

## **Editorial: Bourke Cockran, Economist**

Tammany Hall is not generally looked upon as a seat of learning, or a center of intelligence; quite the contrary. Furthermore, our New York City “respectables” do not, as a rule, waste much love or admiration upon Tammany Sachems; and justly so; the mental and moral caliber of these is just the reverse of admirable. All this notwithstanding, a wonderful change has recently come over certain quarters. Bourke Cockran, until recently designated by these “respectables” as a preposterous fellow, gifted with the art of blab, and not at all distinguishable, except in this respect, from the Hon. Edward Murphy, Jr., whose election to the United States Senate justly shocks the “respectability”, has suddenly become quite a lion among these choice spirits. The reason of this sudden change of heart is that the Hon. Bourke Cockran has, for some reason or other, and it is immaterial what, taken a “sound” position on the silver question. Our “respectables” belong, as a rule, to the bondholding class; they want payments in gold for the obvious reason that then they will get more for their money’s worth, and more than they gave out; in other words, they will be able to practice usury upon a larger scale. The Hon. Bourke Cockran will aid them in this patriotic endeavor, and they have made their peace with that paw of the Tammany Tiger.

Accordingly their papers are giving a good deal of prominence to the words of wisdom that fall from the lips of the Hon. Bourke Cockran.

Here, for instance, is a specimen of his utterances:

Because I am a bimetallist, I am in favor of the repeal of both the Sherman and the Bland acts. Now, suppose we placed ourselves where the leading nations of Europe stand to-day, on a single gold standard? The whole commercial world would then be compelled to conduct

*Daniel De Leon*

its transactions in gold, and we bimetallists believe that there is not enough gold above the surface of the earth to make it practicable. What would follow? The whole world—not a single nation acting by itself, as now—the whole world, I said, would be obliged to call silver into its coinage to help out the volume of money needed.

Not quite, Hon. Bourke Cockran, Economist, not quite.

If we place ourselves to-day upon a single gold standard, it would suit the creditor class, abroad as well as at home, exactly. All the apprehensions they now entertain of not getting all the hog they look for through the gold dollar will then be dispelled; they will grow all the fatter on the assured and continued increase of their fleecings through gold payments; the correcter the opinion of “we bimetallists” proves itself, upon the score of the inadequate quantity of available gold, the happier the creditor class will be. The less gold, the better it is for these gentry. The result of this will be just the reverse of what the Hon. Bourke Cockran propounds. The nations of the world, understanding this term in its proper sense, will not then do any such foolish thing as to “call for silver.” “The nations of the world” does not mean to-day the *peoples* of the world; the term only means the fleecing class whom the peoples of the world are tolerating on top, and whom they allow to do the governing; these fleecers will lie low, quietly low, and, like leeches, silently suck up the peoples’ blood; they will rise, and kick up a row, and “call”, only when the “nations of the world”, meaning thereby the “peoples of the world”, shall have come to the front and put an end to the fleecing and vampire system of to-day. Then the present “nations of the world” will fill the world with homilies upon the sacredness of property, the holiness of vested rights, the “un-American” and un-patriotic idea of people refusing to be robbed, and the necessity of the rifle-diet. That will be their “call.”

The genuine “call” of the genuine nations will be heard only then; but that call will not be for silver or any other of the metals prized to-day; it will be for an article of far more priceless value—Labor Time; that and none other will then be the unit of value and the counter of exchange.

In justice to the Hon. Bourke Cockran, it should be admitted that he probably believes what he says; he is only a

*Bourke Cockran, Economist*

parrot repeating the lessons of our American section of the present “nations of the world”; what does that Tammany brave know about mono or bimetallism or any other scientific-economic question? These terms are as unmeaning on his lips as Greek words would be on the lips of a Choctaw Indian. He, being an ignorant fellow, must be credited at least with sincerity—though it be stupid sincerity. And this is a quality which his stuffers and present whoopers-up—the bond-holding creditor class generally—are wholly devoid of. They know better, and exactly, what the attitude will be of our present “nations of the world.”

*The People*, Vol. II, No. 42. Sunday, January 15, 1893

[Transcribed by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the  
Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded August 2002]