

A National Referendum

In the house of representatives, March 13, 1916, Mr. Warren Worth Bailey, of Pennsylvania, introduced the following bill; which was referred to the committee on the judiciary—and ordered to be printed:

"A bill to provide for the expression of opinion of the electors on questions of national policy at general elections for members of the house of representatives for the advice and guidance of the officials of the United States in relation to the execution of the powers vested in the government of the United States, and for other purposes.

"Be it enacted by the senate and house of representatives of the United States of America in congress assembled, That upon the filing with the secretary of the interior of the United States of a written petition signed by five hundred thousand or more electors qualified to vote for members of the congress of the United States, requesting that any question of national policy in relation to the execution of the powers vested in the government of the United States be submitted to the electors for their opinion for the advice and guidance of the officials of the United States, or upon the resolution of congress, adopted by a majority vote thereof, authorizing the submission of such a question, it shall be the duty of the secretary of the interior to forward to the secretary of state of each state, or if there is no such officer in any state, to the officer having general supervision over the elections in such state, a copy of such question, with the request that the same be submitted to the electors of such state qualified to vote for members of congress at the next general election at which members of the house of representatives of the United States within such state are to be elected.

"Sec. 2. That such petition may be in the form of separate sheets, each one of which must contain a printed copy of the question proposed to be submitted, and must also contain an affidavit of a person over twenty-one years of age, made before an officer authorized to administer oaths, that the signatures appended thereto are the signatures of electors qualified to vote for members of the congress of the United States, and that he saw the persons sign the said petition, and knows that the persons signing it are the same persons whose names are signed thereto. Such petition shall be accompanied by a certificate of the local officer having charge of elections that the names on such petition are the names of electors duly qualified to vote for members of the congress of the United States, and also by the certificate of the secretary of the state wherein the petition was signed, or other officer having general supervision of elections in such state, that the petition is regular in all respects.

"Sec. 3. That when such petition is filed with the secretary of the interior he shall ascertain whether it is in proper form and contains the requisite number of names; but not more than fifty thousand names shall be counted from any one state.

"Sec. 4. That when congress, as heretofore provided, has adopted a resolution requesting the submission of a question of national policy to the electors it shall cause a copy of such resolution to be transmitted to the secretary of the interior.

"Sec. 5. That any number of questions may be voted upon at an election. Such questions shall be transmitted by the secretary of the

interior to the secretary of state of each state, or other officer having general supervision over elections in such state, at least sixty days prior to the general election at which members of the house of representatives of the United States within such state are to be elected. The secretary of the interior shall determine the form in which all questions shall be submitted to the electors.

"Sec. 6. That the legislature of each state is hereby requested to enact the necessary laws for facilitating the signing and certifying of the petitions herein provided for, for the placing of such questions on the official ballot at the general elections at which members of the house of representatives of the United States within such state are to be elected, for the voting thereon, for the canvass of the votes on such questions, for certifying the result to the secretary of the interior, and for such other matters as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of this act.

"Sec. 7. That the secretary of the interior is hereby authorized to publish notices of the questions to be submitted to the electors in such newspapers or other publications as he deems advisable in the state wherein such questions are to be submitted within thirty days prior to the election, and not more than four times in each such newspaper or other publication, but he is not authorized to expend for such publication a sum in excess of the amount appropriated therefor by congress.

"Sec. 8. That when the vote on each such question is received by the secretary of the interior he shall certify the same to congress.

"Sec. 9. That this act shall take effect immediately."

OVER \$7,500,000 TO AID THE BELGIANS

A Washington Associated Press dispatch says: America has contributed \$7,500,000 to the relief of Belgium, according to E. Van de Vire, Belgian minister of finance, who sailed today for London on the steamer St. Paul after spending several weeks in this country. Up to February 1, foodstuffs and clothing valued at more than \$80,000,000 had been shipped into Belgium, he said. Belgian interests had supplied more than \$6,000,000 of the amount expended. The remainder was given by the United States and other countries.

Mr. Van de Vire said that more than \$50,000,000 in other supplies had been expended in this country. He thanked the country for its generosity and said in a parting message:

"I ask you individually and as a nation to accept the love, friendship and faith which is offered to America by every Belgian as a tribute to their gratitude."

BRYAN'S HOUR OF TRIUMPH

The foundation of William J. Bryan's peace propaganda is the Nebraskan's belief that international differences can be composed without resort to war if sufficient time is taken to discuss and understand the subject of dispute. On that theory he drafted the peace treaties which were submitted to some scores of nations providing for investigation by a commission, pending whose report the status quo would be preserved between disputants. Mr. Bryan was in favor of fixing a year as the definite time that should elapse before warlike preparations might be made. He has been much

jeered in this country for his faith, but the treaties have been entered into by thirty nations.

On May 7 last year the Lusitania was torpedoed by a German submarine. The act might have become immediately a casus belli between the United States and Germany. Mr. Bryan resigned his office of secretary of state in protest against what he considered too hasty action by President Wilson in dispatching a note of threatening character to the Kaiser's government last June. The exchange of notes was continued, and now, on May 4, 1916, two days short of a year of the offense that precipitated the whole submarine controversy, Germany yields to the American demands.

Here is concrete evidence of the soundness of the Bryan policy. It is a triumph for the "Sage of Lincoln," in which the American people can rejoice. If Mr. Bryan is inclined to croak a bit, bear with him. He is entitled to do so. — Pittsburgh Gazette, May 6.

"NEVER AGAIN!" FOR RUSSIA

Fourteen months without vodka has, according to her own statement, made a perceptible—nay, a considerable—difference with Russia. We are told that all the officials, from the Czar down, believe that prohibition has come to stay; for the benefits that have accrued in one year are to valuable to lose by a return to the old way again. A Petrograd report, appearing in the Wichita Beacon among other papers, gives a combined official and semi-official estimate of what these benefits have been:

Crime (all kinds) has decreased 62 per cent.

Absenteeism in factories has fallen 60 per cent.

Suicide rate has dropped enormously.

Hospitals formerly overcrowded are not filled.

Efficiency in factories increased 10 to 15 per cent.

Practically every inhabitant is at work.

Savings-deposits have increased 8 per cent.

Fire-damage has fallen off 38 per cent.

Wages in some districts raised 500 per cent. (This applies to peasants working as day-laborers.)

People are eating better and costlier food.

Better clothing is worn by the poorer classes.

Agricultural implement sales 60 per cent larger.

Imprisonment decreased 72 per cent.

Offsetting these remarkable results of Russia's sudden dryness is this startling development:

The death-rate from drunkenness has increased enormously

This seeming paradox is explained by this statement that dipsomaniacs have turned from vodka to methylated spirits and other poisonous substitutes.

Nicholas II's reform is being compared to those brought about during the reign of Peter the Great, and it would seem the fame of the "Little Father" is secure in the hearts of the Russian people.—Literary Digest.

PAINLESS PATRIOTISM

"How quickly some of those immigrants assimilate our ideas and methods!"


"As, for instance?"

"Well, I asked my Italian barber if he was going home to fight and he said he wasn't; that he had paired with an Austrian in the next block." —Boston Transcript.

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