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The War To Free Cuba

Remarks of
Hon James R. Mann

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THE WAR TO FREE CUBA.

—
"Patriotism is again supreme in our hearts."
—

REMARKS

OF

HON. JAMES R. MANN,

OF ILLINOIS,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

MARCH 8 AND APRIL 28, 1898.

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WASHINGTON.
1898.

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REMARKS
OF
HON. JAMES R. MANN.

March 8, 1898.

§50,000,000 DEFENSE APPROPRIATION.

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, it would be a great pleasure to my heart if I could subscribe to the idea suggested by the chairman of the committee that this is a measure of peace. I have been consistently in favor of this country preserving peace, if peace could be preserved: but I recognize in this measure now that it means war. Believing that, still, when the Administration, which has the confidence of the people, asks for money supplies, though it may mean war, I say, heartily, that the people are in favor of the appropriation. War is not only coming, Mr. Speaker, but war now exists between the two countries. Not open war, not declared war, as we know, but the real, the insidious first entrance upon war has already been made. And this country, upon the suggestion of the Administration, is now justified in spending its money as necessary, its blood, as may be called upon, for the purpose not of commencing war, but for the purpose, in war, of upholding the honor and the dignity of the country, and of bringing about peace as soon as possible. [Applause.]

* * * * *

April 28, 1898.

WAR REVENUE BILL.

Mr. HOPKINS. Mr. Chairman, I yield now to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. MANN].

Mr. MANN. Mr. Chairman, the spirit of commercialism has been subordinated to the spirit of humanity. Patriotism is again supreme in our hearts. Greed and the love of gold have yielded to the touch of sympathetic nature. No nobler offering to humanity, no greater sacrifice of self-interest, no loftier example of human kinship has ever been made. A mighty nation, wholly devoted to the arts of peace, absorbed in trade and gain, perme-

ated with the desire for wealth and comforts, without a powerful army and with only a moderate navy, goes to war with a determined, cruel, and revengeful people because it dares to fight for the right and is determined to stop forever the despotic and cold-blooded cruelty to and robbery of the Island of Cuba by the nation of Spain.

To our shame be it said that there are still those in our country who are unmoved by the piteous pleadings of the starving thousands in Cuba and whose eyes do not moisten or hearts swell when they read of the starving babes endeavoring vainly to draw sustenance from the breasts of dead and starved mothers.

Some of these have hypocritically preached tenderness and honor for years, and now their fear of suffering or their greed for gain overcomes all other emotions. But they are few in number. They do not count in this contest. They are the Judases of our nation's real honor.

A short time ago we engaged in a political contest in our land which many of us believed vitally involved the sacred honor of our country. The lesson of that campaign would have been lost if it had not taught our citizens that the honor of a country is above gain, above gold and silver, above ideas of currency or tariff, and that the honor of our country can only be sustained and upheld by the inner consciousness that we have done that which we believe to be right and sacred, whether it means war or peace; whether it means the beating of the sword into the plowshare or the plowshare into the sword. [Applause.]

We do not fight for a fancied slight; we do not fight for a commercial wrong; we do not fight for an increase of territory; we do not fight because our commercial spirit has been outraged; we do not fight because our land has been invaded; we fight because it has become necessary to fight if we would uphold our manhood; because the leader of nations on our continent can not stand idly by while Spain is, with cold blood and cruelty, slaughtering and starving our next-door neighbors to death; because unless we are willing to fight we must abandon our vaunted pretensions of enlightened humanity and civilization; because we can not "pass by on the other side."

And then we fight for honor. On the 25th of January last the

U. S. warship *Maine*, on a peaceful errand, arrived in the harbor of Havana, after notice being given to the Spanish authorities at that place, and was taken to Buoy No. 4 by the regular Spanish Government pilot. In the opinion of the board of inquiry the effect upon the *Maine* caused by the explosion on February 15 "could have been produced only by the explosion of a mine situated under the bottom of the ship."

That court found that the loss of the *Maine* was not in any respect due to fault or negligence on the part of any of the officers or members of the crew, and that it was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, and that the inquiry court was unable to obtain evidence fixing responsibility for the destruction of the *Maine* upon any "person or persons." The *Maine* was moored at a place selected by the Spanish pilot; blown up by a submarine mine located under the ship. No person could have located the mine where it was except Spanish officials, and no one could have controlled the shore connection of the mine except Spanish officers.

The child who can add one to one and make two can tell what authority caused the destruction of the *Maine*. The act has not been disavowed by Spain; no Spanish official has been investigated, arrested, or punished. The people of America know who destroyed the *Maine*. The American Government and the Spanish Government know who destroyed the *Maine*.

It has been said that war was terrible; that war is hell. Let it be so! War was terrible when the English Parliament levied a small tax upon tea imported to this land, but our forefathers fought for freedom. They were not afraid of war, nor are their descendants.

War was terrible in 1812, but the American people, few in number and small in wealth, were not then afraid of the mighty power of Great Britain.

War was terrible in 1845, but our people were not afraid to help the liberty-loving Texans, and my father was among those who then fought for his country and for freedom to another state on this continent.

War was terrible, war was hell, in 1861, but it did not frighten either those who wore the blue or the gray in behalf of what they believed to be right and freedom.

Has war grown so terrible that we now are afraid of it? Shall we muffle our ears and blind our eyes and pluck out our hearts to the piteous moanings and pleadings of the starving thousands in Cuba because we are afraid to spill our blood? Thank God, the American people have red blood instead of ice water running in their veins!

I was for peace. I wanted this country to attend to her own affairs. I did not think that we ought to interfere between Spain and her rebellious subjects. I was not in favor of the Cuban plank in the national Republican platform when it was adopted. I did not then know the facts. No one now disputes the facts. The facts being admitted, the conclusion is inevitable. There is but one thing for us to do. We should free the Island of Cuba from Spanish interference or control. We should return the first deadly blow of war given us when the Spanish officials, by deliberate, preconceived intention, destroyed our war vessel and murdered our sailors. Whether war be terrible or whether war be hell or not, no people or nation is worth surviving or is entitled to the blessings of freedom who will not fight under such circumstances. We would all hail honorable peace, but there can be no honor coupled with peace now.

Have we grown so rich, so enervated, so attached to the unholy dollar, that we are afraid to fight for freedom? We freely tendered our sympathies to the Armenians suffering from Turkish cruelty. Shall we prove ourselves cowards by refusing to tender our sympathies, coupled with our might, to the Cubans?

No, Mr. Chairman, we have taken our stand. We insist that no nation on this continent shall have the liberty to torture and starve her subjects deliberately and coldly to death, and that position we are willing to defend with our fortunes and our lives.

Washington led an army and a people through a war against foreign oppression and to obtain their independence. Lincoln led the North through a war to preserve the integrity of our nation and the liberties and rights of our people. Lee led the people of the South through a war when they believed that they battled for the freedom of their firesides and the rights of their States. But the noblest and most inspiring example of history is President McKinley, holding aloft the Stars and Stripes over an undi-

vided North and South, leading the American people and the modern civilization to the rescue and relief of suffering and tortured and pleading humanity, for the sake of humanity, and to satisfy the longings of the enlarged soul. [Applause.]

Mr. Chairman, we can not carry on this war without money. It requires cash in hand. There must be no doubt in the start of the power of the Government to incur the necessary obligations and to pay all of its bills promptly. The Republican party proposes, as set forth in the bill now before the House, to raise the money by the means usually adopted in times of war. There is nothing new in the scheme proposed by the Republicans. No new experiment is to be made. On the other hand, the proposition submitted by the Democratic members of the committee is one of visionary schemes and theoretical speculations. It involves the change of the policy of our Government. It introduces at once the most bitter partisan politics; and if carried into effect by the adoption of it as a law, it strikes a deadly blow at the honor of our country and the preservation of its financial credit.

It is the duty of the Republican party at this time, while it is endeavoring to obtain freedom for a foreign people, to preserve unquestioned the integrity and honor of the credit of our country and to keep untarnished and uninjured the solid financial policy voted for by the American people less than two years ago.

The Republican party, which has never faltered in its duty, which has never failed in its obligations to the people, will not betray our country now.

A free flag will soon float over the Island of Cuba, and the honor and financial integrity of the United States will at the same time be absolutely maintained.

May God bless our President, our country, and our cause. [Applause.]

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