

Papers of the Gold Standard Defence Association, lobbying organisation

This document describes a collection of records held by NatWest Group Archives, including details of their background; publications (if any) relating to them; summary of the contents of the collection; and information (where known) about related records held in other archives.

collection reference GM/180/

background history

During the French Wars (1793-1815) the Government suspended the legal obligation on banks to pay gold on demand in exchange for their notes, but after the war monetary inflation was seen as a result of the inconvertibility of notes and controversy ensued. As a result the Government passed legislation from 1816 ensuring a return to the gold standard. This was later confirmed by the Bank Charter Act of 1844 which forced the Bank of England to maintain gold reserves against all notes beyond a permitted issue.

In 1892 the gold standard-based monometallic system was called into question by the USA which summoned an international monetary conference in Brussels to discuss proposals for a bimetallic system. This caused controversy in banking and political circles and a flurry of lobbying and pamphleteering, as two opposing campaigning associations were set up.

The Gold Standard Defence Association was formed in April 1895 on the initiative of [Bertram Wodehouse Currie](#), partner in the London bank [Glyn, Mills, Currie & Co](#), to support the existing monetary system against proposals for bimetallism. Two of his colleagues at the bank, [Charles Henry Mills](#) and [Alfred Spalding Harvey](#), were also active in the Association's foundation and leadership. Members included individual clearing bankers, merchant bankers and directors of the Bank of England.

Bertram Wodehouse Currie died in 1896 and was succeeded as chairman of the Association by [John Lubbock, 1st Baron Avery](#).

The Association pursued its objectives by lobbying ministers and Parliament, publishing leaflets, writing letters to the press, giving addresses around the country and countering the opposing Bimetallic League. It was disbanded in April 1901 due to a collapse of the agitation in favour of bimetallism.

our archive holdings

- lists of subscribers 1895-1900
- membership receipt books 1898-1900
- committee minutes 1895-1901
- parliamentary committee minutes 1895-8
- out letterbooks 1895-1901
- correspondence 1895-1901
- trial balance sheets 1896-1901
- ledgers 1895-1901
- journal 1895-1901
- cash book 1895-1901
- petty cash book 1895-1901
- petty receipts 1895-1900
- paid bills 1895-1901
- stamp account books 1895-1901
- cheque books 1895-1901

- paying-in books 1895-9
- bank passbook 1895-7
- circulars guardbook 1895-1901
- leaflets 1898