

Congressman Bailey's Speech

[Below are printed the remarks of Hon. Warren Worth Bailey of Pennsylvania, in the House of Representatives, February 17, 1917, during the progress of the debate on the army appropriation bill.—Ed.]

Mr. Bailey. Mr. Chairman, for one, I wish to hurl back the charge of cowardice flung at the advocates of peace by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Gardner).

Mr. Gardner. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. Bailey. Yes.

Mr. Gardner. When did I accuse you or any other advocate of peace of cowardice?

Mr. Bailey. I will quote your language later, if you please. I do not care to be diverted just now.

It takes more courage than was ever conceived of in the philosophy of swashbuckling shoulder-strappers to face the mob and to bring to bear upon it the forces of reason and justice. Is that courage which enables the soldier to march up to the cannon's mouth the only or the greatest courage which men may show? No; a thousand times no. There is a brute courage and there is also a moral courage. There is the courage of the bulldog, the courage of the tomcat, the courage of the cock sparrow, the courage of a reptile which attacks another reptile. But is this courage such as to inspire our loftiest admiration? Is it the sort of courage we try to develop and strengthen in our children? Who is the greater hero—he that taketh a city or he that conquereth his own soul?

The gentleman from Massachusetts may arrogate to himself a heroism that he denies to men like William Jennings Bryan, Henry Ford, David Starr Jordan, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Callaway). But I am here to say that any one of these is possessed of a spirit of heroism as far surpassing that before which the gentleman from Massachusetts prostrates himself as day surpasses night. The heroism which enthralles the gentleman from Massachusetts is that of the jungle.

Mr. Gardner. Will the gentleman yield? I call the gentleman's attention to the rule of the house which says that a member shall proceed in order and avoid personalities. I do not object to a reasonable amount of criticism.

Mr. Bailey. I would like to ask the gentleman if he proceeded in order the other day when he branded those who stand for peace as cowards and allies of Germany. (Applause.)

Mr. Gardner. If the gentleman can point out a single case in which I transgressed the rights of the house, all right. I shall ask the Chair to rule that the gentleman proceed in order and avoid personalities. I do not object to a reasonable amount of criticism, but I do not want the whole speech directed toward me.

Mr. Bailey. What is the particular language the gentleman objects to?

Mr. Gardner. I call the attention of the chairman to the rule of the house which says that in debate a member must avoid personalities.

Mr. Bailey. I hope this will not be taken out of my time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Gardner. I call attention to rule XIV, which says:

"Sec. 734. When any member desires to speak or deliver any matter to the house he shall rise and respectfully address himself to 'Mr. Speaker,' and on being recognized may address the house from any place on the floor or from the clerks' desk, and shall confine himself to the question under debate, avoiding personalities."

The Chairman. The Chair thinks, of course, the general rule is perfectly well understood that there has got to be a measure of decorum and propriety in debate which the Chair must enforce. There is also a latitude of argument and latitude of reply. What is the particular language used by the gentleman from Pennsylvania which is objected to as being an impingement on the rule cited?

Mr. Gardner. It was the general fact that he seemed to be making me the butt of all his remarks. I never knew the gentleman, even by sight, until the other day, when he was in the chair, and I never mentioned his name on the

floor of the house or elsewhere that I know of. Well, I do not care. Let him go on. (Laughter).

Mr. Bailey. Mr. Chairman, I repeat that the heroism which enthralles the gentleman from Massachusetts is that of the jungle. That is what I repeat, and I am willing to stand by it.

That which inspires men like William Jennings Bryan is the heroism of faith, of service, of love, of justice, of human kindness, of all-embracing brotherhood.

Mr. Gardner. Is there a rule of the house, Mr. Chairman, that requires me to remain and hear the gentleman?

Mr. Bailey. No, sir; you are excused, with my compliments. (Laughter.)

The gentleman from Massachusetts, echoing the voice of the metropolitan press and of the military satrapy which seeks to replace the ideals of the republic with those of the principalities and powers which are now drinking at the fountains of blood, bewail the fact that the American people are taking counsel among themselves regarding this momentous issue which he wishes to be determined without their knowledge or their consent. He would silence those who can not accept the gospel of the claw and the fang which he preaches with such vehemence. There is to be no counsel save that of the war lords; no voice heard except that of the munition maker; no suggestion offered save by what may be usurped authority. Doubtless he believes with the Washington Post that death should be decreed against every American citizen who dares in this crisis of the nation to speak the word of soberness in an effort to curb the mob spirit to which militarism always and everywhere appeals. His whole attack on those who believe the people should have some voice in a matter affecting their most vital interests is based on the assumption that only the war lords should be heard in such an emergency. He thinks that only cravens and cowards would question the word of those who settle disputes with the sword and who dispose of issues involving national honor with 16-inch guns. Yet there is a bravery above that of the barracks, a courage finer than that of the cavalier, a heroism more splendid than that of the man on horseback. It is the bravery of the man who faces the mob; it is the courage of the man who confronts the serried ranks of prejudice; it is the heroism of the soul which rises superior to the shafts of ridicule and malevolence in the cause of right and justice.

Mr. Chairman, the gentleman from Massachusetts conjures those who believe in the possibility of a peaceful solution of the pending problem to "stand by the President." But is he "standing by the President"? The President is hoping and striving to avoid war. With a matchless poise and patience he has thrown his incomparable influence on the side of peace. By every means at his command he is endeavoring to steer the ship of state through troubled waters to a safe harbor. Yet here is the gentleman from Massachusetts and those for whom he speaks going to extravagant lengths in their efforts to balk him and to force him to enter the war as an ally of the allies. The gentleman from Massachusetts makes no concealment of his purpose. He is at least frank, open, above board. He does not beat about the bush.

I wish he were here to listen to this tribute. He hates Germany with a consuming hatred. His heart is with Britain, and he wants to plunge his country into war as an aid to King George in his struggle to destroy Germany. Yet he has the consummate effrontery to stand on this floor before the American people and asperse the good faith of those who wish this country to remain neutral and to avoid a dangerous entanglement with the warring powers. He charges them with placing loyalty to Germany above their loyalty to America.

(Mr. Bailey here uttered certain words which were subsequently ordered stricken out by a vote of the house.)

Mr. Bailey. I thank God for Woodrow Wilson and William Jennings Bryan in this hour of grave peril to republican institutions. I thank God for those men and women all over the land who refuse to bow at the feet of Mars at the call of the war mong-

ers and the traffickers in munitions. I thank God for those really courageous souls who refuse to be silenced by an envenomed press which gets its inspiration from Wall street and which would crucify every American who dares to plead in this hour of stress and strain for reason to assert herself rather than passion.

Perhaps the gentleman from Massachusetts thinks that it is cowardice which impels me to vote against monstrous appropriations that must impose heavy burdens upon my people. Perhaps he thinks that it is cowardice that has directed me in protesting against compulsory military service. Perhaps he thinks cowardice explains the fact that all my life long I have stood four square against militarism in all its manifestations. Well, he is entitled to his own opinion in this regard. But how much easier would it be for me, Mr. Chairman, "to go along," to run with the mob, to shout with the hurrah boys, to let the tide of war sweep on unchallenged until it should engulf my beloved land and the ideals which have made it precious to every man who has caught the glowing vision of human freedom. Oh, how little is the courage required of the man who falls in behind the tumultuous crowd as it rushes on its reckless way! How little is the courage one must have to meet the call of the jungle. It is the call of civilization that tries. It is the call of humanity that brings the real test. It is the call of justice which applies the acid to our mettle.

I can understand why dogs fight. They know no better. I can understand why the cock sparrow struggles with his rival until he dies. He is governed by his instinct and not by reason. But I can not understand why men fight, because men know better; they have the gift of reason, they know right from wrong, evil from good, justice from injustice. And men have, indeed, ceased to settle their personal differences by appeal to force. They no longer vindicate their honor by killing some one or getting killed. They no longer measure their valor by the number of victims they have sent to the cemetery. And there is none we so much despise today as the bully, the bad man, the chap that carries a gun and looks for trouble. We do not honor him. We do not make him the gorgeous and glittering center of our social life. He does not occupy the chief seat in our synagogues nor the first place at our feasts. No. We send him to jail. We put him on the rock pile. We drive him out of our peaceful communities. We point him out to our children as a horrible example. And we warn the youth of the land against following in his crooked courses.

Yet we magnify the name of the bully when he wears an epaulette and carries a sword. We hail him as a hero and savior. We decorate him with honors and ascribe to him qualities and aspirations that belong to the gods. We place him on a lofty pedestal and invite our children to look up and admire, if not to worship. We make of him an idol before which all the humble and the patriotic must bow if they would escape calumny.

Neither as a citizen nor as a member of congress have I reached the pass where anyone can put a gag in my mouth or a seal on my mind. I am still a free man, an American, a citizen, a soldier of the common good, whose only weapon is the sword of truth, whose only defense is the armor of justice. And in this hour of fear and foreboding I do not falter. My faith is unshaken. My courage is that of one who believes that ever the right comes uppermost and ever is justice done. We can go into this war across the waters or we can stay out of it, and it will take a higher courage to stay out of it than to plunge into it at the call of jingoism. We can go into it and help the kings and princes of the Old World in their mad struggle to strengthen their thrones and extend their dominions. We can get into it and underwrite the securities which Wall street has taken, for the billions loaned the allies. We can go into it and sacrifice the fair youth of our land, your boy and mine. We can go into it and fasten on those who shall come after us a burden of debt which will press them down for generations. We may go into it and say that we are doing it to vindicate a right which might be better vindicated by another appeal than to beak and talon. We can get into it and enrich the soil of Europe with our best blood, while