

A Dry Nation in Four Years

[The following interview of Mr. Bryan appeared in the New York World, November 15, 1916.]

"My work during the next four years," declared William Jennings Bryan, in an interview for The World last night, "will be to contribute whatever I can toward making the national democracy dry. When an issue arises it must be met, and the prohibition issue is here. Our party can not afford to take the immoral side of a moral issue. The democratic party can not afford to become the champion of the brewery, the distillery and the saloon. The members of the party will not permit it to be buried in a drunkard's grave."

Mr. Bryan, who took up a two days' abode at the Holland House yesterday morning, on his first visit to New York since before the presidential campaign opened, had been pointing out why Mr. Wilson won, why Mr. Hughes lost, why Colonel Roosevelt did not help Mr. Hughes and what effect the victory for the President would have upon our international relations. He had explained that Mr. Hughes's campaign had fallen flat because "Mr. Hughes was like the man who had to take the side of the moon in a debate on the relative merits of the sun and the moon."

DRY STATES WENT FOR WILSON

The prediction that prohibition is to be the big issue four years hence came in answer to this question:

"In what ways will the result of the election affect the future of the democratic party?"

"In two ways," was Mr. Bryan's quick rejoinder. "In the first place, four years more of experience under democratic reforms will make it impossible to repeal the laws passed. By 1920 the country will have adjusted itself to the new laws, so that conservatism will support the laws that are as against a proposed change.

"This will leave the democratic party free to take up new issues such as equal suffrage and prohibition—and the election returns make it easy for the democratic party to take the lead in both of these reforms. It does not owe anything to the political bosses who control the politics of the wet cities, and besides, a considerable majority of President Wilson's electoral vote came from dry territory."

Mr. Bryan was asked to estimate the democratic strength in the dry states. He resumed:

Of the twenty-three dry states, seventeen went for Mr. Wilson, two more were very close, while prohibition has been practically decided upon in four other states which he carried. It happens, also, that Mr. Wilson carried nearly all the states in which women vote. If the democratic party takes the liquor side of the prohibition question, it will risk a loss without certainty of gain, even if it could be supposed that it was willing to make an even trade of dry votes for wet ones.

REPUBLICANS MIGHT SEIZE ISSUE

"It is worth noting, also," continued Mr. Bryan, "that the republican party, having been defeated on the old issues, will be looking for some new issue upon which to make the next fight, and since the wet vote was not sufficient to give it a victory—and several more states will be dry before 1920—it may champion prohibition in the hope of winning back the dry states of the west.

"It is not at all impossible, therefore," was Mr. Bryan's conclusion, "that the two leading parties will, in 1920, enter into active rivalry to obtain the dry vote of the country."

When discussing the attempt he predicts will be made to capture the dry states of the west in 1920, Mr. Bryan was asked what will be the effect of the apparent shifting of political power from the west to the west and south. He replied:

"The first effect is to teach the East a lesson in geography. It has been enjoyable to those living beyond the Alleghany mountains to hear such plaintive inquiries as 'Where is New Mexico?' 'How did Arizona go?' 'Are the returns from Nevada complete yet?' 'What about Wyoming?' and 'Why is North Dakota?' The question of 'How old is Ann?' was overshadowed for a while.

"The second effect is to free the country from the superstition that all campaign calculation

must be based on carrying New York. The country can now proceed to legislate on the theory that the law should suit the majority, no matter in what section or sections the majority lives."

HUGHES HAD TO TAKE THE "MOON SIDE"

"What have you to say as to the kind of a candidate Mr. Hughes made and the campaign he conducted?" was the next question asked of Mr. Bryan. The reply was:

"You have to make allowances for the fact that Mr. Hughes could not successfully attack the administration's record and could not promise to plunge the country into war, although war was the natural inference which many drew from his attacks upon the President's policy. Mr. Hughes was like the man who had to take the side of the moon in a debate on the relative merits of the sun and moon. He did the best he could, but he had the wrong side. He was put in the attitude of attacking without offering anything as a substitute. I think the best cartoon of the campaign illustrated his embarrassment. It was entitled: 'Listen to the Knocking Bird.'"

On the much debated question whether or not Colonel Roosevelt's support helped or injured Mr. Hughes's candidacy, Mr. Bryan said:

"I should say it would be difficult to decide which hurt Mr. Hughes most, his own speeches or Mr. Roosevelt's speeches. However, the fact that Mr. Hughes lost most in the territory in which Mr. Roosevelt was supposed to be popular and won in the states where Mr. Roosevelt was supposed to be least popular, would seem to give the candidate the advantage over his principal supporter."

SEES NO HOPE IN OFFICIAL COUNT

As to the possibility of a change in the election returns which would show Mr. Hughes to be a winner after all, Mr. Bryan's comment was:

"All things are possible, but there is no probability of a mistake sufficient to change the result. And why should Mr. Hughes desire to hold the office when he knows Mr. Wilson received some 400,000 more votes than he did? How would Mr. Hughes feel conducting a government over the protest of so large a plurality?"

Mr. Bryan summarized the reasons for Mr. Wilson's victory in these words:

"Some voters were influenced by one reason and some by another. Every large group of our voters had received some material advantage from the Wilson administration. The commercial class had been benefited by the Currency Law and the laboring man by the Eight-Hour law, the Anti-Trust law against government by injunction and other measures of special interest to labor.

"Here are the three most important groups and all had reason to be satisfied by the Wilson administration.

"The women voters probably were influenced by the fact that the President had been able to keep the country out of war with Mexico and with Europe, and all classes had been doubly benefited by the Tariff law. First they had the advantage of lower import rates, and, secondly, they were relieved of the fear of panic by the fact that prosperity had come with a low tariff, despite all the gloomy predictions of the republican leaders.

EUROPE SHOULD BE SATISFIED

"Generally speaking, the unparalleled record in the matter of economic reforms was the basis of the President's claim for popular approval, but the peace argument strongly reinforced the argument based upon remedial legislation."

"What effect will the re-election of Mr. Wilson have upon the European war situation?" was asked.

"The attitude of Europe will probably depend upon the personal bias of the man who expresses himself, but the European public in general ought to find satisfaction in the continuation of a policy already settled and known. A change in administration would have ushered in an era of uncertainty, especially between November and March.

"The fact that the belligerents on neither side were entirely pleased with the Wilson adminis-

tration was proof of its neutrality. If either side had championed the President it would have furnished an argument against him."

Mr. Bryan was reluctant to discuss his part in the campaign, even when reminded that the democratic victory was won in the states where he spoke. At length he said:

"It is true that the west, the stone which builders had hitherto rejected, has become the head of the corner. But there were so many democrats at work in that section that no one person can claim a large amount of credit for the result. My share in the rejoicing is surely large, whatever my share may have been in the labors.

"We are also rejoicing that Nebraska went dry. We are now a part of the white territory which covers nearly all the country west of the Mississippi. We are truly proud of Nebraska. It went for Wilson, as well as for the prohibition amendment."

The drive Mr. Bryan will captain against the liquor interests will be undertaken immediately. He will leave tonight for Indiana and speak in Indianapolis Sunday morning before a national assemblage of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. He will speak in Chicago Monday at a luncheon of the Anti-Saloon league.

THE LESSON IN INDIANA

In Indiana the liquor interests forced a wet plank into the platform in spite of the protest of democratic leaders, and then, after having disgraced the party by their insolent domination of it, they proceeded to throw their support to the republican party. Indiana went republican on President, senators, congressmen and state ticket.

The democrats of the nation may well profit by the lesson taught in Indiana. The liquor interests have no politics; they use the party that best serves their purpose, and they cast it aside when through with it. They THOUGHT Hughes would win.

W. J. BRYAN.

REPUBLICAN CONTRIBUTIONS

Thirty-four thousand two hundred and five republicans gave \$2,441,568 to the Hughes campaign fund—that is, to the fund distributed by the republican national committee—an AVERAGE of about \$70 for each contributor. That is not a POPULAR subscription—only about one republican voter in two hundred contributing. But, judging the future by the past, the administration would have been controlled by a still smaller proportion if the republicans had won.

Food prices are said to be lower in Europe than they are in the United States. If the war is to blame for the high prices, it would seem only logical that the closer they get to where there is war the higher they ought to be. It is suspected, however, that the governing principle has more relation to where they have the money to pay them.

There is nothing hasty or reckless about the canvassing board of New Hampshire either. On the afternoon of December 2d, twenty-five days after the election, it announced that President Wilson had carried the state by 56 votes out of a total of over 87,000. They say that only faint signs of life have been visible in Senator Gallinger ever since.

Election analysts say that comparatively few straight party votes were cast outside of those sections where political machines still hold sway. The office humorist says that one explanation is that since candidates have inaugurated the practice of campaigning by automobile it isn't safe for a voter to stay in the middle of the road.

We trust that nothing in the recent election returns will deter Col. George B. M. Harvey's publicity agent from calling attention, on the eve of the 1920 presidential election, to the remarkable accuracy that characterizes the colonel's prediction of the result by states. The need of adding to the gayety of the nation in crises like these forbids.

Anxious Reader: You have been misinformed. The favorite poem of Chairman Willcox of the republican committee is not "Out Where the West Begins."