

The Passing of Bryan

MR. BRYAN'S ELIMINATION

It is manifestly unfair to Colonel Bryan to declare that he has been eliminated by the democrats of Nebraska. That being true, it is also manifestly unfair to state that he is no longer with influence among the democrats of other states. Our own opinion is that Colonel Bryan is still the strongest personality in the democratic party, and that he can today count more partisan friends than any other democrat in the land. What would be true to state at this time is that the democrats of Nebraska have eliminated an issue for which Colonel Bryan stood at their state convention. It must be admitted, however, that the issue is a moral, rather than a political one, so that it is impossible to form any conception of how the democrats of Nebraska or any other state feel regarding Colonel Bryan when it comes to purely democratic principles.

That Colonel Bryan will be a candidate for the democratic presidential nomination in 1912 seems hardly possible at this time, but no intelligent man, remembering the history of the past twelve years, doubts for a moment that he can, if he desires, exert much influence in the selection of whoever that candidate is. Personally, no democrat since the days of Jefferson or Tilden has had so strong a hold upon the hearts of so many democratic voters as Colonel Bryan, and to argue that this has all been lost simply because he stood for county option before the Nebraska state convention, is the rankest sort of nonsense. Colonel Bryan still

has friends and influence, and it is a sure guess that he will make both those friends and that influence felt when it comes to selecting the next presidential candidate for his party. —St. Louis, Mo., Gazette.

BRYAN STRIKES BACK

Although the Nebraska democratic convention deposed Bryan, temporarily at least, from leadership in his party in his state, he remains in the fight as a private. In the convention he denounced some of his democratic enemies as "political assassins," and gave praise to the county option republicans. That issue was overwhelmingly beaten by the democrats, but Bryan continues his fight for it. He urges his friends to support county option candidates in every legislative district. During the campaign he will take the stump for them.

Bryan does not say that he will support republican option nominees in preference to democratic antis, but his words create the impression among his democratic enemies that he will. He wants both parties to put up candidates who are pledged to that issue, so that, in any event, it may capture the next legislature. There is a strong probability that Bryan will succeed in that endeavor. As the republican state convention favored option it is reasonable to presume that a large majority of the men whom the republicans will choose to the legislature will support a measure on that line. Bryan's influence will very likely secure the election of many democratic optionists. It looks probable, therefore,

that that policy will have a majority in the coming session.

There is nothing radical in county option. It means home rule for every community, a thing which democrats have pretended all along to favor on every question. There were enough hypocrites and anti-Bryanites in the recent democratic convention, however, to defeat that idea. The average intelligent outsider will be likely to believe that the sentiment against option is largely a sham, worked up to depose Bryan. Everybody in Nebraska knew long before the delegates to the convention were selected that Bryan would champion option. Therefore his democratic enemies used that issue as a club with which to hit him. They planned to do this early enough to discredit him at home and give a chance to his rivals abroad to work up a movement against him in the convention of 1912. His democratic enemies, it will be remembered, triumphed in the St. Louis convention of 1904. They nominated a Cleveland-Harmon man named Parker, and Bryan, in that convention, told what the voters would do to Parker in November. Let the anti-Bryanites beware of the ideo of June or July of 1912. Bryan will be in the convention at that time, and he knows what he will be there for. —St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

NEBRASKA DEMOCRATS

The much advertised Grand Island convention having come and gone, we may now measure it with some degree of accuracy as to what it was, what it did and what results are to be expected from it.

From first to last it was a fight over the liquor question. It was on the one hand an attack and on the other hand a defense of the saloon system. Mr. Bryan's bold attitude taken months ago against the right of the brewers to dictate the party politics, to use the party in defense of their business, forced the convention into the attitude of a jury before which the saloon system was on trial.

The great jury of nearly a thousand men were to decide whether the democratic party in Nebraska should put itself in the attitude of defending the brewers or whether it should leave them open to the attack of whatever proportion of the people are wanting to vote them out of the towns and villages. Declaring vehemently with every breath that the liquor question was not a political issue, the convention itself, in every thing it did from start to finish, proved that there was no other issue there except the one question, the right of the farmers to vote the saloon business up or down. Every shrewd move made in the arrangement of the unfair anti-Bryan program, every struggle against the unfair program, every speech and every motion pro or con was in effect either an attack or a defense of the brewers.

"They can't put you in jail for that offense," said the lawyer to the man behind the bars. "But I am in jail," answered the prisoner. And so it was at Grand Island. The liquor question was there overshadowing every other issue and every man of the several thousands gathered in and around the big tent knew it and felt the tremendous force of it.

It was not only the boldest and most powerful convention ever assembled in Nebraska, but was hard-faced and cruel in its treatment of Mr. Bryan. It had the right to vote him down, which it did. It had the right to choose its attitude either for or against county option. It was its business to reject Mr. Bryan's advice and to turn from his leadership to that of Hitchcock or Shallenberger, if it wanted to, but it had no right to tolerate the bitter personal

assault made by some of the speakers on Mr. Bryan. In punishing him it helped to make permanent the bitterness that now splits the party and threatens its defeat. Bad feeling between the factions is more irreconcilable and more permanently fixed since the convention than before. Conventions ought to heal old wounds. But this Grand Island convention made opportunity for bitter debate and hard words that will not be soon forgotten.

It seems as if Mr. Bryan's attacks on the brewers should have been answered by the defense of the brewers if any defense or answer was necessary. But to answer his attack on the brewers, by attacking him personally and holding him up to the scorn and ridicule of the party and the public, must react in his favor and make the party appear as if it was under control of the brewery influence. There is plenty of room for honest differences of opinion and for fair and tolerant discussion on the county option question. But there is nothing in Mr. Bryan's attitude nor in all his past history as a great party leader to justify the personal assault upon him by the speakers who were cheered in the assaults at the Grand Island convention.

The new leadership of the party is of men who have secretly chafed at Mr. Bryan's domination. Whether they believe they can do more for the party than he has done may well be doubted.

On the old issues that Mr. Bryan has had to meet, Nebraska is as republican as Iowa. Bryan, by sheer force, by compelling faith in himself as a Christian citizen and a patriot all the time, has kept it a "doubtful state." The first move of the new leaders is one that substitutes expediency for principle. It lowers, therefore, the party standing and diminishes its chance of winning. If the party wins upon the expedient it still has no issue and no ultimate hope of succeeding. If they do not believe they can do better for the party than Bryan has done then their intrusion is party disloyalty and they stand impeached already. —Sioux City, Iowa, Tribune.

BRYAN NOT ELIMINATED

Defeat is not a new experience for William Jennings Bryan. He has been beaten on several notable occasions and has survived. There is no reason, therefore, for assuming that he will be immediately eliminated from politics on account of the repudiation of his county option plan by the democratic convention in Nebraska. Theoretically, of course, he has been deprived of party leadership in his home state. A leader, as the word is used politically, is one who accomplishes his purpose by the control of votes and power in his party, and when the boss loses such control or power he is popularly presumed to have been displaced. This theory, however, does not always work out in practice; more than one "dead-and-buried" politician has pried the lid off his coffin and resumed his seat in party councils.

Bryan has been a leader in Nebraska for twenty years. He could not have retained his political strength if the rank and file of his party had not had confidence in him. He could not have gained the confidence of the rank and file and held it for so many years if he had not been sincere—that is, of course, unless he were a corruptionist, and no one will lay a charge such as that at Bryan's door. The Nebraskan believes thoroughly in the principles he advocates. He has been mistaken sometimes, but he has been honestly mistaken. He believed in the principle which he attempted to induce the democrats of Nebraska to endorse, and at almost any other time that principle would have received

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