

Dunn Scores Special Interests

[Extracts from address of Hon. I. J. Dunn, democratic candidate for United States senator, at Neligh, Nebraska, March 28, 1916.]

Prior to any filing on the democratic ticket for the nomination for governor, those who speak for the corporation-liquor interests declared that the liquor question must be kept out of the primary campaign; and that whether a candidate was "wet" or "dry" ought not to be considered. This demand was made with some insolence, notwithstanding the fact that for years a large element of the "wets" have made political subserviency to the corporation-liquor interests the test of democracy at the primaries and the elections for state, county and legislative offices.

But when these gentlemen selected their candidate for the nomination for governor to represent the liquor and its allied political interests, it speedily developed that their cry that the liquor question should be kept out of politics was mere sham and pretense. Their candidate promptly declared against prohibition, thus electing to plunge into the liquor question up to his ears.

The interests he represents have had no intention of making the campaign upon any other issue. Their purpose is to line up their forces behind their candidate, while shouting that the liquor question must not be made an issue, and thus secure all of the "dry" votes possible. The real cause of their complaint against the candidacy of Charles W. Bryan is not that he stands for the "dry" side, but because he has compelled them to get out in the open and show their colors so that the voters may know who and where they are.

FIGHT AGAINST SPECIAL PRIVILEGE

The fight is on in the democratic party in Nebraska, between those who are opposed to the domination of special privilege and their opponents. For a number of years, the spokesmen for these interests have sought to control the organization. They tried to take the management of the state campaign out of the hands of Chairman Thompson two years ago, and ceased their efforts in that regard only when it became apparent that there would be an open revolt against the entire state ticket if they did not take their hands off. At the last session of the legislature the house of representatives passed a bill providing for the submission to the people, a call for a constitutional convention. There were only nine votes against it. This bill was killed in the senate. When a motion was made to take it from the sifting committee and bring it before the senate for action, the motion was voted down, securing only three democratic votes, those of Beal, Bygland and Quinby. It was notorious that the corporation-liquor interests were opposed to giving the people an opportunity to vote on the question of calling a constitutional convention, and they killed the bill with democratic votes. When the bill to give Omaha the right to erect an electric light plant in connection with its water system was passed, a majority of the democrats in the senate signed a petition asking the governor to veto it. Some of them had voted for the bill and had pledged themselves prior to the election so to do.

The bill had been bitterly opposed in the house by the lobbyists of the Omaha Electric Light and Power Company, but Charles W. Bryan gave valuable assistance in securing its passage. Now who are these men who are the spokesmen for that element within the democratic party, in this state, who represent the allied corporation-liquor interests, and what relation have they to the present campaign? I am speaking of the interests that demand the defeat of Charles W. Bryan as the democratic candidate for governor, and who are giving their undivided support to his opponent. This contest ought to be fought out in the open, and the situation should be clearly understood by the democratic voters. Chief among those who represent the influences that are behind the candidate of the "interests," as principal director and campaign manager, is Arthur F. Mullen of Omaha, formerly attorney-general of the state, and candidate for national committeeman. Mr. Mullen, during the last session of the legislature was the chief representative for the Omaha Electric Light & Power Company, in its efforts to defeat the bill to give Omaha the right to build an electric light plant in connection with its water system. This corporation by a

decision of the supreme court of the United States has obtained a perpetual franchise to use the streets of Omaha. It is owned by the General Electric Company, a Standard Oil corporation. It has collected hundreds of thousands of dollars from the people of Omaha in excessive rates and is still doing so, consequently it is able to pay handsome fees and bonuses for services to defeat legislation affecting its interests. The bill referred to was passed by both branches of the legislature. The effort to defeat the bill having failed senators and members of the house claiming to be democrats were induced to petition the governor to veto it. A bill similar to the one defeated will be introduced at the coming session of the legislature, and the Electric Light Company will again endeavor to defeat it.

WHY INTERESTS OPPOSE CHAS. W. BRYAN

It will be pleasing to the special-interest corporations, if the democrats shall nominate and the people elect to the state senate, men who are "right" on questions in which these interests are concerned. If the democrats will select candidates for state and legislative offices upon the recommendation of Mr. Mullen and his associates, these interests will feel secure. One of Mullen's associates in the pleasant occupation of running the democratic party, is chief lobbyist for the Union Pacific Railroad Company. He spends his time in the congenial atmosphere of Lincoln while the legislature is in session, and gives such attention as is necessary in the various state senatorial districts to see that the right kind of men are nominated on the democratic ticket. A third member of this interesting group of "leaders" spent a considerable portion of his time during the last session of the legislature at Lincoln in the interest of a bill in which the old line fire insurance companies were interested. He too has been active in the past, and is now, in seeing that the democrats make no mistake in their selection of men to represent them in the senate at the coming session of the legislature. But the chief purpose of this group to whom I have referred, ably assisted by the editors of the Omaha World-Herald and the Lincoln Daily Star, is the defeat of Charles W. Bryan for the nomination for governor. And why this effort? For twenty years Bryan has been active in the ranks of the democratic party in state and national politics. He has been on the people's side in every contest. He has been a progressive and always opposed to special privilege. He is clean, capable, aggressive. The real cause of the opposition to him is that he is in favor of putting the special privilege element out of the government business in Nebraska. He is opposed to the corporation-liquor interests dominating the democratic party or controlling the state government. He is against the liquor traffic and its allies. His election as governor would have an injurious effect upon the market value of the services of the professional lobbyist. He is capable of big things, and has shown his capacity to do them. It was Charles W. Bryan who conceived and suggested the famous resolution introduced by W. J. Bryan in the Baltimore convention, denouncing Ryan and Belmont, and demanding their withdrawal from the convention. The introduction of that resolution was the master stroke which finally resulted in the nomination of Woodrow Wilson, and placed the democratic party before the country in the attitude which enabled it to win the national election in the fall of 1912.

A FRIEND OF PRESIDENT WILSON

Charles W. Bryan supported Woodrow Wilson when support was needed, and his support consisted of something more than mouthing platitudes. He was for Wilson in fact and in person in the turmoil and struggle at Baltimore, where support or opposition counted, and when those fellows who are now opposing him in this state, and shouting themselves black in the face for Wilson (when nobody is opposing his candidacy) were following the band wagon of Ryan, Belmont & Company, including the distinguished editors of the Omaha World-Herald and Lincoln Star. And just remember that during that convention these gentlemen who are now loud in their support of President Wilson were denouncing Candidate Wilson and making every effort in their power to defeat him.

They are the same gentlemen who from every

cross-road in Nebraska, during the primary campaign of 1912, and while the Baltimore convention was in session, denounced Wilson and his supporters and opposed his nomination.

The work that such men as Charles W. Bryan did at Baltimore and during the campaign that followed, renders it unimportant whether the self-constituted guardians of President Wilson's political fortunes in Nebraska are for or against him. They opposed the President and his policies as long as their opposition promised any results. They opposed him on the tariff question as to free raw material; they opposed him on the banking and currency question; they opposed him on the question as to placing an embargo on the shipment of arms and munitions of war, after he had declared that such a law would be a violation of neutrality on the part of this government, and now, having failed in their efforts, in each instance, and realizing that President Wilson's nomination is assured, and that their opposition in 1916 would be as fruitless as it was in 1912, they are beating the tom-toms and proclaiming their allegiance.

PROGRESSIVE AND CONSERVATIVE DEMOCRATS

In submitting my name to the democratic voters of Nebraska as a candidate for the nomination for United States senator, I consider it proper to state the grounds upon which I invite support. Whether I represent those principles of democracy which appeal to the individual voter, more nearly than does my opponent, should be considered; and whether I am better fitted to represent the people of this state in the national senate in carrying out those principles. We have in the democratic party in Nebraska what we term progressive democrats, and conservative democrats. We may not agree as to whether these terms are justly applied to individuals, but it is for the voters to decide to which class a candidate belongs. I expect to be judged by my attitude and record on public questions, covering a period of more than twenty years of political activity. The way to determine whether a candidate is a progressive or conservative, and where he stands on public questions, is by his record and not by what he or his friends say about it while he is a candidate.

There is a real difference of opinion on state and national issues between my opponent and myself in my judgment, and the democrats of this state are entitled to an opportunity to determine at the primaries whether they approve his causes or mine. I submit that since his election to the senate, and even before that time, my opponent has been out of harmony with progressive democrats on important issues. Now bear in mind I do not claim the right to determine who is and who is not a progressive; nor as to what constitutes progressive or conservative principles; I do claim the right, however, to present what I conceive to be progressive principles, and to urge what in my judgment determines whether a man is a progressive or a conservative. I may be mistaken, and what I call progressive principles, my opponent and his friends may look upon as conservative. So I shall present my own views and point out why, in my judgment, I should be classed as a progressive, while on the other hand my opponent has been, on important issues, in full sympathy with the conservative element, not only in the state of Nebraska, but in the nation.

SOUGHT TO CRUSH BRYAN INFLUENCE

As above stated, a man's attitude can not well be determined by what he says during a political campaign. We are therefore entitled to consider the public and political record of one who seeks office. The lines of demarkation between the progressive and conservative elements within the democratic party have been sharply and clearly defined for a great many years. When in 1896 the progressive elements of the democratic party under the leadership of W. J. Bryan overthrew the old conservative faction, it faced a new situation, and the nation a new alignment of political forces. Shortly after Bryan's defeat in 1900 the reactionary element under the leadership of Senator Hill of New York, and his associates whose forces were beaten at Chicago in 1896, started what was known as the reorganizers' movement. The purpose of this movement was to repudiate practically all the democratic party had stood for in 1896 and 1900 under Bryan's leadership, and to crush Bryan and his influence and following everywhere in the nation, and especially in Nebraska, and it was so announced. In 1903, the Brooklyn Eagle, one of the spokesmen for the reorgan-