

## Subsidy, Bonus, Labor, and the International Situation

(By W. J. BRYAN.)

The proposed ship subsidy threatened a division in the Republican party almost as wide as the unprecedented division over the Revenue bill and the split over the Tariff bill, but the controversy became so heated that the consideration of it was postponed until after the election. "The 'Job Session' is going to be quite busy with deferred issues. Some day the American people will wake up to the menace of a session held AFTER the election. Whenever a question arises which threatens to disturb party harmony or to arouse an emphatic protest from the people, it is chloroformed during the campaign and left over as unfinished business to be attended to when retiring members can vote wrong without danger to their political futures. Each new Congress ought to convene soon after the election, not later than January, and the second session should, by law, adjourn before the following election. This would not prevent the calling of an extra session in case of an emergency, but it would prevent the passage of undesirable laws by discarded legislators.

But, pardon the digression—the Subsidy Bill has all the demerits of a protective tariff without the excuses that are depended upon to justify high tariff rates. The infant industries which have been nursing at the national breast for generations cry out against any attempt to separate them from the nourishment given them in the form of a protective tariff. The friends of ship subsidy cannot claim that their infant was brought into existence by favoritism in the form of law; they are asking for the creation of a new industrial liability—the establishment of a new dependent that would have no hope of ever reaching independence.

The people have become accustomed to the pleading voice of the industries that claim to be dependent upon high tariff rates,—industries whose owners go to summer resorts while the victims of the tariff are sweating in the sun—but so many Republicans have been disillusioned in regard to the blessings of protection, that they refuse to invite new demands upon the treasury. In the case of the ship subsidy, the private interests have been so open and above board in their efforts to kill off government competition that even the most blind can see the danger ahead. If the government desires to establish trades routes whch private capital will not establish without subsidy, the remedy is for the government to own and operate its own ships. If it most operate them at a loss, the loss would be no greater than the subsidy. The people can better afford to run ships at a loss and run them as the government wants them run than to pay private corporations to run them at a loss. The government can stop its own ships whenever it decides it wise to do so; it cannot so easily stop private ships after they have secured a "vested interest" in the government's bounty.

The soldiers' bonus seems likely to influence as many votes as any other single issue—not that all the voters favor the bonus, but because those who are offended by the President's veto are more apt to express their criticism by their votes than are those who approve. The opposition to the soldiers' bonus has been led by big business and "big business" is Republican anyhow. The soldiers, on the other hand, are not wedded to any party, and the injustice which has been done them by the President's veto is apt to drive many of them away from Republican candidates.

If the Republican administration had been economical in other directions, it might have made a successful appeal to the soldiers to be patient, but the soldiers are the only ones for whom there seems to be no money. The Republican leaders were very prompt in responding to the demands of the profiteers who asked that the excess profit tax be repealed. The four hundred fifty millions a year (the estimated relief given to the profiteers) would have gone a considerable distance towards satisfying the needs of the soldiers. The Republican leaders tried to relieve, to the extent of ninety millions of taxes a year, the persons who pay big incomes. That would have helped some towards paying the soldiers.

The Republican leaders have dealt generously also with the railroads, but the soldier has to wait.

As to the justice of the bonus, there would seem to be little doubt. The soldiers were called from home and, under the selective draft, were compelled to give up any work however lucrative and any opportunities however promising in order to serve the government at a very nominal salary. Most of the four millions of men called to the colors sent their money home for the support of persons dependent upon them. During the war prices rose to such an extent that the money sent home by the soldiers lost a considerable portion of its purchasing power. Then, too, those who stayed at home received an increase in wages and many of them made fortunes. More millionaires were created in the United States during the period of the war—from the breaking out of hostilities in Europe to the signing of the armistice—than were made in all the previous history of our country. Instead of compelling those who made money out of the war to pay the boys who took risks while these fabulous fortunes were being made, we find that the political influence of the newly rich is greater than the influence of the boys who took the risks and made the sacrifices. A great many of the young men reared in Republican families will learn from their experience with the Bonus bill how thoroughly committed the Republican leaders are to property rights as distinguished from human rights. In 1859 Abraham Lincoln, in declining an invitation to a Jeffersonian banquet in Boston, said that the Republican party believed in the man and the dollar, but that, in case conflict occurred between the two, it believed in the MAN BEFORE THE DOLLAR. The soldiers who furnished the man power in the war will not be slow to notice the change that has come in Republican leadership since the days of Lincoln. Today the Republican leaders believe in both the dollar and the man, but in case of conflict, they believe in the DOLLAR BEFORE THE MAN.

The same alignment is found on the labor question. Republican leaders are on the side of capital as against labor, and are responsible for the serious situation in the industrial world today. Never before since our nation was born has the industrial situation been less satisfactory than today. More than ever before the individual members of the two groups known as the "Capitallistic Group" and the "Labor Group" are class conscious—that is, they are thinking in terms of class rather than the terms of the whole country. The individual members of these classes look forward with a vague dread to what they regard as an inevitable conflict.

The struggle between labor and capital has been brought down to a brute basis, with the spirit of brotherhood exercising less and less influence. The church has a duty to perform in reconciling these two groups. The church believes in God and it believes that the same God who made the employer made the employee. The church believes in Christ and it believes that the same Christ who died for the employer died for the employee; the church believes in the coming of an universal brotherhood and it believes that that brotherhood, when it comes, must include both those who pay wages and those who work for wages. It is the duty of the church to bring the rich and the poor into sympathetic fellowship. There is only one Heaven; if the rich and the poor must live there together after death, they ought to become acquainted in this world.

The Republican leaders stand for policies that tend to divide society into classes—to separate the people into the privileged classes and the unorganized masses. The Republican leaders are in sympathy with the force of the big corporations to break up the labor organizations, and it is this sympathy with big employers that has prolonged the strike. Heads of railroads and other big corporations meet in secret and reach conclusions whch are to be supported by united action, and then they expect the government to furnish the army to carry out these private conclusions. It is the expectation that they will be backed by governmental force that make these heads of corporations ignore the wishes of employees and the interests of the people. The mine owners and the railway heads

are united in an effort to reduce the individual employee to helplessness.

It is not necessary to defend all that organized labor does in order to believe in the necessity for organization. Laboring men are human and are as likely to error as other humans. But those who belong to organized labor are no more likely to make mistakes than those who belong to organized capital; they are under more restraint than the capitalists because their needs compel them to accept the best terms that they can get. They cannot stand a suspension of business as long as the capitalists can. If individual laborers were dealing with individual employers, the personal relationship between them would be a protection against injustice, but when one employer controls the labor of hundreds of thousands of men and acts through so many subordinates that he does not come into personal contact with the employee, the relationship cannot be as human as it used to be. Organization among capitalists has multiplied their power; but for organization among the laboring men the wage earner would be absolutely at the mercy of the employer and would in time be reduced to a position of involuntary servitude.

In this country, the laboring man is a citizen and shares in the shaping of the destiny of the nation. All interested in progress and popular government must, therefore, be interested in everything that materially affects the wage earner's standard of living, and the conditions that surround him. The great mass of the people are directly interested on either side of an industrial contest; they now suffer without any voice in the settlement of the disputes that bring suffering upon them. Take for instance, the coal strike. Not more than 5 per cent of our population was pecuniarily interested on either side. In other words, 95 per cent suffered without any fault of their own, while the employers and the employees fought out their differences. Coal has risen in price. Why has not some plan been devised for the settlement of disputes before resort to strike or lockout? We have treaties with thirty nations embodying the principle of INVESTIGATION BEFORE WAR. If the hand of war can be stayed between nations until the matter in dispute can be investigated, why is it not possible to stay the strike and the lockout until the public can be informed as to the merits of the dispute and bring public opinion to bear upon the controversy?

In the present campaign the farmers and the laborers have a very real grievance against the Republican leaders for failure to protect the masses. The government's right to protect the public in any and every emergency must be admitted. Otherwise, the government fails of its purpose. No individual whether he be a natural man or a corporate man can defy the government or oppress the people without restraint. Whenever the employers and the employees cannot agree and the public welfare is at stake, the government ought to be authorized to take over the roads and run them until the normal conditions are restored. So, in the matter of coal mines. Those who control the necessities of life must so control them as to meet the public requirements.

The international situation is so changeable that no one can tell what a day may bring forth, but there are certain general principles that can be understood and acted upon. First—responsibility comes with power and opportunity. Our nation has the confidence of the world in its disinterestedness as no other nation has and it has a moral prestige which no other nation has ever approached. Our advice is needed for the settlement of international disputes—we are the only nation that can speak peace to the world. This advice ought to be given whenever asked, but given with a reservation of independence on our own part. We cannot afford to allow any other nation to decide the question of war for us. Congress alone has the power to declare war and that power cannot be surrendered into the keeping of any other nation or group of nations; but, reserving the right to decide when, for what and under what circumstances we shall use our army and navy, our wisdom and influence ought to be exerted whenever desired for the adjustment of disputes that might lead to war.

Our President has no right to take us into war either to aid other nations or to aid individuals or groups. Europe has interests entirely different from ours—commercial interests that are protected by armies and navies. We may use our moral influence to keep the Suez Canal open and to make the Bosphorus neutral, but we cannot assist any other nation in enforcing this policy.

And so with the protection of those who suffer from the barbarity of Turkey. We can use our