

The Bryan Birthday Dinner

Following is the report made by the Lincoln (Neb.) Journal, of the Bryan birthday dinner, held at Lincoln March 19, 1912.

Fifteen hundred people, all but a few voters, democrats and republicans alike, gathered at the auditorium last evening in honor of the fifty-second birthday of W. J. Bryan, and the fourth annual event sponsored by the Lincoln club which bears his name. It was perforce a gathering of Bryan's friends, a gathering which responded readily and enthusiastically to sentiments of progressive democracy from the speakers, all of whom were in sympathy with such principles as are being now fought for by W. J. Bryan, guest of honor of the evening.

The toast list comprised a group of friends and supporters of Mr. Bryan, all of them of national repute. Ex-Senator R. F. Pettigrew of South Dakota; Senator T. P. Gore of Oklahoma, the blind and brilliant statesman of that progressive state; George Fred Williams, congressman and three times democratic candidate for governor of Massachusetts; Frederick Townsend Martin of New York, millionaire society man and reformer of the nation's metropolis; Robert L. Henry, congressman of Texas and at present in the limelight as chairman of the congressional committee investigating the money trust; Ollie M. James, congressman and senator-elect of Kentucky and a leader in three fights of Bryan for the presidency—these men were picked to tell Nebraska democrats something of the problem now before the people.

While it was well known that George Fred Williams heads the fight for Speaker Clark in his presidential aspirations, that Senator Pettigrew is a staunch supporter of the same candidate, and that Congressman Henry favors openly the candidacy of Governor Wilson, the speakers carefully kept away from a discussion of the relative merits of the two candidates. It was a forbidden topic, admissible in a conference of Nebraska progressive democrats, but not for the banquet room. It was a celebration affair, and not a meeting to boost candidates. George Fred Williams made a veiled thrust at Woodrow Wilson when he spoke of objections of those who forge the weapons of reform warfare against their espousal by one who seized upon them at the eleventh hour, when ambition finds them needful.

Toastmaster Meier read a bunch of telegrams from democrats of fame, congratulations on the occasion and regrets for unavoidable absences. Among those sending such telegrams were John Burke, governor of North Dakota; Mayor W. J. Gaynor of New York, James E. Martine, senator from New Jersey; Senator J. A. O'Gorman, New York; J. A. Maguire of Nebraska, Senator F. G. Newlands of Nevada, Congressman Dan V. Stephens of Nebraska, and Senator Luke Lea of Tennessee.

Senator Gore was the first speaker, and he made good from the start with the big audience. Interspersed with his most potent points were frequent stories of considerable merit, and the crowd was kept laughing throughout his address. Speaking with regard to present activities in the democratic party, Senator Gore said: "It is better to divide and conquer than to be divided and to be conquered," significantly. "And we must have peace in the party—if we have to fight for it—or put all the democrats under peace bonds. Democracy must be united to be triumphant."

He referred to Mr. Bryan as the greatest citizen on earth, an unselfish power in private life, a man who has given freely to the service of his fellow men.

He touched upon the tariff question briefly, declaring that the basis of adjudication of duties might be well taken up under the motto, "Equality before the law."

"When any man gets something for nothing," said he, "then some one gets nothing for something. That is in short the substance of slavery through the following of such a plan, through the pursuance of such a method, the representatives of the special interests, the few, get without earning a wealth of privileges, while the representatives of humanity, the many, earn without getting the rights that should be theirs, certain inalienable."

He made a facetious allusion to the specific tariff duty case, declaring that articles both produced and introduced into this country should have both their prices with and without the duty, marked upon them. Those who favor protection, he suggested, might pay the price

of the article, plus the added duty; those who denied that the duty was a talisman might buy it without having to burden themselves with that duty.

In the purchase of blankets, the cheapest kind, he declared, Americans got \$1 worth of blanket, \$1 worth of protection against the wintry blasts, and \$1.61 worth of protection against "the blasted foreigner."

MR. BRYAN'S INTRODUCTION

Mr. Bryan, in his speech at the close of the banquet, said:

Mr. Toastmaster, Honored Guests, Members of the Bryan Club, Ladies and Gentlemen: These banquets are not given to afford me an opportunity to make a speech. In fact, I am precluded from speaking at length by the number of guests upon our program. My part is simply to acknowledge my indebtedness to my friends and neighbors for this delightful expression of their good will. I am willing to admit the addition of one year to my age with each returning anniversary in return for the pleasure it gives me to bring before you the distinguished men, who, from year to year, honor us with their presence. Possibly I ought to give you a little information beyond what you already have in regard to those to whom you have listened tonight. It is a very representative collection of celebrities whom the club has brought before you. Three are from the north and three from the south. Two are from the east and four from the west, and they have led you into a broad field, and yet there has been harmony of purpose, and they have spoken from a common point of view.

Mr. Bryan, in his closing speech, made the following reference to Senator Gore, of Oklahoma, a copy of whose speech was not secured: Mr. Gore is a leader in the senate of the United States—one of the most faithful of whom our party can boast. Born and reared in the south, his sympathies include the entire union, and he is the champion of the common man wherever he resides. Though from his youth he has dwelt in darkness so far as physical eyesight is concerned, he nevertheless possesses a clear mental vision and deep moral insight into life's problems. While he may not see the light of the sun or of the moon, he is a tireless and vigilant watchman upon the tower and warns his countrymen from approaching danger. He has made the tariff question as clear as anyone has ever been able to make it, and you who have listened to him will not forget the brilliant address which he has delivered. He has honored us by coming all the way from Washington to join us in the celebration of this day.

OLLIE JAMES' SPEECH

In his closing speech Mr. Bryan made the following reference to Senator James: Kentucky is seen at her best when she is represented by Senator-elect Ollie James. Your cordial greeting to him must have made him recognize that he is no stranger to you. He is one of the great orators of our party, and has honestly won the high honors which his state has recently conferred upon him. Our program would not have been complete without him. We have many democrats who are worthy to be president—many who are qualified for that high position, but among them all there is not one for whom I would vote with greater pleasure or in whose administration I would have more explicit faith than I would have in his.

Ollie James, of Kentucky, spoke as follows:

Mr. Toastmaster and Fellow Democrats: I like to come to Nebraska. I have been here before and each recurring visit reminds me that you look and act so much like Kentuckians that I almost feel at home.

In response to the toast, "The Triumph of Democracy," I have but to recount the progress not only of our country but of the other civilized governments of the world. In every land, in every language, with all people there exists a democratic party, called, sometime, by other name, but it means at last to trust the people, to enlarge the liberty of the people and let the people control their own affairs. In the last twenty years in our own republic we have seen democracy in its flower and its bloom; not victorious, perhaps, in securing the offices, but in triumph which is greater than this at last, the winning of the principle. Office is but an incident in government; it gives honor and profit to the individual, but the principle is that which benefits and blesses mankind. Judged by this

standard, democracy has met no defeat under the leadership of your own great Nebraskan, our honored guest, William J. Bryan.

This spirit of the rule of the people is spreading over the whole earth. In England, from which we inherited that distrust of the people which found some lodgment in our government, the spirit of the rule and trust of the people has overthrown the house of lords which held a veto power over the question of taxation as passed by the commons, the direct representatives of the English people. So that now with the people of England questions of taxation are lodged directly in themselves through their commons, the directly elected representatives. In Russia the spirit of the rule of the people found its first voice and hope in the duma; and, in far off China, one of the oldest empires of the earth, the spirit of the rule of the people has overthrown that government and erected upon its ruins a republic. So that wherever the heart beats and lips pray, wherever hands work and hope springs in the human breast, democracy, which is the trust of the people, is growing and advancing. And so it has been in our own country. The democratic party first stood, back in 1896, in those stirring days, for the regulation of the railroads on the theory that they were public servants given life by public law and that their rates should not be confiscatory of the shippers' products, but should be just. We fought for this. Arrayed against us was the twenty billions of wealth and more than two hundred thousand miles of railroad that crossed the republic with all the force and power they could command. They coerced their employes, they contributed their money, but today upon the statute books is a railroad rate regulation law in conformity with the democratic platform, which is the direct result of democratic advocacy and democratic courage. We went to defeat so far as the office of the presidency was concerned, but the millions of dollars of wealth that are left in the pockets of the people of the United States by reason of the just regulation of the railroads is a victory to which we point as the triumph of this democratic principle.

We advocated an income tax; we declared that the supreme court was right when for one hundred years by an unbroken chain of decisions, which was forged by revolutionary hands and in the very twilight of the republic, we held that it was just; and that the vote of five to four upon the petition for a rehearing reversing the former holding of the supreme court was wrong. We were denounced for these platform utterances; we were told the court could do no wrong; we were denied the right to pay reverence and homage to the illustrious jurists who had gone before, holding this tax to be righteous and fair, and that to say anything of the five who were a majority of the court was anarchy. But we fought on until an amendment to the federal constitution has been submitted to the states, an amendment advocated by the democratic platform, an amendment which has been indorsed by more than thirty states in the union, an amendment which I believe will be indorsed by a sufficient number which have not yet spoken to put beyond the fine-spun theories of learned justices and make constitutional beyond any question the most just of all taxes ever visited upon man, the income tax. I would scorn the government, which all just men must, that sends the tax-gatherer to the crumbs of Lazarus and makes him walk by, untouched, the riches of Dives. And when this constitutional amendment is adopted, then will come to the democratic party the honor and the glory of being the only party in a hundred years that has amended the federal constitution save by the sword, the amendment being in the interest of the great masses of the people.

The democratic party advocated the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people and charged that the senate had become the very rock against which legislation to give the people relief has always been wrecked, that the special interests had their representatives there, that it was honey-combed with men of great wealth, that it was unrepresentative of the people of this country, that we should elect senators directly by the people, as we do members of the house of representatives. Our opponents flouted this position, but today men of all parties and all beliefs have come to the democratic position upon the question of the election of senators by the people.

We declared in favor of the publicity of campaign funds. We said these publications should be made before as well as after elections. We declared that corporations should not be allowed to contribute at all. We said, "If it's tainted, do not take, but if you do take it, tell the people of it." We were so much in earnest that