

THE ILLINOIS CONTEST AT ST. LOUIS

In the light of Mr. Bryan's suggestion that Roger C. Sullivan of Illinois retire from the democratic national committee, one incident occurring at the democratic national convention of 1904 may be referred to. It will be remembered that in that convention, Mr. Bryan delivered a speech against seating the Hopkins-Sullivan delegates. Mr. Bryan's speech was delivered in support of the minority report of the credentials committee. Mr. Bryan was defeated and the Hopkins-Sullivan delegation was seated by a vote of 647 to 299.

Extracts from Mr. Bryan's address in the Illinois contest follow:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Convention: I came to this convention in the hope that we would be able to agree on a platform and on candidates, and have nothing to stir up feeling or arouse contention. (Applause.) I still hope that we shall be able to agree upon a platform that will represent the sentiments of all of us, so that we can present it to the country as the platform of a united party. (Applause.) I will go further than that. I still hope that we shall be able to present to the country a ticket behind which we can stand as a united party. (Applause.) And, I regret that I am compelled to come in at this time and present a subject upon which your votes will be asked. But, if there is one democratic principle more fundamental than another it is that the majority has a right to rule. (Applause.) If you destroy the binding force of that principle, there is nothing that can hold a party together. (Applause.) It is because I want the democratic party to stand on the Jeffersonian principle of majority rule that I present the minority report in this case. (Applause.)

In the state of Illinois the majority was not allowed to rule. (Applause.) That convention was dominated by a clique of men who deliberately, purposely, boldly trampled upon the rights of the democrats of Illinois. (Applause.) The evidence shows that no band of train robbers ever planned a raid upon a train more deliberately or with less conscience than they did. (Applause.) And the men who planned it and who carried it out, have the audacity, the impudence, and the insolence to say that, because they certified that what they did was regular, you can not go behind their certificate. (Applause.) If that is good law in a democratic convention, it ought to be good doctrine in a court; and if it is good doctrine in court, then the only thing train robbers will have to do in the future is to make a report of their transactions, and certify over their own signatures that it was a voluntary collection taken up for religious purposes, and deny the right of the robbed to go behind the returns. (Applause.)

They tell you that the law of the party in Illinois permits the state committee to present the chairman, and they deny the right of the convention to override the wish of the committee. Such a rule would be undemocratic if in force for such a doctrine would permit a past committee to fasten itself upon a new convention and dominate a new set of delegates. (Applause.)

But, my friends, that is not the law, for two years ago John P. Hopkins, the same chairman of the same committee, presented the recommendation of the committee and asked a vote upon it and submitted the committee's recommendation to the convention. Two years ago he recognized the right of the democrats in the state convention to elect their temporary chairman. This time he did not dare to do it, for if he had done it he would have been repudiated by the convention there assembled. (Applause.) The minority presented a minority report, or wanted to, but the chairman of the committee, Mr. Hopkins, brought Mr. Quinn up to the convention platform, and handing him the gavel said that he was the chairman of the convention, and Mr. Quinn, seizing the gavel, began his rule of unfairness, tyranny and despotism. (Applause.)

Then they had a sub-committee of the state committee put on the temporary roll the delegates whom they wanted, but when the credentials committee brought in a minority report they refused to consider it and refused to allow a vote upon it. And yet, in spite of the fact that that convention was not allowed to act upon the credentials of its own members, was not allowed to decide upon its own delegates—in spite of all that, the committee did not unseat enough, for more than half of the men actually seated by the Hopkins committee have signed petitions asking that the contestees be sent home and that democrats who represent the people of that state be

substituted for them in this convention. (Applause.)

In the hearing before the committee it was asked: "Why did they not present a minority report from the committee appointed to select delegates at large?" There was a contest in that committee; there was opposition to Hopkins and Cable; but why should they expect a minority report to be voted upon? Why should they expect it, when the chairman had already held that a minority report was only advisory and could be put into the waste basket, and need not be acted upon? They are estopped to ask why a minority report was not filed.

They made no attempt, they declared no purpose to substitute delegates for the delegates selected by the various districts. We admit in the report that if they had legally substituted other men for the men selected by the districts, they might have done so, but it must be the act of the convention. The convention never attempted it; the convention was not asked to do it; and the evidence shows that the resolution which is a part of the record and upon which they rely was never introduced and was never passed, but that it is a fraud pure and simple, presented here in defense of their claim. (Applause.)

Now, my friends, what is the duty of this democratic convention? These democrats of Illinois are not like the democrats of the south. Down south the democrats have all the local offices, and they can reward their workers for their loyalty to the party. Up in Illinois there is a strong republican majority and the democrats of Illinois, in many parts of the state, at least, are struggling against overwhelming odds; they are actuated by love of principle, not by hope of office.

But what will you tell those men? Will you endorse the action of that convention? Will you approve the methods employed? If they had a majority of the convention, why did they not permit roll calls? Would they deny the opposition that right if they had had the votes to control by fair means? Men do not do wrong, as a rule, unless they think it is necessary to do so to carry out some object, and the only ground upon which you can decide that these men did wrong unnecessarily is to decide that they were so perverted in conscience that they did wrong from choice rather than from necessity. (Applause.) Their whole conduct shows that their purpose was conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity and carried out to the destruction of democratic hopes in that state.

Give the democrats of Illinois something to hope for. Do not tell them that when they go to a democratic convention they must go armed as to war, prepared to fight their way up to the chairman of the convention. Let the republican party stand as the representative of physical force, if it will; our party stands for government by the consent of the governed. (Applause.)

What could they do? They could either resort to force and risk the killing that would result, or, it is said, they could bolt. Yes, three-fourths of the convention could have walked out and left one-fourth in charge as the regular convention. They hoped for roll calls. They knew that whenever they could get a roll call they could assert their rights. They had only this one roll call, and when the convention was over these men had to submit to the disfranchisement of a majority of the democratic voters of Illinois, or they had to bring their protest to this convention.

So this petition was signed, and these men, eight hundred and seventy-two, ask this convention to seat the men who have the right to seats from the districts as shown by the evidence. They do not ask you to seat any one man. They do not ask you to seat any set of men. They do not ask you to seat Hearst men, or Parker men, or anybody's men. They ask you to seat the choice of the democrats, no matter for whom they may be. (Applause.)

That convention was so openly, so notoriously a gag-ruled and gang-run convention that two of the men who had been out and had made a canvass in the state for governor, refused to be candidates before that convention. I honor Judge Prentiss of Chicago and Mayor Crolius of Joliet, (applause) who refused to be candidates before that convention, and if Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Cable had any respect for the right of a majority to rule, they would be ashamed to be here, the representatives of a minority of that convention. (Applause.) But, my friends, if they have not learned to be ashamed to misrepresent a great state, you ought to teach them that they can not

do it with the approval of the democratic party of the United States. (Applause.)

Now their sin rests upon them; you do not bear it. But if you decide to seat these men, these delegates from the districts, against the evidence presented in behalf of the contestants from the districts; if you decide to seat these two national delegates, in spite of the protests of eight hundred and seventy-one members, then you endorse their conduct; you take from the shoulders of Hopkins and Quinn and Cable the odium that they ought to bear, and put it upon the democratic party of the nation. (Applause.)

You have not this condition in other states today, but let this convention endorse this conduct, and the next national convention will see more than one state here with delegates chosen as the result of gavel rule. And it is because this question transcends in importance the interest of any state or candidate or any faction that I am here to present the minority report and to ask you to do to the democrats of Illinois that justice which this gang deliberately and insolently denied them. (Applause.)

Mr. Menzies of Indiana and Mr. Quinn of Illinois spoke for contestees, after which Mr. Bryan again spoke as follows:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: The first speaker (Mr. Menzies) said that I had not heard the evidence. I stayed in the sub-committee of the national committee and heard evidence until nearly 3 o'clock in the morning (applause), and I heard more evidence than the gentleman who talked to you and who questioned my knowledge of this case. (Applause.) More than that, I have examined affidavits; I have examined petitions; I have examined protests and I know ten times as much about the facts of this case as the gentleman who denied my right to speak in this case. (Applause.)

The gentleman desires to make use of the report of the national committee. The national committee referred this case to the credentials committee on the ground that the national committee did not have time or authority to investigate the merits, and in doing so, by unanimous vote said: "In some congressional districts there was evidence to show that questionable methods prevailed; in some it appears that delegates selected by district caucuses were replaced by persons who had not been selected by the delegates from the districts and in some instances it was at least doubtful whether the substitutions were properly made." That was the unanimous report of your national committee after listening nine hours to the testimony. (Applause.)

And now this committee considers the case two hours, does not take any evidence, but only hears arguments, and then reports that there was no fraud and that you ought to seat these contestees.

Mr. Quinn, the chairman of the Illinois convention, says that he was unanimously re-elected five hours after he began his gavel rule. Yes, my friends, everything done in that convention was unanimous. (Applause.) It was unanimous. If you do not believe it, read the sworn testimony of the highwaymen who raided the convention. The gentleman says that he is not a man who bolts or who waits until after the convention to decide, but he is the man who with gavel rule tries to force upon the loyal democrats of his state two men who supported Palmer and Buckner in 1896. (Applause.)

These two men who seek seats in this convention against the protests of eight hundred and seventy-two delegates were the men who kept the path hot between Palmer and Buckner headquarters and republican headquarters when the hundreds of thousands of democrats of Illinois were marching up to support the ticket. (Applause.)

Mr. Quinn asks: "Where does the protest against John P. Hopkins come from" and he wanted me to answer it. I will answer it. It comes from eight hundred and seventy-two better democrats than John P. Hopkins ever was. (Applause.) I am willing that the men who left us shall come back and share with the party in shaping its destiny; but God forbid that the loyal democrats of Illinois shall by force and intimidation be made to march beneath the soiled banner of these men. (Applause.)

The Sioux City Journal says the reporter who guessed that Russell Sage would leave all his money to charity made the poorest guess on record. The Journal is wrong. Uncle Russell left all his money to his wife, and we are reliably informed that "charity begins at home."