

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

VOL. II, NO. 32

Lincoln, Nebraska, August 18, 1911

Whole Number 552

The Secret Caucus Must Go

(Editorial in the Nashville Tennessean)

One of the things indicated by the Vardaman election in Mississippi is that the secret caucus is objectionable to the people of that state.

When a secret caucus was held to nominate Senator McLaurin's successor it was loudly objected to, but it was deemed expedient to hold one by the party leaders and though it was stubbornly opposed by many, a small majority favored it, with the result that it was held and a nomination made.

The caucus was so roundly condemned that its nominee, Senator Percy, made a proposition to run it out before the people, stating that he did not want to hold an office unless the people wanted him to have it. However, no such test was ever made and the first time the people of Mississippi have had a chance to strike at the secret caucus was in the senatorial primary, when Mr. Vardaman received more votes than both Mr. Percy and Alexander combined.

When we consider the fact that both Senator Percy and Mr. Alexander are high-class men, worthy of the confidence and respect of the people, we are impelled to look for a public rather than an individual or personal evil that tended to influence the election.

It is clear that the people will no longer submit to public representatives covering up their public acts in any kind of secret combination or compact. It is all very well and proper for an individual voter to cast a secret ballot. This is his right and it is expedient to do so, but for a legislator to cast a secret vote on a question that affects his service as a public representative is an unwarranted practice that will no longer be tolerated. The individual voter is answerable alone to his own conscience as to how he votes, while the legislator is answerable to his constituents as well as to his conscience in all his public acts, and they will not excuse him when he makes a secret of any part of his public service.

The people must know what is going on. They no longer trust the public servant who does things behind closed doors. The public business must be transacted in the open.

BURIED AGAIN

The following is from the New York World: "The process of de-Bryanizing the democratic party has been apparent throughout the present session of congress. It began with the refusal of the democrats to accept Mr. Bryan's dictation on the wool bill. Its progress has been marked by open criticism of Mr. Bryan's utterances and by defiance of his assumed authority. The climax was reached in the enthusiastic applause and congratulation of 95 per cent of the house democrats over the branding of Mr. Bryan as a disseminator of unfounded accusations. The end of the Bryan dictatorship is at hand. It is an essential step to continued democratic success."

So Mr. Bryan is buried again. How mortifying it must be to the World to have to announce the burying so often, and yet it brings out its stereotyped obituary notice again if it were a first bit of news. The World stabbed and stabbed in its revengeful way during the campaign of 1896. After the election it exulted

over Mr. Bryan's death and felt that its Wall street friends were secure. It was amazed to see Mr. Bryan recover from his injuries and receive a unanimous renomination. After the 1900 election it buried him again and proceeded to nominate a ticket. During the 1904 convention the Post-Dispatch—the St. Louis edition of the World—had a two column editorial on "The Passing of Bryan" and the World spent most of the campaign rejoicing over the final elimination of Bryan and the repudiation of Bryanism. After 1908 it renewed its dance over his grave and now it is sure that he has been covered so deep that he can not get out. The World ought to know that it can not kill a man until it kills the things he stands for, and the things that Mr. Bryan stands for are alive and growing.

NEEDS EXPLANATION

The plutocratic papers now tell us that there is a united and harmonious democracy behind Mr. Underwood in his determination to delay the passage of a bill reducing the tariff on iron and steel. But will they explain the following dispatch which appeared in the Chicago Tribune on the 26th of July (and other papers had similar reports):

"The bill was not ratified without protest and a VIGOROUS effort was made by MANY democrats to upset the party legislation program and to prevent adjournment of the special session of congress by blazing away with tariff revision all along the line, even if such action would throw the session into the late fall."

And yet the Wall street press tells us that 95 per cent of the democrats stood on their feet and shouted: "Great is Underwood of the Revisionists!"

THE SOUL VISION

The Storm Child ran screaming into the house. "Oh, mamma," she sobbed, holding up a lacerated hand, "our rose bush has thorns on it."

And while mamma was comforting her, the Sunshine Child burst into the room. "Oh, mamma, mamma," she cried, "look out in the yard. Our thorn bush is all covered with roses."—Toledo (Ohio) News Bee.

PARQUET STATESMEN

Chairman Underwood has coined a new phrase. He accused Congressman James of "playing to the galleries." He withdrew the language and apologized, but those who belong to Mr. Underwood's class will hardly give up the use of the term. We may expect to hear the defenders of the public denounced as gallery statesmen just as we have heard them denounced as demagogues. But we know things by contrast. We can not think of a gallery statesman without thinking of the statesman who does NOT play to the gallery. What shall we call them? How would "parquet statesmen" do? As Mr. Underwood prides himself that he does not play to the galleries it is not unfair to assume that he plays to those who occupy seats in the parquet and in the private boxes. If he can afford to be a parquet statesman Mr. James can afford to be a gallery statesman. How would it do to have an investigating committee make inquiry and see how many of the democratic members take the galleries into consideration and how many give their attention exclusively to those who occupy the high-priced seats?

WRITE YOUR CONGRESSMAN

If the democratic members of the house did not submit to secret caucuses on public affairs there would be no doubt concerning any of their proceedings.

Why should any democratic member submit to the secret caucus? Why should not the public business which these men have to do be transacted in the open so that their constituents may be able to fix responsibility for all that they do and for all that they fail to do?

The secret caucus is one of the worst foes of popular government. If you are opposed to it write your member of congress and urge him to protest against it.

CONTENTS

- SECRET CAUCUS MUST GO
- BURIED AGAIN
- PARQUET STATESMEN
- THE UNDERWOOD INCIDENT
- MR. ALDRICH THINKS SO, TOO
- WHY NOT PROBE IT?
- EXPLAIN, MR. UNDERWOOD
- THE PEACE TREATIES
- THAT IRON AND STEEL CAUCUS
- THE JAMES-UNDERWOOD INCIDENT
- THE WILSON BOOM IN TEXAS
- VICTORY OF THE COMMONS
- OLDFIELD SEEKS TO CURE DEFECT
- SENATOR KERN'S STRONG LETTER
- WHERE THE RANK AND FILE STAND
- WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NEW YORK WORLD
- HOME DEPARTMENT
- WHETHER COMMON OR NOT
- NEWS OF THE WEEK
- WASHINGTON NEWS