

Bryan Raises Prohibition Question

[Below is special correspondence to The New York Evening Post.]

Lincoln, Neb., November 17.—Here in the shadow of Fairview, where the people know their neighbor Bryan well, 1916, and the way the west sideswiped the east, has ceased to be the main talk. The west has a bigger joke on the east coming than that. Under the eaves of Fairview the past is dead and 1920 is the rage.

This comes because everybody in these parts attended William Jennings Bryan's election eve meeting in his home city this year. They went because they were interested in what he might say on Wilson and the prohibition amendment and what he might not say about certain "wet" democratic candidates for governor and other things. They heard these things, but the thing they now remember best, though they paid small heed to it at the time, was something else. It was like this: "When I have helped successfully to rid the democratic party in Nebraska of its brewery control, I propose to go right on and help finish the job on a national scale. My greatest work is still ahead of me."

That did not seem at the time so very sensational. Mr. Bryan has flung himself against many a stone wall in his time, and his neighbors took with calmness his intention to tie Tammany and Roger Sullivan and Tom Taggart and Colonel Watterson, to the prohibition chariot. It was a good lifetime job he had set himself, and Mr. Bryan could enjoy, for he is at his best in a battle for what he considers a moral issue. But as to its leading to any near political consequences that was out of the question "Bryan has permanently retired from politics," said his neighbors at this point.

Then came the election, with Hughes kidnapping the fair Presidency on Tuesday night, and the west dramatically returning it unharmed to its present owner's arms. Meanwhile, Nebraska voted dry in obedience to Mr. Bryan, and with it went Michigan and Montana and South Dakota, and the election of legislatures in Utah and Florida pledged to enact prohibition laws. Enterprising newspapers immediately made two new maps. One was a democratic map of the United States. The other was a "dry" map of the United States. And behold, it required an expert to tell them apart. That is how the "dopesters" hereabout decide that for the lately jilted east the worst is yet to come.

Woodrow Wilson carried the solid south and the solid west. Prohibition has carried the solid south and the solid west. We are speaking by approximations, of course. One or two southern states are not yet "dry." One or two western states voted for Hughes. But the generalization holds practically true.

Four years from now Woodrow Wilson will be retiring. Anybody in sight for his shoes? Any particular issue in sight for his party? There is just William Jennings Bryan, the eternal W. J. B., in sight, and he has an issue—prohibition. Every present democratic state but eight is either "dry" or has made arrangements to go "dry." Every "dry" state but six is now democratic. And William Jennings Bryan has pledged himself to spend his coming years in making the democratic party and the nation "dry."

The Party is "Dry"

The party, wherever it has electoral votes, is already "dry." With a

very little help the "dry" states can elect a president. They have just done it, but not on that issue. At the head of the "dry" in this, at least for the present "dry" party, is the still alert, vigorous, and ambitious leader of three lost causes. Will he take the chance? Will a duck swim? Take it from the post-election issue of The Commoner: "Let the 'dry' democrats begin work at once to secure control of the democratic organization, state an dnational. Nearly half the states are now 'dry,' and the number will be swelled to nearly if not quite thirty before 1920. To take the side of the saloon is to invite disastrous defeat. To take the side of the home is to draw to the party the strong young men who are coming out of the schools and colleges, and who will, within a few years, be the dominant force in politics. Again in the nation's life the old question demands an answer, 'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.'"

They think they know Mr. Bryan out here. Six years ago he began in Nebraska the campaign just announced for the nation. He split his party and bolted one candidate for governor in the course of that fight. He made the liquor issue the only state issue during that period, and he has ended in seeing his state "dry," though he has never been able to control his party on that issue. Knowing their neighbor, and studying the democratic dry map, the people in these parts have no hesitancy in prophesying that by 1920 the democratic party of the United States will be having the time of its life with Mr. Bryan and his liquor issue, and Lincoln be once more the storm source of democratic politics.

That is the surprise the west thinks it has still in store for the east—a bigger surprise than this recent big one. It has already been pointed out that the election returns indicate the prematurity of the reports of Mr. Bryan's political demise and interment. This west that went for Wilson and decided an election without the help of New York, New Jersey, Indiana, and Illinois is Bryan's stamping ground, the section stumped by him for Wilson. And Bryan, it can be claimed with some plausibility, was the man who gave the Wilson administration the peace tinge which made it possible to win the west and the election for Wilson.

It is a doleful prospect. Here in the west they know full well there is nothing like the liquor issue to muss up politics. But it is coming. The cloud is already several times the size of a man's hand, and the biggest wind William Jennings Bryan knows how to raise is puffing it this way.—W. L. L.

BRYAN AND PROHIBITION

Mr. W. J. Bryan did Trojan service for the democratic party in the campaign just closed, and went far to redeem himself from his absurd and undignified conduct as a member of the cabinet and from the pranks he attempted to play with the administration during the most critical period of our foreign relations. But the Nebraskan has suffered no grass to grow under his feet in the attempt to improve on the success of the party by undertaking to lay down and force the lines it shall follow in the next presidential campaign of 1920. He has promptly jumped into the arena with the proposition that the democrats shall adopt a nation-wide prohibition plank in their national platform in 1920 and make this their

PROHIBITION MAP OF THE UNITED STATES



Twenty-five of the forty-eight states in the United States will be dry as the result of the election. Nineteen already had voted out liquor while six went over to the prohibition cause Nov. 7, Utah and Florida electing legislatures which are expected to vote against the saloons when they meet.

Of the twenty-three wet states left, six have local option in more than half their counties, nine have more than a quarter of their counties dry, and the remaining eight have less than 25 per cent of their counties against the saloons. The lineup:

More than 50 per cent.—Missouri, Kentucky, Texas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Indiana.

More than 25 per cent.—California, Wyoming, Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, Maryland, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire.

Less than 25 per cent.—Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts.—Kansas City Star.

chief issue in that campaign. Prohibition as a state-to-state movement on non-partisan lines is doing mighty well and is progressing with wonderful rapidity. It seems a pity that Mr. Bryan can not let well enough alone. Prohibition is a moral issue that should be dealt with by all the people without the injection of political bias. It appeals to all the people alike, if it is left on its sole merits as a principle. What difference, then, should it make to a sincere prohibitionist what the brand of a man's politics may be, so long as he votes for the principle? But to bring party into it is to mix politics and whisky, than which there is no more vicious combination.

Neither national party adopted prohibition as an issue between them in the late campaign, and yet state elections on November 7, held independently but simultaneously with the presidential election, added at least five states to the "dry" column. Michigan gave prohibition 75,000 majority; Nebraska went "dry" by 9,442, Montana by 20,000, and South Dakota by 25,000. Idaho has adopted a prohibition constitutional amendment by a majority of three to one; Utah and Florida have elected legislatures pledged to a prohibition law, and Washington, Iowa, Colorado, Arizona and Arkansas stood adamant against recent attempts to revive liquor traffic in those states.

Twenty-four of the forty-eight states of the Union are now "dry." It is estimated that sixty per cent of the population and eighty-five per cent of the area of the United States is now subjected to prohibition. The movement is progressing favorably and with a minimum friction as a non-political moral measure. It seems to us that it were better continued so.

It is President Wilson's view, as we understand it, that prohibition is a moral and not a political issue, and that it is one for the states to deal

with and legislate upon. The principle of prohibition is democratic in its nature, enuring to the benefit of the masses, as it does, and it is significant that the prohibition wave originated and has moved side by side along with democracy, although independent of it politically, from the south and west which in coalition has just elected a President. This development in itself, of course, furnishes a strong temptation to play politics with and we may fully expect the most will be made of it by politicians on the lookout for issues and the drift of the tide. As a writer says:

"The fear hitherto has been that no national convention would dare to embarrass an eastern nominee by a prohibition plank, since the candidate would be sure to lose the heavily populated states of New York, New Jersey, Illinois and Indiana. But the prohibition strength in each of these states is growing every day. The fact also that a president can be elected without those four states makes it almost certain that from now until 1920 the agitation against high-balls and beers will be relentlessly carried on." — Knoxville (Tenn.) Sentinel.

DISTRICT PROHIBITION FIRST AIM OF CONGRESS

The first effort of prohibition leaders in congress at this session is to be directed toward enactment of the bill to abolish liquor in the District of Columbia. William J. Bryan's declaration for national prohibition and his presence in Washington have served to arouse interest in the subject, and the initial move will be made in the senate, where Senator Morris Sheppard of Texas plans to push the District prohibition bill in the near future. He will be aided by Senator Kenyon of Iowa, who will champion the measure from the republican side.—Washington Star.