

SOME INTERESTING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr. Bryan concluded his "Thou Shalt Not Steal" address at Carnegie hall, New York, in these words:

"The time is ripe for a consideration of ethical questions. There is a moral awakening throughout the land and people are learning that there is something more important than the making of money. Business men, instead of chasing the almighty dollar until they fall exhausted into the grave, are going to set a limit to their accumulations and, having secured enough to supply their needs, give to society the benefit of their business ability and experience. This moral wave will not expend itself until dishonesty has been driven from business, corruption from politics and injustice from government."

At the conclusion of Mr. Bryan's speech a number of questions were asked from the audience and answered by Mr. Bryan. These questions and answers follow:

Q. Is it wise for a public man like President Roosevelt or yourself to use such a term as "predatory wealth," thereby stigmatizing a class?

A. I answer in the affirmative. When you say that predatory wealth is bad you mean predatory wealth, and I have no objection whatever to the president or any other man, stigmatizing wealth that is predatory. (Applause.)

Q. Is it right to tax the people and lend the money thus obtained to individuals or to private corporations in any form of subsidy?

A. This asks a question that can not be answered in a word. What we call subsidy I believe wrong; and yet I would not say that under no circumstances should a government lend money, raised by taxation. I believe it all depends upon whether the money is lent for a public purpose and for the public interest, or for a private purpose and for individual profit. (Applause.)

Q. If the tariff should be revised and the United States should allow free trade, would not the country be flooded with foreign goods, and our country's industries suffer?

A. No one is advocating free trade and no revision that is advocated could by any possibility flood this country with foreign goods to the detriment of this country; and the people who are now selling abroad in competition with the world could put a restraint upon the flood by selling at home as cheaply as they sell abroad. (Laughter and applause.)

Q. Secretary Taft, when asked at Cooper Union about the problem of the unemployed man in relation to the government replied, "God knows, I don't." Mr. Bryan, do you know?

A. I approach this question with some hesitation, for I do not want to say anything that would put me in the class to which it has been committed by the secretary of war. (Laughter.) But my answer is this: All questions of this kind must be considered from two standpoints: First, the temporary remedy and second, the permanent remedy. If a child falls and breaks its arm, as the result of carelessness, it is not sufficient to tell the child how to keep from falling again. It is necessary that the arm shall be set and the child cared for, even though its sufferings are the result of its own carelessness. And so, temporarily, we must provide for every human being in need. I will not admit that any man in this country should be allowed to starve to death, no matter how careless he may have been in not providing for the future. But while we must make temporary provision for the necessities of those who actually suffer, we must make permanent provision against the recurrence of such conditions, and the best way to prevent a recurrence of these conditions, is to change the laws by which a few men have been able to secure an unfair proportion of the results of the toil of all the people. (Great and prolonged applause.) There is no difficulty in this country about production. We produce and consume something like three times the amount per capita produced or consumed by any other people. The trouble is with the distribution, and I believe that the way to reach the difficulty is to withdraw privileges and favoritism, and to enact laws that will secure an open door to every man's labor and a reward for his toil.

Q. Mr. Bryan, do you stand for immediate and radical tariff revision, and do you represent the democratic party in so standing?

A. I will answer the last part first. I am not prepared to say for a few months yet whether I stand for the democratic party or not. (Laughter and applause.) I am proud to say that I do not stand for some people who call

themselves democrats. (Applause.) Whether the revision that I stand for is considered radical or not is a question of opinion. I stand for immediate revision. I will have it tomorrow if I can't get it today. (Laughter.) I would rather have had it yesterday than today. (Great laughter.) Now as to that word radical, it is a matter of opinion. I used to be radical. Now I am very conservative. (Laughter.) What people thought was radical a few years ago is now regarded as not only conservative but necessary. (Applause.) And many who thought that I was dangerously radical a few years ago now think that I am inexcusably slow. (Laughter.) I believe in the immediate revision of the tariff, downwards not upwards, and I would commence by putting upon the free list the articles that come into direct competition with the articles controlled by the trusts. (Great applause.) I would give these men a certain length of time—not too long, (laughter)—say, a few months, and I would say to them: "If you don't stop conspiring behind this tariff wall we will take the wall away and make you compete with the world." (Great applause.) I would then proceed to make material reductions in the necessities of life, and I would go through the tariff and I would pick out the fraudulent paragraphs that were put in by stealth for the purpose of securing advantages that even the framers of the law did not understand, and one of them would be the duty of 150 per cent that was put in for the protection of oil, after it had been put upon the free list. If you read the statute, you will find it says that if oil comes from a country that puts a tariff on oil, then we shall put a similar tariff on oil from that country, and it happens that our only competitor in oil is Russia; she puts a tariff on oil, and therefore while on its face we have a free trade in oil, yet really we have not got it at all. (Applause.) I would then proceed to make such other reductions as were possible—and when I say possible, I mean that the laws are made by the representatives of the entire country, and in the making of the law you have to consult the opinions of these people who represent all sections of the country—and I would proceed as rapidly as possible to make such reductions as would be necessary to put our tariff upon a revenue basis, so that our tax laws would be made for the purpose of securing revenue for the government and not for the purpose of enabling a few people to get rich at the expense of the rest of the people. (Applause.)

Q. You said that the proposed asset currency would give us a no-cent dollar. Is this a fair statement in view of the facts that assets worth dollar for dollar and guaranteed by national banks will be held as security for it?

A. I am permitted to use the language of my opponents and they talked about the silver dollar as a fifty cent dollar; they said that if you melted it it was worth only fifty cents. Let them apply the melting test to their dollar and find out how much it is worth. (Applause.) The silver dollar was never a fifty cent dollar. It was a one hundred cent dollar, because the law declared that you could use it to discharge your debts at one hundred cents on the dollar. These people who are so careful about the use of language were quite indiscriminate a few years ago. (Applause.)

Q. Has not President Roosevelt taken the wind out of the sails of everybody except socialists? Then, where is the room for Bryanism-democracy?

A. I am not sure that I can answer this question to the satisfaction of the man who asked the question, for he evidently believes that the president has done everything that can be done by anybody or by any party except the socialist party. I do not agree with him at all. The president has tried to do some things. He has not tried to do everything that is necessary. For instance he has not tried to secure the election of senators by direct vote of the people, and that is a very important reform. And he has done some things that I do not think he ought to have done. But, my friends, the leaders of his party have not assisted him to do even what he tried to do. (Applause.) And so far most of his recommendations have not been acted upon. If this were a political meeting I would tell a story that illustrate this point. (Cries of "tell it," "let us have it.") Well we will just overlook the fact that this is not a political meeting and I will tell the story. (Laughter.) An old colored man married a wife who was, as he thought, extravagant, and he complained

that she wanted money all the time. He said: "She wants a dollar today and fifty cents tomorrow, and a quarter the next day, and then she wants another dollar, and then another fifty cents, and then another quarter, and it is just a dollar, a half dollar, a quarter all the time." One of his friends said to him: "But what can she do with so much money?" He replied: "I don't know. I hain't gin her none yet." (Great laughter.)

Q. When you speak of "watered stock," as not representing property, do you or do you not recognize goodwill as being as valuable a property as is mere tangible property? Would you confine stock issues to actual tangible property?

A. I think the question a fair one. There is such a thing as goodwill. If a man has built up a business and established a trade and won the confidence of people, his business has a value larger than the mere tangible property would indicate. But you will find that goodwill is not a large factor in the monopolies that have been established. That goodwill is preserved under competition. What we complain of is not the capitalizing of a little goodwill, but it is the capitalizing of the power to rob the public—the goodwill of the public is a thing that trusts have not yet capitalized.

Q. You have condemned the stock exchange in toto. Don't you recognize the fact that millions of securities that are gilt edged and solid are bought and sold there every week on a high basis of honor?

A. I have already answered this. I stated that there is a legitimate function for the board of trade, the chamber of commerce and the stock exchange. We need institutions of this kind, but it is not necessary to have a large part of the transaction gambling in order to retain the benefits of the stock exchange, and what we ask for is legislation which will make gambling impossible, and such legislation is not popular on the stock exchange. (Applause.)

Washington Letter

Washington, D. C., February 17.—As a result of the recent decision of the United States supreme court setting aside as unconstitutional the law known as the Employer's Liability Law so strongly urged by President Roosevelt, Representative Sabbath of Chicago has introduced a bill intended to accomplish much of the same end. This bill is based very largely upon studies of European legislation on the same topic, particularly legislation in France, England and Germany. It covers all cases of accidents to employes in interstate and foreign commerce to which the regulated power of congress extends. It provides for sick and death benefits to the injured employe or his surviving widow and next of kin, and the establishment of a commission of awards to fix the amount of benefits in each individual case. The usual provisions for enforcement and for an appropriation for necessary expenses are included.

Mr. Sabbath says, speaking of his bill, "I have introduced this bill because I believe the burden of misfortune should not be borne by the employe, but should also be borne by the employer. More far reaching laws in this direction have been adopted in England and Germany and more progressive countries where they are giving entire satisfaction."

A similar bill will be introduced within a few days by the same representative providing for benefits to employes in the public service of the United States, excepting the army and navy, who sustain the injuries in the performance of their duties. Whether either bill will get out of the committee in this congress may be doubted. But both deserve passage.

A Washington newspaper has gone somewhat into detail in estimating the chances of Hughes' election. Its figures are interesting, though it is difficult to believe that they are accurate. They were compiled by men whose names are not given, but two of whom I know. The ones I do know are certainly not enthusiastic for Hughes.

Summarized the prophecy is that Hughes will be nominated on the fourth ballot. The claim is made that Taft on the first ballot will get about three hundred and thirty-three votes, or about one hundred and fifty short of the