

Railroad Regulation

It looked for awhile as if the railroads had decided to adopt the doctrine of regulation and adjust themselves to it, but there are increasing evidences of a relapse into the old attitude of stubborn resistance to governmental supervision. The strongest proof of this spirit of rebellion is to be found in the recent effort (to which I called attention in my testimony before the special committee last winter) to take from the states all power to regulate the railroads. Another evidence is to be found in the literature which the railroads are circulating.

One of the leading railroads of the south, for instance, has printed on the back of one of its time tables an argument from which the following is taken:

"Too much state legislation about railroads has reduced earnings and increased expenses so that investors have refused to buy more railroad stocks. Do you blame them? Are you willing to invest your money in railroad stocks when the shippers are demanding lower rates and the workmen higher wages, when every state is making different railroad regulations? If the people insist upon railroad regulation, let it be by one federal body and not by forty-eight legislatures."

"Too much state legislation" is complained of; but that is not all. "The shippers are demanding lower rates" and the "workmen higher wages." The railroads just want to be let alone; that is all. But read this: "If the people insist upon railroad regulation," etc. "If"? This railroad seems to resent the idea of having ANY regulation, but if any is necessary it should be exercised by the FEDERAL government. There you have it. The railroads resent regulation of any kind and to any extent, but if there must be regulation they want it as far away from the people as possible.

The people will insist on regulation by the STATES as well as by congress. As declared in the democratic platform of 1908, federal remedies should be ADDED TO, not SUBSTITUTED FOR state remedies. W. J. BRYAN.

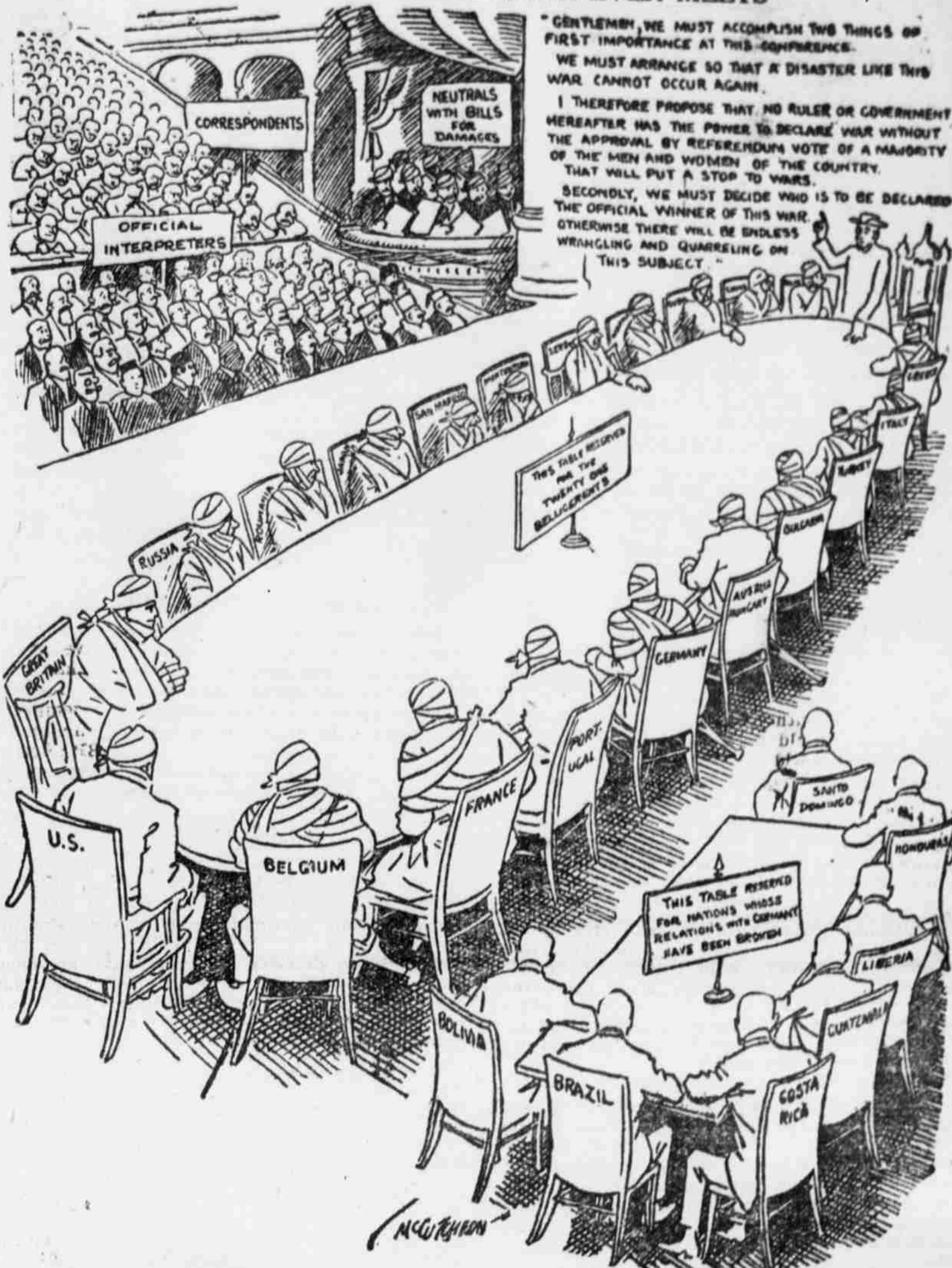
THE RECALL

On another page will be found a Kansas City Times editorial defending the right of recall. The question is raised by the action of the city of Joplin in recalling Mayor McIndoe. The Times does not attempt to discuss the merits of the case; it simply contends that a city should have the right to decide such a question for itself. The reasoning is sound. The right of a city to have an official satisfactory to the people is superior to the right of any official to hold his position. The city may make a mistake, but it has a right to make its own mistakes and to correct them. If, in the case of Mayor McIndoe, the city has made a mistake, the people will be only too glad to correct it when they find it out, and the correction will make Mayor McIndoe forget his recall. An official must do his duty as he sees it and risk approval or disapproval, trusting the people's sense of justice to vindicate him if he acts wisely, and ready to accept rebuke if he disappoints the expectations of his constituents. W. J. BRYAN.

J. Ogden Armour, of the commission that investigated the coal situation, said: "We found that freight rates have advanced little or nothing, that the price paid miners has advanced possibly 25 cents a ton, but that otherwise costs in operation have advanced no more in proportion than other lines." When the facts are that the price of many coals has been doubled and trebled because the coal operators could force the payment of their demands, even more drastic governmental interference than has yet taken place is justified.

Great emergencies give birth to badly-needed laws. For years it has been impossible to secure the passage by congress of a child labor law that was really effective. The presence of war has made this once impossible task an easy one. September 1st there went into effect a law which penalizes heavily the manufacturer who ships in interstate or foreign commerce any goods that are the product of the labor of children under 14 and 16 who were compelled to work more than eight hours a day or six days a week.

IF THE PEACE CONFERENCE EVER MEETS



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It is safe to predict that the people, having once been made the beneficiaries of interference on the part of the government with speculation and its exercise of the power to fix prices, will insist that this same power be invoked when necessary in times of peace. The paramount duty of government at all times is to protect the people from those who would despoil them, and when this is recognized in war there is no reason for denying its application in peace.

When those great business enterprises which have extracted great profits out of the fact first that Europe was at war and then that we were in it, petitioned and threatened the American congress that if they were compelled to hand over in government taxes the larger part of their profits they would reduce their output, they justified every charge made in the months before this country entered the war that there were interests in this country that desired war because of the money in it for them.

WHERE DOES MR. HUGHES STAND?

Now that the President has sent a letter to New York, urging the adoption of the suffrage amendment, would it not be well for the Congressional Union to get an endorsement of the amendment from its presidential candidate, Mr. Hughes? As a citizen of New York Mr. Hughes will have to vote on the amendment. Where does he stand?

The Fight in Iowa

Iowa votes on prohibition on the 15th of October. While the chances seem very much in favor of the adoption of the constitutional amendment the temperance forces can not afford to take anything for granted. The liquor interests are fighting for their life and will leave no stone unturned to defeat the amendment.

The vital thing is to get the vote out in the dry counties—that is, in the counties where the saloons were abolished by local prohibition. Because the people of these counties have no fear of the saloon being brought back to their communities they may not realize the necessity of state action.

From now until the polls close on the 15th of October the advocates of prohibition should make it their business to gain new counties to the cause and to impress all with the importance of polling every prohibition vote.

W. J. BRYAN.

A popular pastime of grand juries these days is to indict the kaiser. Several southern states have joined in the sport. If Mr. Hohenzollern will communicate with John D. Rockefeller he may be able to secure his recipe for preventing such indictments from being followed by an arrest.