

To an Uninformed Critic

Below will be found a reply recently sent by Mr. Bryan to a gentleman (whose name is withheld) who wrote on a New York Athletic Club letter-head, congratulating him upon an expression as to the war, saying, "If this statement on your part is true, I want to congratulate you as being on the right side of a question of public importance for once."

The correspondent then adds: "I have recognized with many other business men the strength and importance of your personality, but have always been obliged to differ with you on every public question from the time you were a representative in congress. All prominent questions of which you have seemingly taken part, I can recall, have been decided against you by the American people during all these years. I am very glad indeed and hope this statement referred to above is correct."

Mr. Bryan's reply follows:

Lincoln, Neb., October 6, 1917.

Mr. _____
New York Athletic Club,
New York.

My dear Sir:

Your favor of August 21 is at hand. The extract which you quote is correct. It appeared in the August Commoner. While I appreciate your congratulations and your personal compliments, I think it is only fair to you to correct a false impression which you have gathered from the misrepresentations of an unfriendly press.

You say that you have been obliged to differ from me "on every public question from the time you were a representative in congress," etc., and that "All prominent questions of which you have seemingly taken part, I can recall, have been decided against you by the American people during all these years."

As a matter of fact, no economic question has been decided against me during the period in which you have felt it necessary to differ from me. Let me enumerate some of the more important victories that we have won in spite of your opposition.

First—The election of senators by direct vote of the people. This I began advocating in 1890. The house of representatives at Washington first endorsed the principle in 1892, and the amendment was finally made a part of the constitution in 1913, after a fight of twenty-one years. I secured the endorsement of that proposition in four national platforms of my party.

Second—The income tax amendment was first proposed in 1896, after the supreme court by a majority of one had nullified the income tax law of 1894 which I helped to write. I secured the endorsement of this amendment in several national platforms, and it is now a part of the constitution. And because it is a part of the constitution we are able to collect a large portion of our war tax from incomes.

Third—My first speech in congress in 1892 was in favor of a tariff policy substantially like that embodied in our present tariff law, and I have advocated a revenue tariff ever since.

Fourth—Currency reform has been secured along lines in harmony with my platforms and the fight that I have made on this subject, and against the protest of the most influential of our banking interests.

Fifth—The anti-trust laws have been enacted—one prohibiting government by injunction and the other establishing a trade commission. The first of these is built upon the theory that "a private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable," a proposition which I first presented in 1899 and which was afterwards quoted in the exact words in four democratic national platforms. Opposition to government by injunction has been a democratic doctrine since it was first embodied in the platform upon which I ran in 1896. The trade commission is also in line with the position that our party has taken for many years—a position which I have heartily supported.

Sixth—The eight-hour day law and the child labor law have had my endorsement for years.

LIBERTY BONDS

Every American citizen should interest himself in the sale of Liberty Bonds. The government needs money as well as men, and the Liberty Bond is a good investment as well as a practical evidence of patriotism. Buy Liberty Bonds—suiting the number to your financial ability.

Seventh—The shipping law is another measure which has had my hearty support.

Eighth—The rural credits law is a measure which I have championed.

Ninth—The resolution promising ultimate independence to the Filipinos is the carrying out of a policy which I had the honor to propose in 1898.

I mention these as specific illustrations of the triumph of measures with which I have been identified.

Prohibition, which I have championed, is growing so rapidly that you will hardly doubt its early success, and woman's suffrage is as sure to triumph. These are two important reforms to which I have given my earnest support.

Speaking of the liquor question, I may add that nineteen years ago, when colonel of the Third Nebraska Infantry in our war with Spain, I excluded intoxicating liquors from our camp canteen. Since then alcoholic drinks have been excluded from all of our army camps by law, and more recently from the ships of our navy. And we now have a law making it a criminal offense for anyone to sell intoxicating liquors to a man wearing the uniform of a soldier of the United States.

The only economic question upon which there has been even a seeming defeat is the silver question, and in that case the defeat was only seeming, because the principal thing for which we contended, namely, more money, has been secured. We proposed to increase the currency by the restoration of bimetallism. We were defeated in this, but the same end has been reached by an unexpected increase in the discovery of gold. The effect of the increase, however, has been the same that would have followed the restoration of bimetallism, namely, a higher price level and greater prosperity. The quantitative theory for which we contended has been established.

I am interested to know whether you have supported any of the measures which I have mentioned, and if not, upon what successes you base the confidence which you express in your political judgment.

Very truly yours,
W. J. BRYAN.

COMPTROLLER WILLIAMS' GREAT RECORD

On another page will be found Comptroller Williams' report showing decrease in bank failures and losses to depositors. Deposits have increased, during the years compared, more than fifty per cent and losses have fallen from 9-1000 to 3-1000. It is a splendid record. Mr. Williams is the best comptroller the nation has had in many years, and his watchfulness helps the honest banker as well as the depositor.

Speaking of one way of not getting rich, we would like to call attention to that of having the contract for printing all the "Made in Germany" labels for Teutonic manufacturers after the war is over.

Tumulty on Local Option

Following is a copy of a letter addressed to Hon. Thomas F. Martin, secretary of state, Trenton, New Jersey, by Secretary Tumulty:

The White House, Washington, Dec. 19, 1916.
Dear Tom:

I have been very much interested in the discussion carried on in the Hudson County Dispatch with reference to your idea of how the liquor traffic can best be regulated. I congratulate you that at least some of the leaders of the democratic party in New Jersey are inclined to approach the discussion of this question without fear and trembling. You and I have discussed this matter on many occasions. You will recall that when the local option bill was pending in the New Jersey legislature a few years ago, I discussed with you what I thought should be the attitude of the democratic members of the legislature toward local option. I still adhere to the opinion then expressed, that the democratic party should support local option, thus giving to each community the right and power to express its own opinion in this matter, and thus settle this difficult question in accordance with its own expressed public opinion. I do not know what the details of the bill are, but I am unreservedly in favor of its basic principle, which is nothing less than the right of a people to regulate their own affairs.

We must set our party free of those influences that oppose legislation of this character. It can not show itself indifferent to the decent impulses that lie back of legislation of this kind without showing its willingness to turn its back upon progress and those things that make for the welfare of communities.

In years past we have boasted about home rule and the right of each community to regulate its own life and its own affairs. Our attitude toward this question will be a test of our own sincerity and our devotion to the fundamental ideals of democracy which underlie this whole question. We should not be afraid to approach a final consideration of this matter because of a fear of the influences and activities of those who oppose legislation of this wholesome character. The democrats of the New Jersey legislature can, by cooperation with the republicans, make this question non-partisan.

I write simply as a friend to express my own individual judgment in this matter.

Sincerely yours,
J. P. TUMULTY.

THE ISSUE IN IOWA

On another page will be found a letter addressed by Mr. Bryan to the voters of Ohio. The arguments presented in the letter apply to Iowa as well as to Ohio. Every voter who favors prohibition should exert himself to the utmost to secure the polling of every temperance vote. A little work now will settle the question for good. The adoption of a constitutional amendment will put an end to the fight, take the question out of politics and encourage the advocates of prohibition in Ohio and New Mexico. A victory in Iowa will also strengthen the hands of the advocates of the national amendment in congress.

"HAVING EYES, SEE NOT"

What does this mean? The answer is to be found in our daily experience. We do not all see with equal clearness; we do not see equally well at all times, and we do not see all things with equal distinctness.

The two things that most interfere with our vision are ignorance—a mental fault—and partiality on the one side and prejudice on the other—both faults of the heart. Partiality sometimes makes us see in our friends virtues that do not exist, and prejudice often blinds us to virtues which our enemies possess.

When they sit down and compare what has happened in the last year or two with what the trained economists and the thoroughly-grounded financiers said would result from the war and note the wide difference, the political prophets of the past have reason to feel proud of their superior ability as seers.