

Treaty Prevented Possible Trouble Over Anglo-Japanese Agreement

(By K. Walker, in Houston, Texas, Chronicle.)

London, Jan. 8.—William Jennings Bryan is the hero of the inside story of momentous diplomatic communications carried on during these weeks between Britain, Japan and America. These negotiations, according to the most reliable authority, have at times been critical, something of which has been indicated by current reports in the press, but only as an echo of the facts about which I have received exclusive information.

Trouble arose directly when the British foreign office began to examine the Anglo-Japanese treaty in the light of changed international conditions brought about by the elimination of Germany as a world power. In normal circumstances there would have been no doubt whatever about the renewal of the treaty. Even the disappearance of Germany did not affect the main purpose for which Great Britain originally entered into the offensive and defensive agreement with Japan.

British interests to be protected in the Orient had never seriously been threatened by Germany. But the new and important factors in world conditions, changing the whole strategical aspect of the Anglo-Japanese treaty, were the rise of the United States as a great military and naval power and the relations so modified between America and Japan.

BRITISH-AMERICAN PEACE DESIRED

Friendship, or at least an assured state of peace, with the United States is one of those fundamental things in British policy which govern that policy without being set down in writing, just as the British constitution is subject entirely to the unwritten laws of its being.

In the new circumstances it was obvious that an offensive and defensive alliance with Japan could no longer be made the corner stone of British policy in the east, since the potential antagonism between Japan and the United States might at any time threaten such an unqualified agreement. So the treaty was carefully examined with a view to qualifying its bearing upon Anglo-American relations. A section of one clause was found to provide an opportunity for a characteristic British compromise.

The provision was that the offensive clause—requiring either of the contracting parties to join with the other in an attack upon any third power—should not apply in the case of a third power with whom the other contracting party had a general arbitration agreement.

REFUSED TO RENEW TREATY

The British foreign office thereupon intimated to the Japanese government that the treaty would be renewed, at the same time letting the Mikado's ministers know that Great Britain was going to negotiate a general arbitration agreement with the United States. This information was also conveyed to Washington and its communication accounted for more optimistic statements regarding Japanese affairs at that time from the American state department.

The next step, however, was that the Japanese foreign minister informed the British foreign minister that if Britain were going to make a general arbitration agreement with the United States, so cancelling the treaty as regarded America, there could be no reason for renewing the treaty in the eyes of the Mikado's government. This was when a more serious view of the Japanese situation was indicated. The impression here in London was that Japan might take some hasty action against the United States if Great Britain denounced the Anglo-Japanese treaty without further consideration because Japan's relative naval strength was at that time greater than it will be 12 months later.

PLANNED GREAT NAVAL PROGRAM

Anyhow the British foreign office decided not to do so, but to take the chance of offending the United States by withdrawing from the proposed negotiations for a general arbitration agreement. Apparently it did give some offense and Washington took the situation very seriously. Daniels was put up to emphasize American naval intentions. The British government was told unofficially that if necessary the United States was prepared to enter a naval construction race with England and Japan combined and to out-build their combined navies.

The British statesmen took a serious view of

this situation as every British statesmen must whenever the safety of the ways of communications is in question.

At this point the situation seemed as bad as it could be. The fatalistic feeling which is propagated by those who repeat, often quite idly, that America and Japan will have to try their strength some day, was in the ascendant here. The dubious position of Great Britain and the dominions in the eventuality of a Japanese-American war was deeply pondered. Quite apart from the fundamental principle of peace with the United States, British sentiment, and still more the sentiment of the dominions, could not support a policy which might lead to Great Britain being in honor bound to attack the United States. It looked like a real dilemma.

BRYAN SAVED THE DAY

Then somebody in the archives of the British foreign office woke up. And this is where William Jennings Bryan comes on the scene. For that British foreign office official had come out of his trance with a copy of a certain treaty entered into between Great Britain and the United States in 1914 at the personal insistence of Bryan.

The treaty was signed by Bryan and Viscount, then Sir Edward Grey. The importance of the treaty lay in a single sentence in which the two contracting parties agree that, "all questions, including questions of national honor," shall be referred to an international commission, and that neither the United States nor Great Britain should make any war-like preparations directed against each other during the six months after such questions had been referred to the commission. In effect the treaty was, and is, a general arbitration agreement.

CAN RENEW TREATY

The present situation therefore is that Great Britain can renew the Anglo-Japanese agreement without any fear of being drawn headlong into a Japanese-American dispute. Should such a dispute come to a head, the diplomatic process will be as follows:

Japan will call upon Great Britain to join her in war against the United States, according to the Anglo-Japanese treaty. Great Britain will reply that under the Bryan treaty the question, being one of national honor, can and must be referred to the international commission provided by the Bryan treaty; that meanwhile, during six months, Great Britain can make no move of any kind against the United States; and that her subsequent action must depend entirely upon the decision of the international commission—on which commission, it may be well to note, Japan has no representation.

I am informed that no official communication to this effect has passed between the governments concerned but that the position of Great Britain has been made clear both to the Japanese government and to the American state department. So far as Great Britain is concerned the incident is closed. It is suggested here that full knowledge of the situation will have a beneficial effect upon Japan's attitude toward America in matters in dispute between Japan and United States.

DAWES REFLECTS THE PUBLIC MIND

Charles G. Dawes, who, if reports have been correct, was seriously considered as a member of Harding's cabinet, has either read himself "out" or "in" the cabinet. It depends upon the viewpoint. If Harding wants a perfectly fearless advisor, he will select Dawes. If he wants men who will only damn the preceding administration he will not tender a place to Dawes.

Called as a witness by the congressional committee investigating charges of extravagance in connection with the world war, Dawes vehemently denounced those who would find fault with General Pershing and officials of the administration who dealt with the big and immediate problems following the armistice. He told the committee: "Don't forget that it was an American war, not a Republican or a Democratic war, and the record of the glorious work of our army will live hundreds of years after your committee is dead and gone and forgotten."

It is presumed that if the war had been conducted by a Republican administration a Democratic congress would have been just as vigorous in trying to unearth "scandals" as the Re-

publican congress is doing now. It's the politics in our make-up. And it is that very thing that Dawes is striking at. He unquestionably voices the mind of many people by denouncing the fault-finding course of the congressmen.

Dawes, mind you, is a big man. He was the most forceful man, with the exception of Mark Hanna, in securing the nomination of McKinley. He was McKinley's comptroller of currency. He was chairman of the general purchasing board during the world war and was a staff commander in the A. E. F. He is president of the Central Trust Company of Illinois.

If Dawes has been able to stop muck-raking by our congress he will have rendered a distinct service.—Miami, Fla., Herald.

HARDING PICKS BIBLE TEXT TO TAKE OATH OF OFFICE

(By Robert T. Small, in Washington Star.)

Marion, January 15.—President-elect Warren G. Harding has chosen the biblical text upon which he will take the oath of office as President of the United States. He will ask that the same Bible which George Washington used be opened at Micah, sixth chapter and eighth verse, which reads:

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."

Senator Harding's thoughts have been much upon the Bible of late. For the past two weeks he has been taking numerous degrees in Masonry. First of all, he was elevated to the thirty-second degree in the Scottish Rite. Then he was made a Shriner. More recently, and at home here, in Marion, he has been taking the Royal Arch degrees. So he has been surrounded by a particularly solemn religious atmosphere.

The President-elect commented upon this last night and pledged his belief in the efficacy of prayer. He believes that prayer will help him with the problems that are before him in the white house.

Senator Harding said that the affairs of this nation have been adrift for a long while, but as he approaches his task faithfully that God will make him equal to the responsibility.

"During the past ten days," he said, "I have been taken far back into the story of creation and I have found it adding to my sense of religious devotion. Prayer grips the heart and adds to one's confidence."

"I believe in prayer. I believe in prayer in the closet, for there one faces God alone. Many times the outspoken prayer is only for people's ears. I can understand how those prophets of old in their anxieties, problems, perturbations and perplexities found courage and strength when they gave their hearts to the great Omnipotent in prayer."

"How many things there are in Scripture that we in our worldliness never discover!

"After all, men are much alike. God made us all in the same image and there is no difference in us except as we have developed, or when the weight of responsibility is shouldered upon us. Then God makes men equal to that responsibility. It is the touch of responsibility that makes human beings awake."

"The government of this republic has been adrift," Senator Harding continued, "and the inevitable result has followed. But I am not afraid, for I know through courtesy, confidence and close adherence to justice, one will have at his call the best minds and intellects in this great republic, and with their truth, advice and direction, we cannot go wrong."

So far as Marion is concerned, the conference of "best minds" virtually came to an end today. A few "best minds" are expected early next week, but Senator Harding during the greater part of the time he remains here will be settling up many of his personal and business affairs.

By the end of next week he should be under the sunny skies of Florida. The skies out here have been leaden for a week or more, with snow flurries every now and then. The weather has helped to depress the senator, and he will be glad to throw off all cares and worries for a time and get the breath of the southern pines and palms in his lungs.

When he leaves Marion the senator does not expect to return here except possibly one occasion during the four years he is in the white house. He has promised to run back in May to attend a Masonic festival. To some of his fellow masons of the local chapter, he said: "I trust that in the four years that are to come I shall be worthy of the honors you have conferred on me, and that I will come back and look you in the face and be able to say: 'I have kept the faith.'"