

A Generous Estimate

TIME IS VINDICATING MR. BRYAN

[From The Albany, N. Y., Times-Union.]

One can not help wondering how Hon. William Jennings Bryan views the many activities and achievements which he urged with such fervency and heard so viciously criticised as dangerous and socialistic.

Note that silver has reached a point where the sixteen to one ratio has been about achieved. It worked out automatically, but the condition is here. This must be pleasing to the democratic war horse.

The election of United States senators by the people was one of his hopes. His enemies and the interests that could control legislatures called it a "hobby;" but it won. The senate is today a body as responsive to the will of the people as the house of representatives.

Railroads under control of, and operated by, the government! With what amazement were Mr. Bryan's opinions on this subject viewed by his critics! There was something about the suggestion horrible to contemplate, and how the self-styled "big folks" did flay the Nebraskan and cause him to lose votes on account of his advocacy of this principle! But the government is doing just what Mr. Bryan said it should do and not a few people believe that what is found good in war time will be continued after peace has come.

Then woman suffrage has carried in many states and an amendment to the federal constitution making the condition national is now pending. Remember how long it was that Mr. Bryan was one of the few statesmen of national influence that advocated the ballot for women?

The income tax was a hobby that he did urge with energy and consistency. He proved to the satisfaction of most people that it was the fairest tax that could be levied. And he fought with especial emphasis demanding the tax on corporations. The tax law so far as these items are concerned followed closely on the lines of Mr. Bryan's "hobby."

"The initiative and referendum" was a principle that his traducers delighted to parade as a conspicuous horror in Mr. Bryan's gallery of hobbies. But how it has won and is winning! Even staid and conservative Massachusetts is seriously considering the matter of trusting the people to the extent of adopting the initiative and referendum as a part of its organic law.

And he dared to take a position in favor of prohibition—dared to do this when told over and over again that the stand would forever kill him politically. Yet prohibition has made tremendous strides since that day and many little time serving politicians who bent their efforts to help the enemies of prohibition when the enemies didn't need their help are now catching on in favor of prohibition after the federal amendment making a national "bone dry" provision has passed the house of representatives. This must make Mr. Bryan smile one of those broad smiles with which the cartoon makers familiarized the nation when Mr. Bryan was advocating so many unpopular things that have since not only become popular but have been made parts of the law and facts of the land.

These are only some of Mr. Bryan's "hobbies." There are others and each one is worth a smile and each one gets it from the people who stood by Mr. Bryan and believed in the practicability of most of the measures he advocated and had the fullest confidence in his honesty of purpose and great ability as shown in every one of them.

Mr. Bryan has a "hobby" now, and he is most ably, eloquently and vigorously urging it. His present "hobby" is that individual opinion as to whether or not this country should go into the conflict was permissible till war was declared, and after that there is no chance or excuse for divisions. The act of the nation was the act of all the people and the only way to shorten the war is to give the President the undivided support of the entire nation. Maybe a year or two after the war is over the critics of the Nebraskan will catch up with him on that "hobby" too.

Mr. Bryan's "hobbies" have won and their winning has again shown that however right a statesman may be his being too far ahead of his time is liable to be a hindrance to his immediate

efforts greater than the errors of another. Mr. Bryan has been completely vindicated and maybe he may yet be president and maybe not. If he is not he will occupy a place in that galaxy of statesmen greater than mere presidents, who have left the impress of greatness on the records of their country like Webster, Clay, Calhoun and others who developed great ideas as they passed along. Every school boy and school girl is familiar with the names of Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, yet how few of them can tell the names of the presidents of the United States. Yes, time is vindicating Mr. Bryan and he will loom large in history when many of the men who beat him in political battles are buried beneath the dust of oblivion.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, PAST AND PRESENT

[Richmond, Va., Times-Dispatch, Jan. 6, 1918.]

Whatever may be your attitude toward William J. Bryan; whatever may be your estimate of his intellectual capacity, you must grant him a large measure of satisfaction as he contemplates the present state of national politics. Disappointed though he may be that he has never achieved the presidency, he remains the most successful political theorist in the country and the most farseeing statesman.

This comment is inspired by the recent act of President Wilson in taking over the railroads of the country, the first direct step toward government ownership of the American transportation system. This is the last of the original Bryan policies to be put into practice. His championship of such a measure twelve years ago brought upon him national ridicule and no doubt cost him the presidential nomination in 1904. But he has lived to see almost the whole body of the American people acquiesce in a move that may lead eventually to government ownership of railroads.

This is not all. For more than twenty years Bryan has been preaching prohibition. Like most dry leaders, however, he began with the advocacy of local option, then progressed to state-wide prohibition, finally coming out boldly for a nation-wide ban against liquor. Today a nation-wide prohibition amendment has passed through the initial stage and has been placed before the states for ratification.

Monetary reform was another Bryanism. The old sixteen-to-one plan went overboard, of course, but it was only one number on the Bryan financial program. The decentralization of monetary control, with elasticity in the currency, was the basis of the Bryan theory. Now the federal reserve system, carrying into effect those two fundamental policies, has been given to the country by a union of republican and democratic votes. There is not a man with two good eyes, in the broad land, who would seriously propose the repeal of this law.

Direct election of United States senators was demanded by Bryan long before his own party was willing to support such a project. But he was not deterred. He first went out to convert democrats to his convictions upon this issue, and, having won his party over to it, he has had the privilege of seeing enough republicans fall into line to pass the amendment through congress and make possible its ratification by more than three-fourths of the state legislatures. The same is true of the income tax amendment to the constitution, another Bryan policy.

As said before, the Commoner may never be president of the United States, but in the deeper recesses of his heart he may agree with many of his intense admirers that there is, after all, something more satisfying in public service than public office.

THE NATION'S WORST ENEMY

One of the greatest English-Canadian manufacturers gave as the main cause of the war, the failure of English industrial production to keep up with the efficiency of German industry. "This war would have been unnecessary," he said, "if our English masses would spend more money for food and clothing, and less for drink. They would soon get into a condition, physically and mentally, that would enable them to successfully compete with German sobriety and German efficiency"—then waiting a moment, he added, "and this war would have been unnecessary."

Whether he was right or wrong, only the future can know. In the unemotional analysis of the causes for this war, made with all the facts before them, historians of the future may

set down "Drink" as one of the factors. But we are not concerned any more with the "causes" of the war. What we are concerned in is its ending. And we are concerned with everything that has to do with the efficiency of the Allied armies.

And here we find the drink question again taking first place!

According to a London dispatch dated January 11, increases in the amount of grain are being allowed English brewers! The people of the United States are asked to save grain to give the English people and the English soldiers increased facilities for getting drunk!

Arthur Mee, the noted English publisher, says: "Not for one hour has the full strength of Britain been turned against her enemies. From the first day of this war, while our mighty allies have been striking down the foes within their gates, Britain has let this trade stalk through her streets, serving the kaiser's purposes, and paying the government a million pounds a week for the right to do it."

In Arthur Mee's pamphlet, "The Fiddlers," there is a sickening collection of facts about the crime and disease and disastrous weakening of British soldiery as a result of the untrammelled traffic. And yet there are alleged patriots in the United States who call the prohibition lobby at Washington an obstacle to the prosecution of the war!

Willing to let our grain go to the brewers and distillers of Europe, willing to turn our young men into association with British troops that are permitted to have their booze at the front and debauchery in their camps, the liquor people of the United States are more despicable enemies than are any foreign foes, and they should be fought with greater vigor.

So long as the United States permits the export of grain and sugar for use in the manufacture of liquor in Europe, just so long are the authorities responsible for this business lending aid and comfort to the kaiser. And from one end of the United States to the other, this truth should be told.—Miami, Fla., Metropolis.

Complaint is being made by some of the town folks that the exemption boards of Nebraska are placing all of the young men from the farms in a class where they are unlikely to be called for service if the war ends this year. The fact that the country needs experienced men on the farms as badly as it does trained soldiers in the trenches would justify an intelligent discrimination of that sort. Besides, with the coal shortage causing most of the town poolhalls to close early in the evening, some place for the slackers ought to be found.

There would be general approval of a conservation program that would put the ban on meatless arguments in congressional discussions and encourage heatless debates.



BRYAN, HELLO; HERE COMES THE WORLD!

—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.