

## Mayor Bryan Tells How Special Interests Seek to Control

[From The Aurora (Neb.) Sun, Feb. 24, 1916.]

Some fine audiences have gathered in the rooms of the Y. M. C. A. to hear men of prominence from various parts of the state this winter, but it remained for Mayor Chas. W. Bryan, of Lincoln, to meet the largest crowd of men ever assembled there. Fully half an hour before the appointed hour for the meeting last Sunday the regular seating capacity of the gymnasium was filled. Additional chairs were placed until there was no longer room, and a considerable number found places on the floor of the office rooms overlooking the gym. The crowd numbered very nearly three hundred men, a large per cent of the number being of middle age and past middle age. Mr. Bryan arrived on 39 and was escorted to the Y. M. C. A. building by Attorney F. E. Edgerton, old time friend of the mayor.

Mr. Bryan expressed his happiness at meeting so large a number of Aurora's representative citizens, and stated that his profession was not that of an orator, but that he was engaged in the publication of a newspaper, in which questions of economics and reforms are discussed. He would, therefore, give some of his time to the discussions of these problems. Mr. Bryan thought that many of the modern day problems are fit subjects for discussion before Y. M. C. A. audiences, for the reason that this society is often in the best position to bring about some of the improved conditions desired, and he told of how community welfare work in the city of Lincoln had done much to aid in the improvement of conditions there. He gave much credit to Attorney F. E. Edgerton, formerly of Lincoln, for the good work he had done through these channels.

Although Mr. Bryan is a candidate for the democratic nomination for governor, he made but slight reference to his own personal interests in the matter and, unlike a former candidate speaker, did not burden his audience with an amplified story of his own personal woes and ambitions. It is known to all Nebraskans that Mr. Bryan heads the list of dry candidates for that office in Nebraska, and it was but natural that he should take up and discuss some of the reasons for his stand, especially since he was talking to a Y. M. C. A. audience. Mr. Bryan's attitude is not, as many supposed, that of wanting to put all non-prohibitionists out of the running this year, but rather to drive from politics the liquor influences of the state and bring to an end every phase of legislative domination on the part of these interests.

Mr. Bryan maintains that a large number of the public service corporations of the country work hand in hand with the liquor interests. When the corporation needs votes the liquor combine and its allied forces come to the rescue, and when the liquor interest are threatened and need protection the corporation influences are wielded in their behalf. This is the system which, the speaker said, should be forever eliminated from the politics of the state. In Nebraska, he said, there are 981 saloons and 1200 bartenders. These 1200 bartenders can muster an army of 40,000 voters at any time on very short notice. All of the larger corporations, he thought, looked to the liquor interests for protection when unusual emergencies arise, and at the last session of the legislature all of the proposed laws regulating insurance companies, telephone companies and other corporations in the interest

of the public were defeated by the lobbies maintained throughout the sessions by these same interests.

Big business, said Mr. Bryan, always organizes to protect its own interests, and big business controls the "floating" vote in return for immunity from the law. The liquor interests never vote for men who are not with them, but who at least will do them no harm. In the last legislature the Omaha electric lobby and the fire insurance lobby worked together and traded back and forth on wet votes.

He believed that to pass the prohibitory amendment without electing state officers and a legislature in harmony with it, would be futile. The liquor interests had charged him with being a dictator, yet he said that he had been publishing a paper in the interest of progressive legislation and had always voted for the bulk of democratic candidates. His intent was not to be a dictator, but what he wanted in urging the dry issue was to see that there were dry nominees for all the places so that the question might be a live issue during the campaign, but not to exclude candidates who might not be dry. He charged that the water power projects of the state had been opposed by the liquor interests, acting for the big light and power concerns, because water power in the state would mean cheap light and cheap power for everybody, including the farmer, because the commodity would be carried to his yard at a very low cost.

Referring to the affairs of his own city, Mayor Bryan said that the policy of his administration was to render aid to what is known as the weaker part of society—to help the man and the woman as against the dollar. To this end new departments had been added to the city government at no additional cost to the city. One of these is free legal service for those who are too poor to hire attorneys. This is conducted at the office of the city attorney, where persons with small claims or grievances may go and have them adjusted without cost. Thus a large number of small claims are each week settled, in such cases as where an employer discharges help without full payment and where the amount is not large enough for the employment of a lawyer. It is surprising, said Mr. Bryan, how many of these small accounts are collected, and to this time it has never been necessary to bring a lawsuit. Formerly, and before this system was adopted, the poor had no recourse in such cases, except as they sometimes sought to "get even," only to find themselves charged with crime and facing a penalty.

Another department that has been found of great service to the poor is the employment bureau maintained by the city. Here the service is free and the man or woman looking for work is kept out of the clutches of the sharks of the employment agencies. This is a work which the speaker thought could be properly done by the Y. M. C. A. or the commercial club in cities like Aurora. Parks were another kind of improvement that tended to the general good, and he congratulated the city upon its good fortune in having the beautiful tract of land donated recently and which will be known as Streeter park.

Other matters that have been fought out in Lincoln were the electric light and the gas problems. A few years ago Lincoln citizens were paying 13 cents per kilowatt for electricity and the city council had failed to get a reduction. The commission form of government was adopted and

the rate was immediately reduced to 9 cents. The municipal plant was put in and the rate went down to 5 cents, the public service corporation meeting the lower rate in each instance. The city is making a profit of 35 per cent on current at 5 cents. The same fight was on to get dollar gas, and the matter went to the courts

to stay there for years, but dollar gas came, and the city of Lincoln is saving the sum of \$56,000.00 annually.

Mr. Bryan had the closest attention throughout his talk, and at the close many remained to meet him and to express their appreciation of the many facts he had clearly brought out in the course of his speech.

## Couldn't Kick Europe Into War With This Nation, Says General Wilson

[From a Wilmington, Delaware, newspaper report, Feb. 11, 1916.]

General James H. Wilson, U. S. A., Wilmington's distinguished member of that band of heroes who led the Union forces to victory during the war of the rebellion, appeared before the Rotary club yesterday in the Hotel du Pont to talk on "Preparedness." But instead of a jingoistic speech advocating military preparations on a large scale and "from the ground up," such as is not unusual in these days of wars and rumors of wars, Rotarians heard a frank and hopeful talk minimizing the troubles in regard to the possibility of war.

The core of General Wilson's thought seemed to be contained in one pithy remark: "You couldn't kick any power in the world into a war with the United States today for the simple reason that they are all fully engaged." The general appeared to have no antipathy toward a national preparedness but he indicated most strongly his disapproval of sensational or alarming movements of a militarist nature.

General Wilson enumerated the factors which would necessarily enter into any conflict, were such remotely probable. England, with its close relationship to the United States, the two being the great English-speaking powers, he said would be unquestionably on our side.

"But rest perfectly assured," he added, "the policies and measures would be laid down in Washington, not in London."

England would ally herself with the United States in order to protect Canada. France would be for us, General Wilson went on. Russia, another great power, is in sympathy with us. Although one hundred years "behind the times," she has the largest family group in the world—and 170,000,000 white subjects. These people should double their number in a generation, and General Wilson looks upon Russia as a coming great power.

Italy never has had occasion to show animosity toward the United States. Therefore, said the speaker, the only powers with whom there would be a possibility of conflict are Germany and Austria, the former with 65,000,000 to 70,000,000 men, the latter with 50,000,000 men. These two, with their one hundred million of Teutons could muster a large army.

### Troubles of Their Own

"But there is not the slightest danger, for the simple reason that these nations are now engaged in war across the waters to their fullest capacity. And after the war is ended—well, I don't believe that any power would have the money, equipment, men or defences to make war with this country effectively. If there were any risk, I should be willing to take it.

"Nothing further will be done toward a settled military policy until after the war is concluded, and the parties now engaged come to terms of settlement. When they do settle, then we'll find where we stand. If we are to have peace in the future, then God be blessed; if war, then our system of militia and volunteer service would not take care of matters. By

compulsory measures, we could muster a large force. If we need guns, we could go out and buy them; if ammunition, we buy it and make it.

"Our only shortcoming lies in the lack of trained officers. It has been proposed to enlarge the West Point military academy, but that institution is in a bowl of hills where enlargements, to include 500 more men, would mean a very large expenditure. The accommodations at present are well filled. The same applies to the naval academy.

"To increase our quota of trained officers, I would suggest the establishment of five new naval and military academies at points on the Pacific coast, the Gulf of Mexico and in the middle west. These could be built, equipped and maintained at less than the cost of one superdreadnaught.

"Not one soul has put his finger on the logical method of increasing our standing army. There has never been a company of soldiers in our service which had enough men effective service after deducting sick, wounded and detached men. The only relief I can see through the present agitation in congress along these lines is the elimination of a number of balloons and gas bags.

"We could readily have the desired increase through an act of congress, along these lines: 'From this time on every company in the army of the United States, whether infantry, cavalry, artillery or engineers, shall have a maximum enlistment of 180 men.' As to securing the new officers I could get 5,000 within forty-eight hours' notice, and all fit to be second lieutenants, as good material as any now in the army.

"The present maximum of each company of infantry and cavalry is about 75 men. In this number there is certainly not enough to replace the sick and wounded. The proposed increase would double the standing force. We could even go farther than that, if necessary. The limit of each company of infantry in the German force is 240 men.

"Some people say our army has reached the maximum of yearly enlistment. One reason why there are not more is the small amount of pay. For instance, \$13 a month is the pay of the private soldier. You business men would not expect to see any fellow who is making a decent salary in the city leave to accept a position of \$13 a month, even with board and accommodations.

"The obvious remedy is an increase in pay, to be brought about by an act of congress, so that hereafter every enlisted private should receive \$20 a month, lance corporal, \$30; first corporal, \$45; duty sergeant, \$60; first sergeant, quartermaster sergeant, etc., \$75 a month. With this rate, men would jump at the opportunity. And when they got out, they'd have a neat stake to start them off in business. With the attractions of military or naval service, including travel and other experience, we would no doubt get all the men we need.

"The present war in Europe may end in one, three, five, ten or twenty years. The conflict is trying the greatest of all human issues—the cause of democracy against autocracy and militarism."