

Roosevelt on the Peace Treaties

There are some disadvantages in these times of rapid change, in writing an article too long before its publication, and still greater disadvantages, in writing a criticism without examining into the thing criticized.

Ex-President Roosevelt has recently written an article in which he exhibits, to a painful degree, both of these disadvantages.

The New York Times of Sunday, October 4th—the day set apart for prayer for peace—contains an article in which ex-President Roosevelt attempts to belittle the peace treaties which this government has been negotiating with the governments of South and Central America, Europe and Asia. He says: "The nineteen or twenty-one all-inclusive arbitration or peace treaties recently negotiated at Washington, although unimportant, are slightly harmful."

He evidently wrote this article before the treaties with Great Britain, France, Spain, China and Russia had been signed.

The first twenty-two treaties were with governments whose total population aggregated one hundred twenty millions. To increase the probabilities of peace in our dealings with such small nations could hardly be expected to excite the enthusiasm of one who, like the ex-president, deals in big figures. But surely the five treaties which have been negotiated since, with governments representing over one billion of human beings, ought to lift these treaties to a plane which would entitle them to his respect.

Earlier in his article, he speaks of "LITTLE all-inclusive arbitration or so-called peace treaties" and says of them that they "represent as high a degree of fatuity as is often achieved in these matters."

He spoke too soon; he was as hasty in this matter as in the denunciation of the administration policy in Mexico, which he unhappily attacked just before Huerta retired and left the United States victor in its policy of "Watchful Waiting."

But Mr. Roosevelt's article indicates that he has not read the treaties of which he is disposed to make sport. They may be "little" in his estimation, and they are "all-inclusive" as a matter of fact, but they are not "arbitration" treaties at all. They make no provision whatever for arbitration. These treaties not only do not provide for arbitration, but they distinctly declare that the contracting parties reserve the right to act independently after the investigation is completed. The treaties, instead of being "arbitration treaties," are INVESTIGATION treaties—they simply provide that all disputes, without any exception whatever, when diplomatic means fail, and when resort is not had to arbitration (according to the terms of some other treaty), the

matter in dispute shall be submitted for investigation to a permanent international commission, which is to be organized as soon as the ratifications are exchanged, and, thereafter, ready for service at a moment's notice.

Knowledge of what is going on can not be safely left to intuition, and even the most widely informed do well to understand something about the subject which they attempt to discuss.

If the ex-president will take the time to "investigate" these treaties providing for investigation, he may revise his opinion of them—unless we can accept his language as an assertion of the doctrine that no treaty is binding.

Speaking of the "little, all-inclusive arbitration or so-called peace treaties," he says: "There is no likelihood that they will do us any great material harm, because IT IS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT WE WOULD NOT PAY THE SMALLEST ATTENTION TO THEM IN THE EVENT OF THEIR BEING INVOKED IN ANY MATTER WHERE OUR INTERESTS WERE SERIOUSLY INVOLVED." And then he adds: "But it would do us moral harm to break them, even though this were the least evil of two evil alternatives."

He may speak for himself, but does not speak for the United States when he says that "it is absolutely certain" that "if our interests were seriously involved" that we would not pay any attention to a treaty pledging us to INVESTIGATE before declaring war. Sometimes people in hours of temptation fail to do things which they would not think themselves capable of doing before the temptation comes, and for which they humbly apologize when the temptation is past, but it is seldom that a man boasts in advance of faithfulness, and counts it a virtue to break a treaty. Yet Mr. Roosevelt, after asserting his horror of war, deliberately commits himself and tries to commit the nation, to the doctrine that treaties are not binding if a nation's "interests are seriously involved."

What interests can the United States have that can be so "seriously involved" as to justify us in beginning war in an hour of passion, and before the dispute can be investigated. Mr. Roosevelt has many good qualities, and must be credited by history with large and important undertakings, but the world would have to turn back some distance before his views on the subject of treaties could be accepted as representing the best thought of the country.

The senate is made up of democrats, republicans and progressive republicans, and yet the senators representing ALL parties have joined in the ratification of these treaties, nearly all the treaties having been ratified by unanimous vote. They are not "little" treaties; they are of large moment, and far-reaching in their influence.

W. J. BRYAN.

PEACE PRAYER DAY

October 4th, the day set apart by the president as a day of prayer for peace, was observed throughout the United States. The churches, Jewish and Christian, were overflowing with worshippers who, obedient to the summons of the president, assembled to unite their hearts and voices in prayer for peace. The presence of so large a proportion of the citizenship of this great republic at these services, has a significance that will not be lost on either this country or the countries of Europe. The solemn earnestness which characterized the audience indicates the fervent desire of the American people to exert such influence as they can to bring the conflict to a close.

On another page will be found the substance of the speech delivered by Secretary Bryan on Peace Day in New York. He spoke in the morning with Former Secretary Oscar S. Straus, at the services of the Free synagogue, Rabbi Wise's congregation, at Carnegie hall. Dr. Wise is one of the most prominent of the Jewish leaders of the nation, and Mr. Straus has an international reputation as a peace advocate.

In the evening the secretary addressed a meeting of the Peace Society, held in Broadway Tabernacle Church, presided over by the pastor, Rev. Charles Jefferson. Dr. Jefferson is one of the most popular ministers in New York; his book on "Fundamentals" is a valuable contribution to the religious literature of the generation.

Mr. Bryan followed the same lines of thought at the two meetings, although some of the prop-

ositions outlined were elaborated in the morning and others in the evening.

At the morning service he referred to Abraham as the greatest illustration of the value of faith. Through faith the great patriarch founded a race not surpassed in history, and established a religious system whose principles have been impressed upon the more than four hundred millions who worship one God. In the evening emphasis was placed upon the growing influence of the moral code of the Prince of Peace—the basis of a universal brotherhood.

There being no shorthand report of either speech available, The Commoner presents an abstract of these addresses, which was prepared in advance.

BECKHAM OF KENTUCKY

The head of the democratic state ticket in Kentucky this year as the party nominee for United States senator is Mr. J. C. W. Beckham, who was for eight years governor of that state and who at the national conventions of 1904, 1908 and 1912 served upon the committee on resolutions.

Mr. Beckham is, in many ways, one of the most remarkable men that the democratic party in the United States has developed during the last fifteen years. When he took the oath as governor of Kentucky in January, 1900, he was barely thirty years of age, but in less than thirty days the whole state was aware of the fact that it had in the governor's office a man, who for strength of character, force of will and clarity of purpose equalled any man that has held that

office in this celebrated state during its history of more than a century.

Mr. Beckham made an admirable governor and showed unusual capacities as an administrator. He paid off a large floating debt on the state, and built at Frankfort, Ky., one of the most beautiful capitol buildings in America, and this structure was erected, as is stated in Kentucky by men of all parties, "without a cent of graft."

The most striking feature of Mr. Beckham's service as governor was, however, the impetus he gave to strict and impartial enforcement of the law. He showed no favors and played no favorites, and naturally made for himself certain bitter enemies. As a result of his resolute stand that the saloons should obey the law and keep their doors closed on Sunday in Louisville and other centers, a bi-partisan combination of liquor men in politics enlisted to retire him from public life. In the state primary of 1906, Mr. Beckham faced this combination and defeated it, and was made the democratic nominee for United States senator. When the legislature met a year later, however, although the democratic party was in control, four democrats voted for W. O. Bradley, a republican, and made him senator. The affair was a duplication of the Lorimer scandal.

Mr. Beckham retired to private life and intended to remain, but in 1911 he was forced by practically a unanimous demand of his party to come forward and shape the state campaign, the republicans having in the meantime secured control of the state. Refusing to take office himself, Mr. Beckham faced and defeated a combination of all the special interests in the state, put the party on a winning platform, and carried the state for the democratic party.

This year he became a candidate for the democratic nomination for senator and was nominated at a state primary and, therefore, heads the party ticket at the November election. President Wilson has made a public statement expressing his keen interest in the Kentucky election and his hope that Mr. Beckham will be elected by a safe majority.

In the senate, Mr. Beckham will at once make himself felt. Possessing broad experience in public affairs, an unshaken strength of character, he is moreover a trained student and thinker, a graceful and forceful speaker. Kentucky can do itself proud, and the democratic national convention a favor, by electing Mr. Beckham to the United States senate.

W. J. BRYAN.

WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE

In Nebraska and a number of other states the question of woman's suffrage is submitted to the voters. In most of the states the subject has not been dealt with in party platforms, but left to the organizations formed for the special purpose of putting the issue before the public. Woman's suffrage being an issue in Nebraska, I have already stated my position and presented a brief argument in support of it. The subject is easily understood as shown by the rapid growth of the reform. That woman's suffrage is coming does not admit of doubt. Ultimately—why not now?

The rapid spread of the doctrine during the last few years is not strange. We are in the midst of a great moral awakening, and woman's assistance is always welcomed when the conscience is aroused. There are three questions which the voter ought to consider before he votes to deny the ballot to women:

First: Why should those who conspire against the home be allowed to use the ballot to wreck a young man, and his mother be forbidden the use of the ballot to protect her son?

Second: Why are all the evil influences of society arrayed against woman suffrage? Is it not because they recognize that woman suffrage is a menace to wrong doing and the wrong doers?

Third: How does it happen that some honest, pure-minded well-meaning men and women join hands with the worst elements of society in the effort to defeat woman's suffrage? Which crowd is deceived?

W. J. BRYAN.

THE PEACE PLAN TRIUMPHANT

Since the last issue of The Commoner, the British, French, and Spanish treaties have been ratified and treaties with Russia, Greece, and Ecuador have been signed. A treaty with Sweden has been agreed upon and is being prepared. Thirty of these treaties have been agreed to in all, representing about three-fourths of the population of the world. Only a few nations of any size are left, and agreements with these are expected soon. In less than two years the peace plan, providing for investigation in all cases, will have been accepted by the entire world.

W. J. BRYAN.