

## Mr. Bryan's Statement is Sound Principle in the Public Service

It is hard to separate and dissociate our obligations to the public from our personal or individual obligations, and many of us are inclined to regard our friends and punish our enemies when it comes to choosing men for the public service.

Most people are more or less influenced in these matters by personal considerations. They feel inclined to favor those who have favored them, and to bestow the emoluments of office upon the bestowers of office.

A great deal has been said about Governor Wilson's obligations to Mr. Bryan, the point being conceded that Governor Wilson could not have been nominated without the cordial and active support of Mr. Bryan, and the demand being made that, for this reason, Governor Wilson should award the Nebraskan a conspicuous place in the public service.

Many of the newspapers take the position that President-elect Wilson owes Mr. Bryan a personal debt which he should pay, bringing the latter into official honor and power.

The St. Louis Republic says that as to Mr. Bryan's fitness for the premiership or for the ranking ambassadorship, opinion may differ, but nevertheless that paper urges that "Woodrow Wilson's debt to Bryan is the biggest debt possible in American politics. Proper acknowledgement of that debt is expected. Popular belief is that it will be paid."

The Commoner, in speaking for Mr. Bryan, takes the sound and unassailable position that cabinet positions ought not to be regarded as

currency with which to pay debts, and in filling them the future, and not the past, should be looked to. "The men selected by Mr. Wilson for the cabinet," says The Commoner, "should be selected not because of personal service rendered to him, nor even because of past service rendered to the party. For," it says, "the individual counts for little; the cause counts for much."

Evidently Mr. Bryan resents the idea, often expressed, that he should be rewarded for the great service he has rendered the democratic party and the country, contending that Governor Wilson should be governed by a higher motive than gratitude in the selection of his official household.

Here is Mr. Bryan's view, as expressed by The Commoner:

"A great responsibility rests upon him, and he will need the assistance of the best and bravest for his work. He ought to feel free to select for each place the men best fitted for it; in no other way can he hope to measure up to the expectations of the public. He need not—he should not—consider any service that Mr. Bryan has rendered to him, or to the public. Mr. Bryan has been abundantly rewarded for all he has done, and does not feel that the party, or any individual in the party, owes him anything. If he ever holds any office, it ought to be given, whether by appointment or by election, with the view to the service that CAN be rendered in connection with the work YET TO BE DONE, not with the idea of rewarding him for anything that he has done. And the rule which is here laid down for Mr. Bryan is the rule which he believes should be laid down for all. In other words, the welfare of the party and the welfare of the country, not the ambitions of men or the interests of individuals, should be considered."

While this standard for the measurement and proper public service is somewhat higher than parties have been accustomed to, yet the believers in democratic simplicity, official honesty, sanctity and usefulness will agree that this declaration of principle comports with an ideal representative government, and that if Thomas Jefferson had been confronted with similar conditions he would have made a similar declaration, which is wise, patriotic and unselfish.

No man has a clearer conception of official obligation to the public than Mr. Bryan, and no man has a greater capacity for stating concisely and correctly the relationship that should exist between those who perform the functions of office and those who have been chosen for this performance.—Nashville Tennessean.

### DISCUSSED IN CONGRESS

Following is a dispatch to the New York World: To the accompaniment of applause from Representative Palmer, of Pennsylvania; Burleson, of Texas, and other democratic members who are regarded as cabinet "possibilities," Representative Sims, of Tennessee, in the house delivered a speech full of advice to Governor Wilson on the subject of cabinet building.

One of the mildest things Mr. Sims said was that he favored the enactment of a federal statute to hang persons who misinform presidents of the United States.

The text of Mr. Sims' speech was an editorial in The Commoner, in which William J. Bryan said that cabinet appointments should not be made as rewards for political service, with the best interests of the people in view.

"Whether we be Bryanites or anti-

Bryanites," said Mr. Sims, "I think we must all agree with the ideas and principles advocated in that article. We see a great deal stated in the newspapers about who is to be in the cabinet. I desire to say that the kind of men I want to see in the cabinet are men who will tell the president the truth, though the heavens fall, without either exaggerating or minimizing."

"The president, as it were, must look through the cabinet to see the conditions of the country. The cabinet is in a way the eyes of the president. When I was a youth I read that under the English law they did not punish the king for any wrong doing, but they punished his advisers and coaches. I thought at the time that it was a great outrage, but I have since concluded that it was a very wise provision of law. Those who get next to the president and mislead him should be punished. I would be in favor of hanging these misinformers."

"Governor Wilson has the judgment to do the right thing if he can only have the facts presented to him without prejudice and without bias. It makes no difference to me who the man is who goes into the cabinet so long as he be a man of ability and a man of information as to the department in which he will serve. But above all must he forget himself and forget his friends, and if he has enmities he must forget them, and tell the president the plain truth, and let the president's judgment rest upon a clear understanding of the facts."

"Is the gentleman complaining now of what he thinks the president-elect is going to do?" asked Representative Garner, of Texas.

"No," replied Mr. Sims.

"Is the gentleman writing Governor Wilson a letter through the columns of the Congressional Record advising him as to what he thinks he ought to do?" insisted Mr. Garner.

"I am not intending in this way to advise the president," was the reply. "I am trying to point out what I think would be an ideal member of the cabinet."

"Is not the gentleman telling what he will do when he is a member of the cabinet?" asked Representative Mann, of Illinois, republican floor leader.

"I have no idea, not the slightest conception of being so honored," replied Mr. Sims.

"Has the gentleman anybody in mind who will fill the bill?" asked "Uncle Joe" Cannon.

"I have nobody in mind," returned Mr. Sims. "I think that within the last hundred years presidents have been prejudiced unduly against some people, and have been persuaded to reward others unjustly by reason of the false information given them. Where men secretly, under the guise of friendship, misinform the president in order to attain some other end than the public welfare, they ought to hang, just as did the false advisers of the king. Therefore, I do not think that such a position ought to be appointed by reason of their extraordinary willingness to serve, but that they should be selected with reference to the public welfare with no other motive than that the public good is to be enhanced, and not the ends of some private citizens to be promoted."

### FUTURE ONLY COUNTS

Mr. Bryan, in The Commoner, has had a word to say about the rumors that he was to be offered a cabinet position. He takes for his text a newspaper utterance:

"Woodrow Wilson's debt to Bryan is the biggest debt possible in American politics. Proper acknowledgement of that debt is expected. Popular belief is that it will be paid."

To this The Commoner answers: "Cabinet positions are not to be

regarded as currency with which to pay debts. A public official has no right to discharge political obligations at the expense of the public. The men selected by Mr. Wilson for the cabinet should be selected, not because of personal service rendered to him, nor even because of past services rendered to the party. A great responsibility rests upon him, and he will need the assistance of the best and bravest for his work. He ought to feel free to select for each place the man best fitted for it; in no other way can he hope to measure up to the expectations of the public. He need not—he should not, consider any service that Mr. Bryan has rendered to him, or to the public. Mr. Bryan has been abundantly rewarded for all he has done, and does not feel that the party or any individual in the party, owes him anything. If he ever holds any office, it ought to be given, whether by appointment or by election, with the view to the service that can be rendered in connection with the work yet to be done; not with the idea of rewarding him for anything that he has done. And the rule which is here laid down for Mr. Bryan is the rule which he believes should be laid down for all."

This is what the country has expected of Mr. Bryan. It is logical and it is magnanimous. We believe that Mr. Bryan has fathomed the

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