fifty soldiers and was "rolling over the Bozeman Short Line." The engineer had asked a yard operator for a track clearance but was not given one. At this rebuke, the Coxeyites sounded a war cry of "Tell 'em we're coming" and opened

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17 Great Falls Tribune, April 24, 1894.
18 Ibid. April 26, 1894.
19 Ibid.
the throttle. By ten o'clock the train had left Bozeman only to be halted at the Bozeman tunnel by a cave-in accomplished by the company. But the army unboarded and dug through the tunnel.

Meanwhile, Hogan had overcome the tunnel cave-in and was in Livingston with his men on the morning of April 25. Up to that point the industrial army had been victorious. Livingston citizens entertained and fed the troops and even provided a good engine so that the workers' grievances might be heard in Washington. Hogan's army, refreshed and with high morale, left for Billings but were stopped by a rock slide near Park City. The soldiers left Park City at 9:30 p.m. and much to their surprise a federal train with seventy-five deputies under McDermott arrived at 9:55 p.m. Before the commonwealers reached Billings the deputies had closed in near enough for an abrupt gunfire attack but were repelled.

Obstructions and powder kegs had been placed on the tracks leading into the Billings yards. Finn, superintendent of the Division had also ordered all danger signals killed and to impede the army at "any risk to life or limb." The citizens of Billings felt the action was underhanded and managed to warn the train. A skirmish broke out in the Billings yards as deputies attacked the army. Hogan's troops, bolstered by a reserve force of the good citizens of Billings, routed the U.S. assailers. The fight moved into the downtown area. Two innocent spectators were shot, one fatally wounded. In the end, the unemployed railway men scored a

Ibid., April 26, 1894.
resounding victory. Coxey's men stripped the marshals of their guns and
marched them as POWs to the railroad yards and damaged the marshal's
train so they could not follow. Once again the army had proved victorious
and reaped the spoils. After receiving aid from the residents of
Billings, the army departed, fully aware of the troops at Fort Keogh.

The rampaging of Hogan's army was to soon end, however. The Federal
government ordered troops from Fort Keogh, Bismark, North Dakota, and
St. Paul, Minnesota to intercept the train and return it to the N.P.
Acting in accordance with the orders, troops surprised Hogan's command
at night when the commonwealers had dismounted from the train and set
up a bivouack area near Forsyth. Most of the army surrendered without
resistance. Some escaped by running across the wind swept prairie under
the cover of darkness. Marshal McDermott's deputies had allied with the
U.S. Army troops and together they took the captured men to Helena for
arraignment in the Federal Court, thus marking the end of one protest
against existing economic conditions in Montana during the 1890's. A
citizen of Butte commented in a letter to the Review of Reviews that
the escapade of Hogan's army "appealed to (Montanens') sense of
ludicrous" but added that Montanans were willing to see the army go to
protest the grievances of the West. Furthermore, he concluded his
correspondence with a sharp attack upon "the system which has put cheap
silver in the hands of British merchants with which to buy cheap wheat

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Great Falls Tribune, April 18, 1894-April 26, 1894; Review of Re-
views, IX, (1894) pp. 13-59, contains letters from Western citizens on
Trans-Mississippi conditions.
in India and cheap cotton in Egypt. "By this process," stated the letter, "we have protected England and done our own industries a disastrous injury."

Despite the efforts of Hogan's army and the literary protests of writers, the economic problems of the state still existed. Clearly, the failure of Montana's economy stemmed from sources beyond the immediate control of the individual interest groups. The high rate of unemployment that existed in the silver mining industry, the building trades and other laboring areas could not be regulated by the afflicted. Likewise, the agrarians' plight, with not only natural conditions but also high freight rates and constantly declining prices on grain, beef and wool was far removed from any instant remedies that section of the economy could provide. Small businesses, especially those in mining areas, failed because people were unable to purchase the businessmen's merchandise due to lack of money.

In the western sector of the state the diversified economic endeavors were, for the most part, inter-dependent and revolved around the silver mining industry, which in turn depended upon a sound government market. The loss of the government market and the subsequent lowering of silver prices meant that the mine owners could no longer afford to operate their over-expanded operations. As a result miners were laid off and production was cutback, smelters were closed. The miners and smeltermen without a stable source of income, sought work in other fields such as carpentry, laborers, or odd job men, thus creating a surplus labor force. Even more

Ibid.
important, the buying power of the large force of unemployed miners and smeltermen was greatly reduced. Therefore, the demand for houses decreased abruptly ending employment for carpenters, masons, and other related tradesmen. With such a large number of totally, or at best partially unemployed men without buying power, businesses felt the economic pinch also. The logical action on the part of small entrepreneurs was to cut down on the number of employees such as clerks, bookkeepers and sales personnel. As the downward trend continued some businesses were forced to close their doors permanently.

Similar hard times, although from other causes were also prevalent in the agricultural and livestock areas of the state. The low prices for beef and wool affected not only the ranchers and woolgrowers but also had profound results in the case of agrarian employees. Owners often were forced to mortgage their property. To offset the conditions wages of their employees were cut.

In the mining areas, groups assailed by reduced silver operations realized that if the economy was to regain its balance, the mines would have to be re-opened and worked to capacity. By such revitalization, of mining and smelting operations the unemployed would again be working and as far as the businessman was concerned, buying his merchandise. Likewise the building trades would thrive again, with unemployment in the field decreasing. However, the silver mining magnates could not possibly open their mines without a sound market price set and supported by government buying. Therefore it was necessary for the federal government to buy silver bullion from the mine owners, mint the bullion into dollars and circulate the new money at a ratio comparable to gold.
Realizing the importance of a government program to help alleviate the severe conditions, western Montanans from the various strata of the economy combined into a solid force demanding the free coinage of silver at a sixteen to one ratio with gold.

Eastern farmers, ranchers and woolgrowers pinpointed the major cause of their hardships as freight rates, low prices and, in the case of the woolgrowers, the constant lowering of the duties on wool each year. Still, the agrarian section of the nation has traditionally advocated an inflated monetary system and an adequate supply of circulating money. Since the agrarians' immediate hardships, as they saw it, were direct results of a lack of money they were easily persuaded before 1896 that the free coinage of silver would be the medicine to heal their wounds.

With silver as the major campaign and election issue of 1896 various political factions throughout the nation vied to be the standard bearer for the Holy Grail, silver. One such group, arising in the mining regions of the West is of particular interest for it alienated itself from the general consensus of its party on the issue of silver and, although of little national significance, exerted extraordinary influence in the silver mining states. The faction was known as Silver Republicans. In Montana, the group dominated politics for the decade of 1888 to 1898, their greatest year of influence being 1896.
Chapter II

Montana's Silver Republican Leaders

Prior to Montana's admission to the Union, the Democratic Party was the supreme political force. Although official election returns did not affiliate candidates with parties except on the level of Congressional delegates, evidence indicates that from 1864 to 1888 only one Republican was elected as a Congressional delegate. Thomas H. Carter's election in 1888 was the second Republican victory in the thirteen elections for the position. With Montana's admission a swift change in the state's voting pattern was registered. The political history of Montana from the time of its admission until the election of 1896, clearly indicated an unswerving tide of Republicanism in the state. In 1889, the year of Montana's admission into the Union, a Republican foothold was established, despite the election of a Democratic governor and equal representation of Democrats and Republicans in both chambers of the state legislature. The offices of Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, State Treasurer, State Auditor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and two associate justices and the Representative in Congress, were won by Republicans. The party continued to be Montanans' first choice until the issue of silver became the primary national question in the election of 1896. The western sheep grower needed the protective tariff which Republicans traditionally advocated. Republicans continued to "wave the bloody shirt" of the Civil War in the new states against the party of "Rum, Romanism

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Perhaps the major reason for Republican votes in the West after 1892, was the state party's plank of its 1892 platform declaring for free and unlimited coinage of silver at a sixteen to one ratio. Another strong factor is that, after the Panic of 1893 and the pursuant depression, Republicanism rode a wave of popularity by blaming the incumbent Democratic Administration for the depression.

Government buying and coining of the white mineral from the West had long been a local issue. Politically speaking, to oppose the free and unlimited coinage of silver at a 16 to 1 ratio, was to sound the death knell of political ambitions. Thus certain Republicans became crusaders for free coinage early in the struggle against the "Eastern and European" money power axis. Agitation for silver legislation had been heard in the halls of Congress ever since 1875. The Bland-Allison Act and the Sherman Silver Purchase Act resulted from Western and Mid-Western agitation. Congress followed the demands of agrarians and Western miners by passing the Bland-Allison Act over President Hayes' veto in 1878. The Act provided for a monthly purchase and coinage of from two million to four million dollars worth of silver. This Act, despite the government's persistent policy of purchasing only the minimum amount, had the overall tendency of settling silver agitation for ten

years. The admission of the "omnibus states" to the Union in 1889 increased the desire and political strength for new silver legislation because silver mining was an integral part of the new states' economy. In 1890 the Sherman Silver Purchase Act was passed, which authorized the federal purchase of four and a half million ounces of silver per month, (which equaled the national output) at the market price through the issuance of treasury notes redeemable in gold or silver at the option of the treasurer. Regardless of the low market price, ($1.05 per ounce) the bill did provide a government market where mining interests could sell their bullion, and such purchases, of course, would tend to drive the market price up.

The issue of silver was bipartisan among Western congressmen, although due to its sparse population the West had little voice in the House of Representatives. In the Senate they were more strongly represented in relation to population and were able to exert considerable influence. Henry Moore Teller, a Republican Senator from Colorado, had assumed the leadership of the pro-silver forces in his chamber. With the admission of the "omnibus states", Teller's strength increased due to the added Western vote. By 1895 a definite silver bloc existed in the upper house and Western Republicans were rapidly moving away from their Eastern counterparts.

Among the solons from the silver producing West were four Montanans: T.C. Power and Thomas R. Carter of Helena, Lee Mantle of Butte and Charles S. Hartman of Bozeman. These four men served in either the House of Representatives or the Senate during the mid-nineties. In Carter's case, service was rendered in both Houses of Congress. Several basic factors were common to all of them. First of all, none were native Montanans: Power, Carter and Hartman hailed from the Mid-West. Mantle was originally from England. All came to Montana before its admission to the Union and lastly, all were successful businessmen: Hartman and Carter also achieved success as lawyers. In Congress they attempted to combine both the silver and tariff issues. Realizing the commitment of Eastern Republicanism to high tariffs they hoped to force a compromise. At the same time they could retain the allegiance of the Montana woolgrowers, who also demanded protection.

Chronologically, Thomas C. Power was the first of the group to reach Montana. After a brief teaching experience Power traveled to the Territory in 1864 only to return to Omaha. By 1867, however, he was operating a general store in Fort Benton. Power expanded his interests into freighting, steam boats, cattle ranching, mercantile stores, and a stage line. He also organized the American National Bank of Montana in Helena and the water works system of that city. He enjoyed a long and successful political career. In 1884 Power was a delegate to the first Territorial Constitutional Convention and he served as a delegate to the 1884 Republican National Convention. He was the Republican's candidate for state governor in 1886 but lost. His final conquest of political ambition was realized by his election to the United States Senate,
serving from 1890 to 1895, but he did not seek reelection.

Lee Mantle came to America from Birmingham, England in 1863 at the age of 10. By 1877, he was established as an up and coming businessman in Butte, operating a Wells-Fargo office, the first telegraph company in the city, and an insurance company. Mantle had partnerships in at least three mining enterprises along with co-ownership of the Silver Bow Electric Company and the Beaverhead Water, Light and Power Company of Dillion. The mining and public utility enterprises were shared with George W. Irvin and Charles S. Warren. Later in Mantle’s political career, Irvin and Warren seem to have exerted a strong influence on Mantle, clearly because of the joint business undertakings. Mantle was instrumental in the incorporation of Butte as a city. He was one of the first aldermen as well as the founder of the Daily-Inter-Mountain, the first and eventually the leading Republican paper in the western portion of the state. His political career began in 1882 when he was elected to the Lower House of the Territorial Legislature. In 1884 he served as a delegate to the Republican National Convention and in the same year he was nominated as delegate to the Lower House of Congress but was defeated. A year later he was pushed for the vacant gubernatorial office but lost.

Mantle’s civic mindedness resulted in a permanent chairmanship of the Montana Mineral Land Association. The Montana Mineral Land Association was the result of the public protest to the Northern Pacific Railroad’s

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method of acquiring valuable mineral and timber lands in the state. When the N.P. was constructed, much of the expenditures were covered by the Federal Government. The line received alternating tracts of land along the right-of-way. Under a Congressional bill known as the Lieu Lands Act, railroads were allowed to exchange granted sections of land for other sections further away from the right-of-way. The N.P. consistently followed a pattern of exchanging poor tracts for areas rich in mineral deposits or timber stands. Citizens of Montana Territory objected to such practices and in 1888 assembled in Helena to set up a counter-action group. Thomas H. Carter, the Helena Lawyer nominated Mantle as chairman of the group.

Mantle was instrumental in securing a registration law for more honest elections and the Australian ballot. Following a term as speaker of the House in 1888, Mantle secured the nomination of T.H. Carter for U.S. Representative. In 1890, Mantle lost a senatorial post to T.C. Power by 2 votes. By 1892 Mantle was Mayor of Butte and state chairman of the Republican party. The height of his political career came after 1892 when he served his party as chairman of two state conventions and of the State Central Committee. He was also named to succeed Wilber Fisk Sanders as U.S. Senator but the Senate refused to seat him. The futile attempt to appoint Mantle as a Senator was a

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direct result of the Clark-Daly feud over the permanent site of the state capitol. Sanders' term in the Senate expired in 1895 and according to the law the seat would have to be filled by a person chosen by the State Legislature, the direct election of senators not being in effect at that date. The two major mining factions each nominated candidates but all ballots ended in deadlocks. Therefore, the governor appointed Mantle to the position. The Senate invoking the Constitutional requirements for Senatorial appointment, found Mantle's appointment as extra-legal and did not seat him. As a result the Senatorial seat remained vacant until 1895 and the next legislative session. Finally in 1894, Mantle's political ambitions were fully realized when he was elected to the U.S. Senate.

The background of Thomas H. Carter is characterized by a rapid rise to prominence. Coming to Helena in 1882, he opened a law office and in 1888, he defeated for Montana's Territorial delegate to Congress, William Andrew Clark, the mining magnate. During the 1890 campaign he served as secretary of the Republican Congressional Committee and in the same year won election to the House of Representatives. In 1892, Carter assumed the position of Chairman of the National Republican Committee, a position he held until 1896. In 1895 Carter was elected to the U.S. Senate.

The youngest member of the four silver spokesmen from Montana was Charles S. Hartman. Hartman came to Bozeman from Indiana in 1882 and worked for Nelson Story as a legal adviser. By the end of 1884 he was

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6 Progressive Men of Montana, pp. 208-211; Thomson, "Mantle", Chap. I.
7 Progressive Men of Montana, pp. 1120-1122.
the probate judge. Hartman served as a member of the State Constitutional Convention and he served as a Representative to Congress from 1892 to 1898.

Carter was the first of the four to serve in Congress. On June 6, 1890, the Helena lawyer set the prevailing views of Montana's silver congressman. In a speech on the proposed Silver Bullion Redemption Certificates, (more commonly referred to as the Sherman Silver Purchase Act), Carter gave a history of bimetallism, claiming that from antiquity silver's main use was in coinage. The 1873 demonetization caused the decline in silver's value and use. Carter claimed that money in circulation had to be in accordance to the population but was not in the United States because the population increased at a greater rate than gold was mined and minted. Therefore, the solution Carter proposed was for employment of silver coinage. Such coinage would cause the silver mines to reopen and also tend to increase the gold production in the nation, for gold and silver were often mined together.

Before relinquishing the floor Carter rebuked the claim by many that, in order to solve the problem of the lack of coin money, the U.S. should buy foreign silver and melt it down, cool it and remint it. He argued that the foreign coins did not have the silver content of American coins. By coining American silver there would not be a value loss in the mineral and the government would not have to pay the transportation

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rates. Such action, although Carter did not emphasize the point, would bring about a revitalized mining boom in the silver states.

The logic of Carter’s argument went further into the complexities of the silver question when the freshman congressman launched a verbal attack upon the government’s consistent policy of purchasing only twenty-four million dollars worth of silver per year. Carter presented statistics showing the world’s production of silver was fifty-one million dollars worth. The United States purchased $24,000,000 worth a year, leaving a surplus of $27,000,000 dollars of silver. Since the United States produced forty-five percent of the total output, the government’s buying policy was only injuring the nation’s silver mining industry by leaving a large surplus. The surplus was a major reason for the price decline.

As Carter concluded his portion of debate he asked for the Silver Bullion Redemption clause to be stricken from the bill under consideration. Otherwise, he would continue to oppose the bill. The Silver Bullion Redemption Certificate Bill provided for the government purchase of silver bullion with payment in certificates redeemable in both gold and silver.

The record of Thomas O. Power in the Senate actually reinforced Carter’s action in the House. Senator Power, besides carrying out his duties of presenting various petitions for free silver coinage and the retention of duties on wool from groups of Montana citizens, entered the debate on silver with a speech entitled "Silver: the Friend of the Farmer
and Miner," which he delivered October 3, 1893.

Occasion for the speech occurred when a proposal to repeal the silver purchase clause of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act was made on the floor of the Senate. The bill for repeal had been passed by the House of Representatives in a manner unpleasant to most Westerners, for President Grover Cleveland had exerted pressure on Democratic members to vote for a repeal. He received aid by having Thomas Reed, leader of the Republican minority which had voted for the Sherman Bill in 1890, sway votes to the administration. After a venomous onslaught against Cleveland's tactics in "railroading" the repeal through the House of Representatives, Power declared the issue of silver as paramount to not only the mining interests but to agrarian interests as well. Eastern banking firms and financial experts had placed the farmer at their mercy by the demonetization of silver and the appreciated value of gold. As a result agriculture and mining went hand in hand because of the lack of circulating money. To Power, the advocates of a gold monometallic standard were not true to either the people or the nation. Instead, the silver advocates were the real champions of democracy.

With Carter and Power speaking against a monometallic system on historical, statistical and patriotic arguments, Charles S. Hartman carried the voice of Montana's silver advocates to the House of

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11 For the varied petitions Power presented to the Senate refer to: Congressional Record, 53rd Cong. 2nd Session 1894. Vol. 26, part 3, p. 2078; part 7, pp. 6254-6255; part 2, p. 1907.

Representatives in February of 1896. Hartman declared the United States was using gold as real money and silver as "token money." That is silver was a part of the nation's monetary system in name only, not in reality. The Congressman expressed the majority of his constituents' views by encouraging the United States to correct its monetary system independently, not in conjunction with other nations. As a concluding remark, like Carter, Mantle and Power, he demanded the passage of silver legislation along with a new tariff.

The question of the proposed Dingley tariff was scheduled to be brought up in Congress during the session. Hartman, like others, was in favor of the tariff because it would aid the Montana sheep grower and grain producer. Despite that, Hartman announced he would vote against the bill unless a comprehensive silver coinage portion was included as part of the tariff legislation and passed simultaneously.

Similar reaction and legislative bargaining was manifested in the Senate by Carter and Mantle, both of whom voted against a motion to consider the tariff bill. Carter having been elected to the Senate in 1895, continued his fight for silver by delivering a speech shortly after Hartman's in February of 1896. Carter explained the reasoning behind the silver bloc's refusal to consider the tariff bill at the time it was brought up. According to Carter the majority of "nay" votes which defeated the motion did not mean that the free coinage force opposed the tariff. They merely wanted an amendment for silver coinage at a sixteen

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to one ratio attached so both the tariff and silver legislation could be made legal together. If the silver forces had been in outright opposition to the bill, they would have voted with Eastern Republicans for the bill's consideration. Once the bill was on the floor the silver bloc would have united with the free-trade Democrats and voted against the measure, closing the issue completely. Since the action was not taken the Silver Republicans revealed their desire for a tariff bill so as to please an element of their constituency and also to maintain a degree of party tradition and regularity. Perhaps even more significant, the refusal of the silver forces to consider the tariff indicated their power in the Senate when allied with Democratic and Populist coinage backers.

As the wintery months of 1896 gave way to spring the senatorial debate on silver and the tariff had followed a course whereby one issue could not be debated without involving the other. Lee Mantle, in April, restated the position of him and his colleagues from Montana. They were in favor of tariff increases but would oppose passage unless they were guaranteed the enactment of the free and unlimited coinage of silver at a sixteen to one ratio in the same bill.

Montana's congressional delegation, along with the other advocates of free silver, were staunch in their demands and continued to drive a hard bargain of no tariff without silver. Their constituents in the state followed the pattern by demanding the passage of silver coinage laws along with the tariff. An election victory in 1896 would be certain for the party which could best incorporate both protection and bimetallism.

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Chapter III
Dissension

On the surface silver coinage's high popularity in Montana during the 1890's, coupled with the political power of Thomas Carter, Charles S. Hartman and Lee Mantle, seemed to assure continued Republican victories in the 1896 elections. In fact, for the party to win, its members would have to do no more than endorse the free coinage of silver and the proposed tariff issue. To favor protection would be agreeing with the national party and also place the agrarian voters in the party's camp. An endorsement of silver would almost guarantee the majority of the remaining votes. Forces were at work, however, to prevent the state party from endorsing silver. Prior to the November elections the activities of the Montana Republicans were characterized by factional squabbles and feuds over the silver issue. In effect, the arguments and spats, the total lack of co-operation between the gold adherents and the silver advocates in the party, were accountable for the disintegration of Republicanism in Montana and the party's misfortune at the polls.

The first major incidence of intra-party conflict was at the convention for selecting delegates to the national Republican convention. The call for the convention in Montana was issued in the early part of May. After the naming of county delegates the state convention began its proceedings in Butte on May 11, 1896. Montana Republicans, in accordance with the Republican National Committee, set out to choose six delegates and six alternates to attend the National Convention at St. Louis. Two-hundred and sixty-one delegates were assembled when George W. Irvin, Mantle's business and political partner, called the convention to order in the
absence of Senator Lee Mantle, Chairman of the State Central Committee.

From the first blow of the gavel the tone of the convention was set. Judge D.J. Tallant of Cascade County, a delegate friendly to silver, made a speech on the mineral's behalf that, as the Missoulian reported, "set the convention wild." Simultaneously a hassle over the general chairmanship ensued because the chairman appointed all the committees. A small, well-knit minority favored the monetary status quo. Therefore, if a gold advocate received the chair, he would make sure other gold adherents controlled the committees and the convention. Tallant, supported by silvermen who made up a majority, received the chairmanship. The remainder of the first day was spent in committee appointments, meetings and factional caucuses.

With the silver forces victorious in securing a friendly chairman and controlling a majority of each committee the advocates of gold knew that they were hopelessly at silver's mercy. Yet the gold bloc fought staunchly for their policies. Following the report of the Committee on Resolutions, an amendment was proposed demanding that the delegates withdraw from the National convention if the platform did not include a silver coinage plank. After a heated debate the proposal was voted down by an "overwhelming majority."

There is room for speculation as to why the amendment was defeated. First of all, the advocates of a gold standard monetary system were opposed to it. Still, the power of gold was not sufficient to defeat

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1 Daily Missoulian, May 10-12, 1896.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
the silver forces. More than likely the question was defeated by silver forces themselves for two key reasons. The bimetalllic advocates did not wish to separate from the national party completely. Instead they desired to maintain party regularity and harmony. To bolt the convention in St. Louis would be a denial of the party and loss of identity with it. Secondly, the silver forces knew they would be able to choose strong silver men as national delegates and by so doing be able to have their pleas for a silver coinage plank in the national platform heard. The alternate delegates would in all probability be gold men, and, should the silver group bolt, gold forces would take the vacant seats as alternates, thus the true sentiments of the majority of Montana Republicans would not be voiced at the St. Louis meeting. Of special significance is the fact that while the delegates from Montana were not instructed to bolt the convention, there is no evidence that they were compelled to remain in the conclave by action of the state convention. At best, it is safe to conclude that the state convention placed no restrictions upon the delegates' actions. Still indications prior to the Butte conference made a bolt at St. Louis reasonably assured.

Teller of Colorado was advocating a bolt should silver not be included in the party platform and a candidate against silver be nominated. Montana silver men would, in all probability, follow the Coloradan's lead. In January of 1896 Mantle and Carter both stated that silver came before party allegiance and that they would never consent to be bound by caucus action when silver was under consideration. Mantle, when queried if the Montana Republicans would bolt a gold standard candidate or platform, stated without hesitation that they
A related resolution which did instruct the state's delegation to St. Louis to favor the free and unlimited coinage of silver on a sixteen to one ratio was carried without a prolonged debate because of the dominance of the silver men. The final major action of the state conference was the selection of delegates. The three congressional leaders, Hartman, Mantle, and Carter, having supported silver so energetically in Washington, were made delegates by acclamation. Of course, the gold advocates were opposed but they had been defeated on almost every issue. They undoubtedly thought it best to quietly acquiesce. A squabble, however, occurred over the selection of the other three delegates. A proposal to have one from the eastern sector of the state, one from the western and one from the northern was opposed by delegates from the central and southern regions. The final selection included two additional silver men and one delegate who represented the wool-growing interests, and placed a protective tariff ahead of bimetallism. Mantle, due to his position of chairman of the State Central Committee, was named to head the delegation at the national assemblage of Republicans the following month.

Although the silver forces held sway at the brief Butte conference, signs of a long and extraordinarily hot summer of political skirmishes was evident. The gold minority had been able to muster enough strength

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to oppose each and every resolution for silver, even though the overwhelming silver forces won the vote. In one case, that of the instructions to bolt the national party, the gold forces found the silver men voting in the same vein of opposition to the measure. More than likely the gold supporters desired to avenge the setbacks suffered at Butte and resolved to make the struggle more even as the summer progressed. Results of the National Convention in June would serve as either a final rallying point for the state's gold element, or, should the party adopt a silver plank and candidate (an unlikely move), it would be the funeral oration of gold and the supporters of the yellow mineral as the sole standard of money. Thus, the political climate of Montana for the remainder of 1896 depended on the outcome of the National Republican Convention.

Silverites were also caught up in a cyclone of dilemmas, whose results depended on the national convention. If the delegates to St. Louis approved of a silver plank, all would be well as far as Montana's Silver Republicans were concerned. Furthermore, such an approval at St. Louis would mean an extended Republican reign in the state. The Democrats and Populists would be merely nominal entities. On the other side of the ledger, however, should the convention refuse the incorporation of bimetallism into the platform, the advocates of silver among the G.O.P. would find themselves faced at home with an unpleasant alternative, for it became increasingly evident that Democrats and Populists would support silver. If the prominent figures of bimetallism, especially Mantle, Carter, and Hartman, threw silver aside to remain in good graces with
the Eastern dominated party, the support of their constituents could be lost forever and political ostracism would result.

Thomas Carter, a professedly free silver man had been Chairman of the National Republican Committee from 1892 to 1896. Had he been able to maintain the powerful position, Carter, if true to silver, might have been able to force a bimetallic plank upon the convention by parliamentary manuevering. But Carter's term expired at the end of 1895. To replace Carter, Marcus Alonzo Hanna had been selected as the new chairman. Hanna was a staunch believer in the merits of a single gold standard and also favored the nomination of William McKinley for president. In fact, Hanna, confident of a gold victory, made himself McKinley's campaign manager before the St. Louis convention began.

By the eve of the National Convention the western delegations favoring silver must have known their efforts would be futile. What chance would the sparsely populated, fairly new states of the silver producing West have against the ominous power of the many Eastern and Midwestern Republican delegates under the guidance of a clever and avowed gold advocate such as Hanna? Even the debates in the Senate on bimetallism and the blockage of the Dingley Tariff bill could not have been accomplished without the aid of the Democrats and Populists who favored silver coinage. At St. Louis the Silver Republicans stood alone. There were no Democrats and Populists to hold the balance of power in check.

As the convention in St. Louis opened, Montana's delegation, although favoring silver, was split with regard to proper strategy should a gold plank be adopted instead of a silver plank. Mantle headed the faction
amenable to bolting should silver be defeated. Carter, reversing his pre-convention stand, assumed the leadership of the delegates desiring to remain in the hall regardless of the fate of silver. Both men may have been hesitant to unabashed action because of their hopes to preserve harmony in the state's party. At St. Louis Carter argued that a strongly worded utterance would be as effective as a walkout. Mantle declared a bolt was the only action true silverites could follow, but by the third day of the convention Mantle had switched to Carter's position. Charles Hartzman was then the only Montana delegate favoring the bolt.

Reasons underlying the abrupt change of tactics on the part of Carter and Mantle are hazy. Carter had enjoyed an unusually rapid rise to political prominence via the Republican party. In fact, for a young lawyer to become a senator within eight years after coming to a new and different state was somewhat unprecedented, not to mention his selection as Chairman of the Republican National Committee after such a short political career. This is not to imply that Carter bribed or bought his way to the top of the political mountain but the theory that Carter did receive special attention from the Republican party cannot be ruled out. Perhaps Carter, realizing his swift rise to political prominence through Republican channels felt an obligation toward his party and therefore switched his stand on bolting the National Convention. Another possible reason for Carter's sudden change of heart was that the Helena lawyer, realizing the fact that silver was defeated before the convention began, wanted to remain in good graces with the national party, knowing

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full well that to the victors would go the spoils.

The reason for Mantle's change of tactics are also shrouded in mystery. One thing must be remembered, however; Mantle was politically ambitious and for that reason alone had founded the Daily Inter-Mountain. "By his strict conformity to the wishes of his constituents, he further emphasized the perpetual office-seeker who was always looking for political supporters." Mantle may have been no more than a political puppet for George Irvin, the mine owner and another man named Charles S. Warren (both business partners of Mantle), both of Butte. Irvin, Warren and Mantle have been credited for the founding of the Silver Bow Republican party but, Mantle was the only one constantly pushed for public office by the other two. In fact, Thomson, a relative of Mantle, declared that his various appointments and election as Speaker of the House in the last Montana Territorial legislature were merely rewards for services rendered. Should these assertions be true, it is highly probable that Mantle, at the St. Louis Convention may have been no more than a puppet.

To use an old adage, the cards were stacked against silver when the convention opened. Teller was the only bimetallic delegate on the sub-committee of the Committee on Resolutions which was charged with framing the monetary plank. Of all the states and Territories represented, delegates from only ten (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, North Carolina, California, Nevada, and Arizona and New Mexico Territories) favored free coinage. In the Committee on Resolutions the measure for free coinage was voted down as expected. However, the majority tried

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to pacify the silver delegates by including a "conciliatory pledge" to promote an international agreement to secure free coinage and a worldwide bimetallic system. Such a pacifying measure was included in the platform plank because Mark Hanna wanted to insure party unity in the coming elections and a victory for McKinley.

Teller and his followers continued to press the issue on the convention floor the following day. Through common courtesy (and knowing the victory was theirs) the regular Republicans allowed the bimetallists ample time for their pleas and arguments. Teller was recognized by the chair and he moved that an amendment to the monetary plank preferring the free coinage of silver be adopted and that the nation act in favor of a bimetallic monetary system without Great Britain. When the Coloradan relinquished the floor for the question, Ellis claimed "there were tears in Teller's eyes . . . and tears in the eyes of many who heard him." The vote against Teller's motion was 818 2/3 as compared to a mere 105 1/3 for it. The same states which had supported it in the Committee on Resolutions gave majority votes in the motion's favor. Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Nevada, and Arizona Territory were the only ones to take a unanimous stand. At this point the chairman of the convention again recognized Teller who had Senator Cannon of Utah read a prepared statement setting forth the reasons why Teller was about to bolt. At the conclusion of the statement Teller arose from his seat and walked down the aisle to

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8 Ellis, Henry Moore Teller, i. pp. 258-259.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid. pp. 258-261.
the doors, thus leaving the Republican party. Cannon followed as did Dubois and the Idaho delegation as well as those from Nevada, and Colorado. Several others joined the straggling procession, as did Charles Hartman, Montana's only delegate to leave the convention.

Following the withdrawal, Lee Mantle obviously confused and not knowing which direction to turn, delivered a speech, revealing his perplexity. "A majority of the delegation from Montana did not feel that the circumstances justified their walking out," he declared. In other words, the earlier pledge to bolt if silver and a silver candidate were not adopted was scrapped by Mantle. Mantle then declared that he reserved the power to either accept or reject the gold plan, thus indicating his disapproval of the gold platform and candidate. Finally, after speaking against the bolting faction, to assure his party loyalty, and then reserving the power to accept or reject the convention's actions, Mantle must have thought of his constituents and his own interests because he denounced the party. Mantle's paper in Butte carried a "lame explanation" as to the Senator's actions. Mantle, the Inter-Mountain contended, was merely following the orders of the Butte conference when he did not bolt with Teller.

Following the National Convention, Mantle and Hartman joined other silverites in trying to secure Teller's nomination for the presidency on the Democratic ticket. Teller was opposed to such efforts and

11 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
encouraged the endorsement of Bryan. Dubois of Idaho and Hartman then went to Colorado to meet with Teller, who had returned to his home after leaving the Republican convention. The free coinage Republicans assembled at Manitou Springs, Colorado and, after being persuaded by Teller to endorse Bryan and Sewall, signed the Manitou Declaration. This document, although not nearly as important as its designers believed, stated in part: "We urge all friends of gold and silver as standard money... to give Mr. Bryan and Mr. Sewall their hearty support. In advising this course we do not consider it necessary that they shall abandon or surrender their political views on other questions." Hartman's name appeared among the list endorsing the declaration, as did Mantle's. Obviously Mantle was hesitant to alienate himself from the regular Republican party. Still Mantle was instrumental in procuring the so-called "Montana Protest" which was no more than a statement of Montana's non-bolting delegates publicized by Montana papers. It proclaimed that "We are profoundly impressed with the belief that the adoption of a gold plank and the abandonment of bimetallism must sooner or later bring the G.O.P. to defeat."

Reaction in the state to the National Convention was varied. Hartman became the state's hero because of his walkout. Even a gold Republican paper such as the Billings Gazette praised Hartman's action because he was true to his beliefs. On the other hand, Mantle was blasted by the Gazette for inconsistency because he first endorsed Hartman's bolt and

then claimed there was no justified reason for withdrawing at St. Louis. Strangely, Thomas Carter was silent and remained non-committed with respects to his future actions.

Republicans favoring the gold standard had been carefully following the National Convention and with the victories of McKinley, Hanna and gold for morale boosters, the faction began to rally and exert their influence in the state party. Ample proof of the upsurge in power was first evident at the State Central Committee's meeting in Butte on August 4, 1896. The committee had been assembled for the purpose of selecting a state nominating convention site and date, along with the formation of a plan of order for the convention.

Mantle, though claiming no allegiance to the monetary plank of the national party assumed his role as chairman of the Central Committee and called the meeting to order. The fall of the gavel seemed to serve the same purpose as a ringside bell in a prize fight. A Flathead County's delegate's seat on the committee was the initial round of contention between the silver men and the gold advocates. The dissent occurred when H.S. Harwood, the original Flathead County committeeman moved out of the state, thus relinquishing his residency and becoming ineligible for the position. During his absence, Harwood's seat was given to R.L. Clinton, a silverite. Harwood, a gold advocate, then returned to Kalispell and resumed residency and he also wanted his position back. At any rate, neither Clinton nor Harwood were able to attend the Butte meeting and both men, certain of the legality of their positions, issued proxies.

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Clinton's proxy was held by Mantle's old political and business crony George W. Irvin. Colonel Wilber Fisk Sanders of Helena, a leader of the gold faction, held Harwood's proxy. The vote was a tie, but Mantle as chairman cast the deciding vote for Irvin.

Irvin suggested the state convention first of all nominate a state ticket, adopt a platform, allow the minority (whether gold or silver) to withdraw for the purpose of nominating separate presidential electors and a separate candidate for Congress. At the same time the majority would hold similar nominations. Finally, Irvin proposed that a joint committee of members of both majority and minority devise a method assuring the election of the state ticket. Another delegate wanted to abolish completely the nomination of electors. The Lieutenant Governor, A.C. Botkin, favored a platform for silver, McKinley electors, the re-nomination of Hartman and the nomination of a state ticket.

Charles Hartman, who had remained silent, gained the floor and staunchly opposed any plan which included McKinley electors. The Congressman was immediately challenged and accused of not being a Republican nor a representative of Republican interests. Finally, the state committee adopted a gold proposal for handling the state convention. According to the plan the state convention would adopt the order of business, decided on at this meeting. Secondly, they could nominate candidates for governor and other state officers, except a Congressman and presidential electors; thirdly, a platform, minus a financial plank, would be drawn up. After the platform's acceptance, the silver wing would have to leave the convention (unless they would approve of a gold plank), meet, organize, complete the financial plank, name presidential
electors and a congressional candidate. Meanwhile, the gold Republicans acting as rightful delegates would nominate candidates for the official party. In short, the gold Republicans would assume the leadership of the party even though the silverites comprised the majority, held the party chairmanship and the state's congressional seat, as well as the votes of the majority of Montanans. The only possible explanation as to why the silver men agreed to abide by such a plan is that they wanted to maintain sufficient party harmony to help secure the election of Republican state officials.

Peace and harmonious relations seemed to prevail as the Central Committee meeting adjourned. The Missoulian emphasized the fact that no decree of excommunication against anyone would be issued at the state convention because of differences of opinions as to national policies. An editorial proclaimed that the Butte plan for conducting the state convention would be satisfactory to the majority of Republicans in the state. "Harmony would exist before election time." And so, with anticipation of a tranquil relationship within the party, the committee members headed for home. Politics, so it is said, often makes strange partners. Likewise, politics makes many enemies. Harmony amidst the Republican party was not perpetual, contrary to the Missoulian. In fact, within a month's time the two major components of the G.O.P. in Montana were again at each other's throats, thereby disrupting the precariously

17 The account of the State Central Committee meeting was taken from articles appearing in the Daily Missoulian, Aug. 5, 6, 1896; The Daily Inter-Mountain, Aug. 5, 6, 1896; Thomson, "Mantle", pp. 110-111.

18 Daily Missoulian, August 5, 6, 1896.
false atmosphere of rapprochement.

Definite lack of intra-party unity was best exemplified at the Silver Bow County Republican Convention, the first week of September. The purpose of the meeting was to name seventy-seven delegates to the State Convention at Helena, September 9.

Mercury in thermometers surpassed the 100 degree mark in Butte on the day the Silver Bow Republicans assembled. The heat of the day was hardly noticed as the convening precinct and ward representatives gathered and peacefully opened the convention. In the absence of the regular chairman, O.D. French, a friend of silver legislation and secretary of the County party called the convention to order. French then opened nominations for a temporary chairman. According to the Helena Herald, originally no one protested the procedure of French. Malcom Gillis, a goldite was nominated from the McKinley wing, while Stephan Williams received the silvermen’s nod. As French announced the nominees, L.J. Hamilton, who had nominated Gillis, challenged his (French's) right to act as chairman. The truce was broken and the heat inside the assembly hall soon matched that outside. French refused to relinquish the gavel so gold men, inspired by the influence of the strong American Protective Association in Butte, removed French by brute force. A wild melee broke out and according to the Inter-Mountain report, "... pandemonium reigned supreme ... delegates flourished canes ... and fists ... and acted like men bereft of reason." A call to the local gendarmes resulted in the arrival of the sheriff and two deputies. They were helpless and

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Butte Daily Inter-Mountain, September 3, 1896.
quickly withdrew seeking two more deputies for reinforcements. Upon the law agents re-enterance French was still at the mercy of the belligerent and golden A.P.A. The sheriff succeeded in having him released and in calming the situation. The silver forces then moved for a roll call vote to determine the new chairman. Gillis' backers declared that he was the new temporary chairman, carried him to the palladium and gave him the gavel. At this outrage the silver advocates walked out of Oaplice Hall, the meeting place, and found another suitable building to conduct a civilized convention among themselves. That is, all the silverites except one withdrew. Mr. French insulted by his physical ousting as temporary chairman, remained at Oaplice to protest the atrocity. An A.P.A. delegate moved that French be thrown out a window and as the parliamentary procedures necessary to make the motion effective were underway the gallant and noble Mr. French, recalling that discretion is the greater part of valor, quickly left of his own accord.

Each faction, decided it was the legal one and therefore both groups selected seventy-seven delegates and seventy-seven alternates. Leading the silverites was Lee Mantle, still declaring allegiance to the Republican party in the mornings and against the national party's position in the afternoons. His counterpart was a man named Thomas Couch.

Couch had been a political enemy of Mantle for nearly two decades. The A.P.A. leader was successful in crushing Mantle's political ambitions as early as 1889 when he lead a similar revolt against Mantle's authority in the Silver Bow Republican Party, temporarily ending the grip of a

Ibid; Helena Herald, September 10, 1896.
Mantle-Irvin-Warren triumvirate. When Mantle attempted to receive the party's senatorial nomination in 1890, Couch had been a key person securing the candidacy for T.C. Power. Couch perhaps envious of Mantle's position seemed determined to once again send his adversary reeling from political power. Of course, the Republicans had been undergoing a rapid process of disintegration in the latter years of the silver crisis. Still contemporary leaders, clamoring for a united front, grossly underestimated the effects of intra-party discontent. The two men in positions to best reconcile the factional differences, Mantle and Carter, were too concerned with their own images before the public and the national party to use effective means towards realigning the state organization. Hartman, on the other hand, was overly dedicated to the issue of silver to compromise his beliefs. Therefore, the state party continued to entertain itself with feuds among the tight little cliques which comprised the party. Each new feud surpassed its predecessor in intensity and violence until, as in the case of the Silver Bow County Convention, the presence of law enforcement agents was necessary to maintain some resemblance of order.

Mantle's news media asked "How can Democrats, ten thousand strong be opposed to twenty thousand Republicans and fifteen thousand Populists and still expect to win?" Little did the editors realize that a new political force of an allied Democratic-Populist nature was waiting for the total breakdown of the invincible Republicans. The final crumbling occurred at the state Republican Convention, thus signifying the fall of Republican supremacy after a decade of victories.

22 Butte Daily Inter-Mountain, Aug. 5, 1896.
Chapter IV

Convention, Campaign, and Courts

September mornings in Montana are usually clear, crisp and cold. September ninth was probably no exception, but in Helena the weather went unnoticed. Residents of the capital city were too busy crowding and jamming their way into the already overfilled auditorium which was to house one of the state's warmest Republican conventions. Democrats, Republicans, Populists and any other interested persons turned out en masse to watch the colossal struggle between the golden elephant and the silver elephant. The leaders of Montana Republicanism were once again assembled under one roof to debate, plead, condemn, and should time prevail, nominate a ticket of political hopefuls. That is, all the major leaders were present except one, Thomas Carter.

The elusive Thomas Carter, knowing that he would be called to account for his change of heart at St. Louis, was not present. According to news reports, Carter found it necessary to journey to the Nation's capital because "an unexpected occurrence had burdened me with a pressing and imperative duty demanding my presence at the ... capital." The probable reason Carter went to the capital was the suspension of the First National Bank of Helena. However, had Carter wanted to remain in the state for the convention he certainly could have recommended another lawyer to represent the bank. As a substitute for his absence the wily Carter left a long, arid letter expressing his sorrow for not being able to attend the conclave. The Carter letter finally confirmed the silvermen's suspicions. Carter, endorsed both the national Republicans' ticket

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1 Helena Herald, Sept. 8, 10, 1896; Daily Missoulian, Sept. 9, 1896.
and platform with no reservations. His total submission to the Hanna-dominated national Republicans is indicated more clearly in the closing passage of his letter when he stated: "To those of our party who feel constrained on account of a matter of method on one issue to depart from us on all other national questions at the coming elections, we should manifest a spirit of toleration, well knowing that in due season they will return." Immediately the Great Falls Tribune labeled Carter as "Traitorous Tom" and his letter as a "Stupid attempt to veneer his treachery to the case of Free Coinage."

With Carter out of the state, the golden Republicans sought a forceful and persuasive leader. To take Carter's place as spokesman for gold was Wilber Fisk Sanders, a Helena resident who apparently appointed himself as Carter's successor. Sanders, a pioneer in the state and diversified businessman, was a staunch Republican, a solid backer of McKinley and gold.

Although aware of the State Central Committee's agreement for the silver advocates to withdraw from the state convention Mantle, mindful of Carter's absence, called the convention to order and at once began to champion free silver. After reminding the Republicans of their stands in 1892 and 1894 which favored Silver, the party chairman reviewed the actions of Carter, Hartman, and himself on the tariff question. The theme of not silver alone nor wool alone but both together for the common

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2 Ibid.
3 Great Falls Tribune, Sept. 9, 1896.
good of the state was re-echoed. Such an opportunity to beat his own drum would never be passed up by Mantle. Knowing that the majority of delegates were in favor of silver legislation, Mantle declared: "... My own course is marked out. To me my duty in this emergency is perfectly clear. To my mind the question of the restoration of bimetallism is, in the present condition of affairs, by far the most important question before the American people...." Needless to say such a concluding remark assured any doubting silvermen of Mantle's loyalty and furthermore gave the silver delegation from Butte a favorable light at the convention and a better chance of being seated instead of the contesting A.P.A. group lead by Couch.

When the Committee on Credentials announced the contest between the Mantle-oriented delegation and the gold men from Butte, spectators knew the major test of factional strength was at hand. Seventy-seven votes from Silver Bow County could easily turn a gold convention into a haven for silver, and vice-versa. Within the debate over the seating, the proceedings of the Silver Bow County convention were recalled, with the riotous actions in Butte being roundly condemned by silvermen. The final vote adopted the minority motion to seat Mantle's group by a vote of 156 to 154. Therefore, the added seventy-seven votes gave a total of 233 positive ayes for silver legislation, comprising a clear-cut majority. With such voting power the logical conclusion would be that the free coinage of silver faction not only could, but would, dictate the remaining actions...

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4 Helena Herald, Sept. 9, 1896.
5 Ibid. Sept. 10, 1896.
of the convention. In the face of such formidable strength the gold men began to panic, Sanders especially. After gaining the floor Sanders exorciated Mantle's speech. Sanders deplored the possibility that the convention would not support the national party on the question of gold. A recess was called following Sanders' speech. Upon resuming Sanders lugged a gigantic picture of McKinley to the platform, proudly revealing it to his fellow Republicans. A delegate from Deer Lodge County retaliated for silver by going to the platform and unrolling a banner proclaiming:

CHARLES S. HARTMAN
16 TO 1
NO COMPROMISE
DEER LODGE COUNTY.

At this point pandemonium broke out and reigned supreme from 7:45 p.m. until 8:35 p.m. Order was restored mainly through the efforts of the band when it struck up the "Red, White and Blue." Sanders having anticipated the awesome power of the silver elephant, had organized a group to bolt the convention. In all, thirty per cent of the delegates vowed to be a nucleus of the withdrawal; more were expected to join the walkout. Sanders confident of a successful maneuver had rented a hall, filled it with chairs and hired a band. His moment of destiny was at hand. He called for the bolt and counted a mere thirty men willing to leave the convention—thirty men out of 388 delegates. Not knowing what to do in the wake of his pathetic flop and the realization that his power over even the gold Republicans was nil, Sanders proclaimed in the tone of a biblical prophet, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver."

Ibid; Great Falls Tribune, Sept. 10, 1896; Anaconda Standard, Sept. 11, 1896.
Amidst the comical parrying of the gold men and silver advocates attending the convention there was a deeper type of sobriety than the external utterances and actions revealed. Previous dictums (the Butte conference) had set forth the plan of action for the state convention and the action called for the withdrawal of the bimetallists. When the proper time arrived, that is the call for the nomination of congressional candidates and electors, A.J. Seligman, the silverite who was elected permanent chairman of the convention, declared "We have reached the parting of the ways", (thus signifying what many observers felt would be a prime cause of Republican defeat in the state.) A vice chairman was elected to preside over the gold section of the Republican convention and was escorted to the platform as Seligman joined Mantle, Hartman and the other withdrawing silverites.

Where the real conflicts of nominations arose were the candidacy for Congress and in the electoral college choices. Hartman was the incumbent and assured of not only the Silver Republican nod but also of the entire state. Similarly, electors in favor of Bryan and Sewall were demanded by the silvermen, regardless of party affiliation. Facing the inevitability of defeat in both a congressional candidate and electors, the small group of gold Republicans nominated by acclamation O.F. Goddard for Congress. Goddard, a Billings man delivered a speech in which he accepted "every line, sentence and reading between the lines of the St. Louis platform." The issue at hand according to Goddard, was the

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7 Helena Herald, Sept. 11, 1896.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
protection of American industry. In concluding, the nominee called for a purification of the state Republican party, and by implication the ousting of Mantle and Hartman. Two McKinley-Hobert electors were also nominated by the regular Republicans. The status quo adherents took advantage of the absence of their adversaries and proceeded to purify the state party by electing a complete roster of gold men to fill every position on the State Central Committee.

In the meantime, Lee Mantle called the silver wing to order and requested that Seligman again act as chairman. He did so. At once Hartman received the unanimous nomination and his fellow delegates from Gallatin County carried him to the platform on their shoulders. After the excitement had died out, roll call was taken to determine the exact number present. Only eight of a possible twenty-three counties were absent, and those counties absent were from the eastern portion of the state. By coincidence eight of the counties at the convention had total delegation strength at the silver wing gathering. Silver Bow, with its seventy-seven delegates was among the latter group. Seligman announced that there were only 265 delegates out of a possible 308. Therein lies the tragedy of the Silver Republicans. With such power at their command they could have easily controlled the nominations and Central Committee by simply staying in the convention. In fact, they could have run Sanders, Goddard and the few who followed them completely out of the auditorium, and nominated their own people for offices and the State Central Committee. Had they flexed their muscles and exerted their power instead of withdrawing, a ticket could have been nominated that would have helped to bring a Republican victory in November despite the
allied efforts of the Democrats and Populists.

Apparently the Silver Republicans were not willing to stray too far from the parent party, thus giving a type of validity to Carter's contention that in due season they would return. Evidence is plentiful in this regard. First of all, the silverites, while in their convention, endorsed all of the St. Louis convention platform except the financial plank. Likewise, they approved of not only Hartman's and Mantle's actions at St. Louis and in Washington on the tariff issue, but also extended their stamp of approval on Carter's action at St. Louis. Explicit commendation was given to the attempt at having Teller nominated for president and the Manitou Declaration was spoken of highly by several of the Silver Republicans. The end result in the long list of endorsements was of no greater consequence than a placer miner reveling at a flash of color in his pan and then having his hopes dashed against the rocks of reality when he discovers the color to be fool's gold. Before adjourning the silver party elected a State Central Committee and initial steps in drawing up a petition to appear on the official ballot as the Silver Republican party were begun. The question of electors was easily settled by merely endorsing the two put forth by the Democrats and the one supported by the state's Populists.

Aside from the highlights of conventions and conferences, the drive for free silver in Montana took on many aspects of traditional politics. One of the more characteristic phases of the silver movement was the continued attacks upon Charles Hartman by William Andrew Clark's

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9 Ibid.
news sheet, the Butte Miner. Clark was a Democrat and being a mine owner favored bimetallism but his editor, a man named Quinn took advantages of every opportunity to denounce Hartman. After a sustained period of onslaughts, Mantle's paper, the Inter-Mountain, defended Hartman against the various charges. Among the charges issued against the Gallatin Congressman were the following questions. (1) Why did Hartman support the Dingley Tariff while Mantle and Carter so vigorously opposed it? (2) Why did Hartman, if true to silver verbally quit the Republican party as Teller did? (3) If loyal to bimetallism Hartman should have remained in the East campaigning for men whose election to Congress was not assured. Instead he returned to Montana for his own good. (4) How could Hartman, if true to silver, be willing to throw in the towel, should silvermen not be sent to St. Louis?

To answer the accumulated charges of Quinn the Inter-Mountain claimed Hartman voted for the Dingley Tariff because he wanted to aid the state's wool growers in every possible way. Any opposition Hartman could have given the bill in the House would have been of no avail because of the dominance of gold in the lower chamber. On the other hand, Mantle's and Carter's opposition to the bill was motivated by desires to have silver coinage enacted at the same time because of the Democratic, Populist and Silver Republican power in the Senate. The Inter-Mountain also believed that Hartman was justified in not verbally quitting the Republicans because he was young and such an announcement would not have the impact on old line members as Teller's declaration. As a further defense of Hartman, the Inter-Mountain announced his date
of departure from the state for Eastern campaigning duties as September 20th, thus allowing a full six weeks of stumping before the elections.

As a final buttress for Hartman the silver-oriented paper explained the Congressman's reason for demanding silvermen as delegates to St. Louis. If the Republicans, the dominant political force in the state, chose friends of gold as delegates Hartman would have accepted such action as a rebuking of silver by Montanans and a desire for his congressional policies to change.

Journalistic competition such as the intra-city rivalry of the Miner and Inter-Mountain were not unusual during the silver issue. Helena sported a similar feud between the then Democratic Independent Record and the Republican Herald. In the case of these two papers, Hartman by election time had lost support of the Herald but gained the Record's as well as most Democratic papers in the state, especially the Great Falls Tribune.

... Coordinating the drive of the Silver Republicans, Populists, and Democrats for the November election appeared to be the Montana Bimetallc League organized under the leadership of Joseph K. Toole. The fragmentary evidence available suggests that the League turned out a first rate promotional campaign with sufficient funds, subsidized editors, politicians and pamphleteers. As possible solutions to the money problem they suggested that the United States could borrow money from British capitalists through

Butte Daily Inter-Mountain, August 14, 1896.
their Wall Street agents. Of course they readily pointed out that borrowing was not feasible because it would add to the nation's foreign debt and thereby increase the "drain of money" to pay annual interest charges. As a second possible course of action the League believed the Federal government could authorize national banks to increase their promisory note issues and offer the banks "liberal inducements" for that purpose. League literature questioned beneficial workings of increased loans on the grounds that the "already powerful" money trusts would only grow more powerful and demanding as a result.

Emotional appeal in both the first and second proposed solutions is readily seen. Montanans, along with other Westerners, Midwest and Southern citizens and Eastern laboring classes, were highly suspicious and antagonistic of dealings with foreign nations like Britain and of the money gods of banks, Wall Street agents and the kind. But they were psychologically prepared to accept the third major solution to their economic troubles. Adopt free coinage of silver and gold and by doing so increase the production of American mines. Increased mining activity would signify the end of unemployment in almost every capacity, thus alienating the burdens of the people. All would be well if this would be done argued the League. To insure that all would be well the League simply declared to Montanans "The election of Bryan and a friendly Congress will of itself settle every question of present disturbing the

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11 "The Money Question: The Common Sense of It", Campaign leaflet Published and circulated by the Montana Bimetallic League.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
country, by the simple process of giving work to the idle."

After establishing the free and unlimited coinage of silver at a sixteen to one ratio with gold as its issue, Montana's branch of the American Bimetallic League set out in efforts to guide the various political groups in their efforts to attain that end. Although usually acting in an advisory capacity, the League was quick to admonish any silver group which was not up to par in the campaign. Such evidence is readily seen in a letter from Joseph K. Toole, president of the League, to the various chairmen of the Democratic County Committees. The opening sentence read in the following manner: "The Democrats by a remarkable oversight have not taken advantage in this campaign of the strongest issue that could possibly be brought forward." The issue referred to was the industrial possibilities and growth in the state should silver coinage be enacted. Accompanying the letter were various copies of handbills emphasizing the development potential of the state on not only the mining level but also on the population side, business expansion and greater marketing opportunities for farm commodities. The League suggested six basic steps the Democrats were to follow in order to have a more effective campaign. These instructions were:

1. Have a liberal supply of handbills printed (also in foreign languages if needed) and thoroughly distributed, especially amongst the working men and farmers.

2. Have county newspapers take up the subject and publish extracts
with comments as to their local application.

(3) Have all speakers discuss the new issue, and if not convenient to have handbills printed, read the matter from the stumps and platforms.

(4) Explain there are many rich mineral lands in the West not explored or developed and all deposits in government land are open to appropriation by discovery hence the impossibility of organizing monopoly production.

(5) Endeavor to secure the co-operation of all labor organizations in the effort to publish the advantages of opening the gold and silver mines as a wide field for employment.

(6) Where there are local committees representing the People's or Silver Republican parties, cooperation should be secured. 16

Appended to the letter was a joint statement by W.M. Cockrill, Chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, Lee Mantle, Chairman of the Silver Republican Party and C.O. Reed, Chairman of the Populist State Committee. The statement was to the effect: "We have examined the statements of the Montana Bimetallic League with reference to existing conditions in the mining regions and their capacity to employ and maintain largely increased population, and regard the estimates as conservative and reliable." 17

The League file in Helena contains numerous pamphlets that were issued by the Democrats in the amount of ten thousand each. It is highly possible that the master copies of the circulars were written by personnel of the state League. Most of the literature was endorsed by W.M. Cockrill, Chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, C.O. Reed, Chairman of the Populist State Committee and Lee Mantle, Chairman of the Silver

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16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
Republican Party, thereby indicating the combined efforts towards cooperation and victory in the November elections. The most comprehensive piece of literature published by the Bimetallic League was a forty-eight page booklet entitled *Prosperity, How to Restore It: Are You For England or America? An Address to Eastern Businessmen by Their Western Patrons.* This particular campaign document contained all the standard arguments opposing the "international agreement" of British and American financiers against America's debtor class. The solution to the onslaught of economic hardships adhered to in the booklet was the traditional free silver coinage at a sixteen to one ratio with an urgent plea for "every reader . . . who favors a deliverance of his country from the bondage of foreign debts . . . please hand this pamphlet to a friend."

Other letters of the League were sent to Eastern news editors emphasizing possible employment opportunities in the Western mines. All events would depend on the election of Bryan and a friendly Congress. One letter slated for Eastern publication stated in part: If free coinage succeeds the number (of workers) required will be very large and it is thought all can be accommodated, but it is deemed best to secure places for the applicants before coming out." Being cautious and not entirely confident of a Bryan victory the letter also claimed: "If Mr. Bryan is

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19 Ibid. p. 1.
defeated it is likely that a large number of men now here (Montana mining areas) will have to go East to seek work, hence parties are advised not to come West without assured positions. Other League literature claimed that the success of bimetallism would attract between five and six million persons to the mining areas. Prosperity would follow the influx of people, especially in agricultural products.

Amongst the literature were also many handbills based on the writings of William H. "Coin" Harvey's Coin's Financial School, supposedly the most effective of the free silver tracts. Of particular interest were the efforts of the League to make the appeal for silver to immigrant groups, particularly the German populace.

Aside from League activities and more related to the layman were the efforts of many merchants. F.H. Ray of the Parchen Drug Company in Helena inaugurated a silver campaign sponsored by merchants only. Ray organized an inter-city merchants' guild designed to print pamphlets and distribute them at their own expense. Also incorporated in the overall plan were these ideas:

(1) All participating Montana merchants would send pamphlets to each Eastern business house patronized asking for perusal and reply.

(2) The Montana merchants would endeavor to enlist merchants in other mining regions of the nation.

(3) Urge the public patrons to send the pamphlets to Eastern friends and relatives and to volunteer their services in

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21 Ibid.
addressing literature for committees.

(4) All the member merchants would contribute to a general fund.

(5) Merchants would set aside one "silver day" a week and donate a portion of the day's intake for the silver cause.

To carry on the many activities of the silver campaign money was necessary. Any exact amount of money raised through such activities is hard to ascertain. Hofstätter claimed that the silver movement did not have a large financial backing. In Montana, it may be safe to assume that the movement certainly did not lack financial support. Marcus Daly and William Andrew Olark were two of the nation's richest men at that time. Since both were mine owners and favored the silver coinage drive it is very likely both men donated heavily to the cause, even though the amount of donations is indeterminable. Kenneth Ross Toole, stated in his study on Daly, that Daly contributed $50,000 out of a total $350,000 to Bryan's silver campaign. Toole also related a story told to him by Paul O. Phillips, a former history professor at Montana State University. The story, obtained by Phillips from Joseph M. Dixon, (a Missouliam who eventually became governor) claimed that Olark donated only $100.00 to the silver drive. Despite these assertions regarding Olark, it seems logical that he would have made much larger contributions. For instance, Clark's "almost unlimited resources" may very well have been instrumental in nominating Grover Cleveland for his second term in 1892. In the Clark-Daly feud over the state capital site, Daly supposedly spent one million

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dollars and Clark four hundred thousand. If Clark was willing to spend such sums of money in feuding over a capital site why would he not have been willing to contribute freely to the bimetallist effort, especially since free coinage of silver and a government market would mean greater profits from his mining interests? Perhaps Clark thought that by contributing $100.00 while Daly was giving $50,000 he would score another victory over his rival by not spending as Daly expected him to. Another reason which makes the contention that Clark contributed only $100.00 seem absurd is the fact that he later spent in excess of $400,000 in bribes to legislators in an attempt to gain a seat in the U.S. Senate.

An intriguing article, which was reprinted by the Daily Inter-Mountain and which originally appeared in the New York World, claimed that the combined silver forces received huge sums of financial support. The article was actually a letter from William Shaw Bowen, a staff correspondent of the gold-standard World to his editor in New York. Bowen claimed that he overheard a conversation between J.D. Rickards, the state's governor and George W. Irvin, Mantle's political crony and owner and treasurer of the Irvin-Amy Silver Mining Co. of Butte. Bowen reported that Irvin told Rickards the "Anaconda people", meaning Daly's company, had given "over $140,000." When queried as to how much Clark had

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25 Ibid., pp. 118-119, 132-141.
26 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
donated Irvin stated, "I don't know exactly, but he will give more than $30,000 before he's through." Bowen also claimed that at least $295,100 was raised in Montana and used for campaign purposes. When coupled to the amount raised in Colorado, a total of over $650,000 was asserted by the reporter. Bowen's list of major contributors in the Montana silver campaign included the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marcus Daly</td>
<td>$100,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William A. Clark</td>
<td>$50,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Hauser</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees of Anaconda (forced contributions)</td>
<td>$60,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions in Helena and Butte</td>
<td>$17,500.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<tr>
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The Inter-Mountain referred to the articles as "infamous lies" and Rickards, although admitting a conversation with Irvin, did likewise. Although Bowen probably exaggerated the figures, it appears probable that the silverites did not lack for adequate funds.

Such instances as the Bowen report served the cause for silver in the state by keeping the issue alive and attracting public attention. Persons who may have lost interest in the issue because of years of indoctrination on the benefits of bimetallism may very well have regained interest in the subject because of the story's controversial nature. Occuring at the same time was a legal maneuver by McKinley men in the state which, provided it succeeded, would have removed the Silver

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
Republicans from the official ballot. Needless to say, any lagging interests in the silver issue suddenly became alert at the attempt.

Prompting the court action was the formation of local parties known as the Citizens' Silver Party in Granite, Missoula, Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow and Deer Lodge Counties. The party's purpose was to insure the election of silverites to local offices because the Silver Republicans extended no further than congressional and electoral college nominees with endorsement of regular Republican candidates for state offices. To counteract the nomination by the Citizens' Silver Party as local office holders, members of the regular Republican party obtained temporary injunctions restraining the county clerks of those Counties involved. They contended the party was not duly formed and organized, nor did it represent views entirely different from an established party in the state. Upon the public announcement of the temporary restraining writs, Malcolm Gillis a Silver Bow A.P.A. member, filed suit against the Silver Republicans.

The first case was the hearing of E.C. Russell versus John S. Tooker, clerk of the Lewis and Clark County. In this particular case Tooker's defense counsel argued that should the court restrain Tooker from placing the County ticket on the ballot, such a decision would have the effect of deciding that Hartman had been nominated by a convention of delegates as distinguished from a convention of electors. Therefore, the role of the court was to define electors and delegates and decide how the persons at the state Republican convention were designated. The defense further

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argued that Montana codes provided that nominations be made by a convention or primary meeting and defined convention or primary meeting as "an organized assemblage of electors or delegates."

E.C. Boom, Tooker's lawyer, claimed that all the men who nominated Hartman were acting in their own capacity as electors, not delegates to either the Republican convention nor the Silver Republican convention. Therefore, if the case was decided for Russell, it would necessarily follow that Hartman's nomination would be invalid, because both Hartman's nomination and the county candidates' nomination were made by organized assemblages of electors rather than by conventions of delegates.

To Boom such a decision would make void the entire silver ticket. However, the silver attorney believed that the regular Republican ticket would have to be stricken from the ballot because the nominations of Goddard, McKinley electors and nominees for state offices were not made by a majority of the Republican convention. Such a contention was based upon the fact that when the bimetallists walked out of the Republican convention they took with them the majority of the electors. Since the state codes provided that a candidate must receive a majority of the delegate's votes, it stood to reason that all the Republicans were illicitly nominated.

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34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., Oct. 17, 1896; The state codes provide that a candidate may be nominated for public office by a majority of persons delegated to attend a convention or primary meeting, provided the office is to be filled by election in the state. This particular code was established in 1889 and is still in force. Therefore, Tooker erred by proclaiming that only delegates to a convention, not electors, could nominate. See Montana, Election Laws of the State of Montana, 1940 Arranged and Compiled from Revised Codes of Montana of 1925 as Amended by Laws of 1937-1939, (Helena: Naegle Printing Co., 1940), p. 41.
The Supreme Court's decision was handed down October 19, and for those who thought silver's cause was entirely lost, a pleasant surprise awaited. The Court decided that the case did not involve the office of congressman nor the nomination of presidential electors. It was concerned only with the dispute in Lewis and Clark County. Invalid methods of assembling and nominating county candidates under Bryan and Sewall electors were responsible for the temporary injunction against Tooker being made permanent. The fact that no ruling on Hartman's candidacy nor on the validity of Bryan and Sewall electors on the Silver Republican ticket gave hope to bimetallists that their congressional choice and presidential electors were valid.

A more direct attack on the Silver Republicans came when the case of Gillis vs. Johnson came before the Court October 22. The Court immediately clarified the case as an action to decide whether or not the Silver Republicans constituted a new party. Counsel for the plaintiff (Gillis), instead of arguing on the grounds of legal procedure of the Silver Republican convention (there was no call for a primary meeting or convention) based his contentions on the riotous Silver Bow County convention. The attorneys claimed that the seventy-seven delegates at the Helena convention from Silver Bow County were not the legal delegates and electors because they bolted the Butte auditorium convention. As a result those seventy-seven men were not valid representatives of either the Republican party or all the districts of Butte. Since the group in question was instrumental in forming the so-called majority, the majority claimed by the silver adherents was in itself invalid. Therefore, an invalid majority could not nominate
valid candidates.

Johnson's defense argued that the Oaplice Hall faction (bolters of the Silver Bow County convention) had not formed a new party but simply designated themselves as Silver Republicans for the convenience of voters on the official ballot. Furthermore, the defense pointed out, because the official state Republican convention seated the Oaplice Hall delegation, the question of their legality was settled in their favor by the convention itself. As a result the seventy-seven delegates, having received full legal status from their peers, and having been instrumental in forming a legal majority were lawful in placing into candidacy Charles S. Hartman, and Bryan and Sewall electors under the name of Silver Republicans.

Presiding Judge Hamilton, although considering both arguments, had quite a different view of the overall circumstances. In his decision he declared that since the Silver Republicans proposed Bryan and Sewall electors and the candidacy of Charles S. Hartman in direct contradiction to the platform of the St. Louis Republican Party, they were as different from the Republicans as were the Democrats and Populists. Hamilton added that the name "Silver Republican" did not serve as an identifying characteristic of the party as much as did the party's platform and principles. The decision also prohibited the Silver Republican party while "disavowing any of its cardinal principles and avowing allegiance

Daily Inter-Mountain, Oct. 21, 1896.

to its enemies." With the favorable decision the Silver Republicans were made a legal party and were assured of being included on the November ballot, thus signifying silver's most instrumental victory over conservative forces in the state up to that time.

In the county cases the Court decided for permanent injunctions in five hearings and refused to issue writs in two others. Generally speaking, the attempt to block the Citizens' Silver Party on the county level was mostly successful, the major issue, the legality of the Silver Republican party was upheld.

Silver Republicanism in Montana had survived its strongest tests during September and October of 1896. The hectic state convention which was rent by factional feuds carried into it from the Silver Bow County convention and earlier Republican gatherings was dominated by bimetallists. Strangely enough the powerful silver men did not exercise their power

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38 Ibid.  
39 Ibid.  
40 Janet Thomson in her thesis, "Mantle" p. 112, claimed that the Supreme Court issued a permanent injunction against county clerks placing Silver Republican candidates on the official ballot. Elmer Ellis in his book, Henry Moore Teller, p. 280, stated that legal obstacles kept the Silver Republicans off the official ballot in Montana. Technically, the county candidates, although Silver Republicans at heart, were under the name of Citizens' Silver Party. Also, the court did not issue a blanket injunction as Thomson would have the reader believe. Each case of seven was considered separately with separate rulings handed down. Two of the cases, both against Granite county clerks, were decided in the clerks' favor. Contrary to Ellis' declaration the Silver Republicans were retained on the official ballot of Montana. See Montana, Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of the State of Montana From March 9, 1896 to November 16, 1896, state ex rel Gillis vs. Johnson; Daily Inter-Mountain, October 22, 1896.
in the Helena assemblage, but, like meek lambs, left the convention hall to the small group of regular Republicans bent on the destruction of the Silver Republicans. After reconvening under Lee Mantle's direction incumbent Congressman Charles S. Hartman was unanimously re-nominated while Democratic electors were approved of. Not wishing to stray too far from the fold the Silver Republicans endorsed all of the National Republican platform except the financial plank and the McKinley-Hobart ticket. They also endorsed any nominees the regular Republicans put forth for state offices.

At the same time the campaign for free silver coinage among the state's residents was reaching full steam. In reality the campaign took on varied aspects but the most important role was played by the Montana Bimetallic League. The League, supported by Democrats, Populists and Silver Republicans, served as the pace-setter for campaign policies. Journalistic competition among newspapers was frequent and often heated, especially in the case of the Butte Daily Miner and Mantle's paper the Inter-Mountain. Hartman was the subject of debate and was under constant fire from editor Quinn of the Miner. Normally Democratic papers gave their support to Hartman while Republican papers which had endorsed him in the past abandoned him.

Another major threat to the Silver Republicans came in October through courts. Unable to nominate county tickets, affiliates of Silver Republicanism formed Citizens' Silver Parties on local levels. They were opposed by Republicans who first obtained temporary writs of restraint against county clerks placing any candidate under the C.S.P. on the ballots. The case was referred to the state Supreme Court as was a case
directly challenging the legality of Hartman and Bryan-Sewall electors appearing on the ballot as Silver Republican. In five of seven county decisions the O.S.P. was slapped down. The major question that of Hartman's candidacy as a Silver Republican, was clarified when the court ruled his legitimacy as a candidate. Had the court ruled the opposite events would have been difficult to determine, for the Populists and Democrats, instead of nominating congressional candidates, in effect endorsed Hartman by leaving the position open on their tickets.

With the ordeal of a hostile convention, a hot campaign and high court decisions behind them, the Silver Republicans had only one major test left, the decision of the voters.
Conclusion

The combined support of the Democratic, Peoples, and Silver Republican parties for Bryan gave the Commoner an overwhelming victory in Montana, almost a four to one popular vote over McKinley. For the House of Representatives, Charles S. Hartman, running as a Silver Republican and without Democratic or Populist opposition, defeated regular Republican C.F. Goddard by more than three to one. Robert Smith, of the fused Democratic-Peoples' ticket, defeated Alexander C. Botkin, supported by both Silver and regular Republicans, for the governorship by more than two to one. The Democratic-Peoples combination won every state-wide office by a comfortable majority. In the State House of Representatives the Democrats elected 42 members, the Republicans eight, and the People's party 18. In the State Senate the Democrats picked up six additional seats, one short of a majority. Unlike the national level in which the 1896 election helped to guarantee the G.O.P. a virtual majority for some 34 years, the election in Montana substantially strengthened the Democratic party. On the state level the parties remained nearly even, but for the U.S. House of Representatives the state would in the future generally go Democratic. After the adoption of a referendum for the popular election of United States Senators in 1912, they elected through 1964 all 1 Democrats, with the single exception of 1966.

The divisive election of 1896 had dealt an enduring, though not fatal, blow to the future of the Republican party in Montana. Hartman

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having won the congressional seat, served a colorless term in the House of Representatives and refused to be re-nominated in 1898. Despite the death of the issue because of the new influx of gold, his allegiance to silver continued. By the year 1910, Hartman had actively become a Democrat and in that year was defeated for the United States Senate by 4,448 votes. Lee Mantle's interest in silver continued until the turn of the century. With the Republicans reluctant to take him back because of the 1896 defeat, and with the silver issue literally dead, Mantle returned to his business enterprises. In the opposite vein, Carter remained popular in Republican circles, although not extremely active in politics because of the silver issue.

The Silver Republican campaign was indicative of what became a political tradition in Montana. Montana, like most of the other Rocky Mountain states, had demanded assistance from the federal government. Montana's envoys to the National government were required to seek federal help in times of distress. In 1896 the Silver Republicans responded to the call, even at the risk of being ostracized from the National Republican party and factionalizing the state party. The 1896 campaign in Montana represents a case history of state demands which were so strong they forced the state party to secede from the principles of the national party.

Viewing the results from an economic standpoint the 1896 election in Montana fails to conform to the national results. Bryan did most poorly in the eastern portion of the state; he ran nine to one ahead of

\[2\] *Ibid*; Thomson "Mantle", p. 112.
McKinley in Silver Bow County. A similar geographic-economic split occurred in the gubernatorial and congressional races. All 16 of the 25 counties carried by Hartman were in the south-central and western portions of the state. The wheat and wool growers of Eastern Montana apparently found the allure of free silver less to their liking than the promised protectionism of regular Republican O.P. Goddard. There is little doubt that Bryan, Smith, and Hartman won the labor vote by a landslide. The traditional interpretation that Bryan's largest appeal came from property-holding farmers and that he lacked appeal to labor, does not hold true for Montana. The labor vote in the silver mining districts apparently saw their future connected to the purchase of silver by the Federal government. Furthermore, the traditional view that recent immigrants and their immediate descendants were less welcomed by the Populist-oriented politicians appears to be without foundation in Montana. The American Protective Association, blantly anti-foreign and anti-Catholic, was closely identified with the gold Republicans in Montana, while the recent immigrants and their sons voted overwhelmingly for the fused Democratic-Peoples ticket.
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