

## Mr. Bryan's Speech at Kansas City

Referring to the democratic dinner held at Kansas City, March 30, the Associated Press said: "Democrats from all parts of Missouri, to the number of two thousand, attended a banquet in convention hall in this city tonight under the auspices of the Young Men's Democratic clubs of Missouri, at which W. J. Bryan and Judson Harmon of Ohio were the guests of honor and prominent speakers and the recipients of the repeated ovations from the fifteen thousand persons who thronged the hall. Each banqueter paid one dollar for the privilege of attending. Even the distinguished guests insisted upon the democratic prerogative of paying for their plates, and the affair proved to be one of the most elaborate political affairs held in the state. Democratic clubs in St. Louis, St. Joseph and other cities of the state sent delegations to the meeting. Among the guests were four ex-governors—T. T. Crittenden, D. R. Francis, Senator W. J. Stone and Alexander M. Dockery. The meeting essentially was a Bryan affair, spontaneous in marking every feature of his candidacy for the presidency."

Mr. Bryan's speech was as follows:

In this great city, on the boundary line between Missouri with her rock-ribbed democracy, and the west, which until 1896 was counted as republican territory, we have met to begin the campaign of 1908 and to present those principles and policies which ought to appeal to progressive republicans as well as to traditional democrats. It is only a recognition of a fact which is becoming clear to all, to say that there is a democratic element in the republican party to which a successful appeal can be made. I might give several evidences of this fact. In the first place, what is known as Roosevelt sentiment is strong in the valleys of the Mississippi and the Missouri; and the Roosevelt sentiment is not so much attachment to a person as devotion to an idea with which the person has identified himself. And what is this idea? It is the idea that conditions are not what they should be. Before a remedy can be applied, the need of a remedy must be admitted. For years the democratic party has been pointing out the abuses which have been growing under republican rule, but those abuses have been denied by republican leaders and the country has been congratulated upon the possession of everything essential to its welfare. Republican platforms have been full of fulsome eulogy of the republican party and barren of promises of reform. Even the platform of 1904, upon which President Roosevelt was elected, was silent in regard to governmental evils and gave no hope of relief. To the surprise of democrats and to the surprise of republicans as well, the president immediately began to recommend remedial legislation, taking as his guide the platform declarations of the democratic party. He did not follow in the footsteps of democracy out of any desire to compliment the democrats or to encourage them, but simply because the democrats had preempted all the ground in front, and he could not go forward without trespassing upon their land. It is not strange that his suggestions were hailed with delight by democrats and met with indignation by republicans. Whether the president cultivated a reform sentiment in the republican party or only revealed a previously existing sentiment, we shall never know, and the question is not material anyhow. It is sufficient that that sentiment now exists. It is sufficient that it is so strong that the president is praised by the masses just in proportion as he assails the predatory corporations and pleads for reforms that look to the restoration of equity and fairness in the government. The president is not a democrat, for he leans toward Hamilton rather than toward Jefferson, and favors a concentration of power in Washington and a centralization of government which democrats regard as distinctly hostile to the national welfare. The president does not believe with Jefferson that reforms must come from the masses and that the government is good in proportion as the people can make it their own and administer by their own hands in their own interests. He believes rather, as Hamilton did, that there is a governing class, and that the governing class ought to deal honestly and generously with the masses. He has never advocated the election of senators by the people. Notwithstanding his knowledge of the senate's subserviency to the favor seeking corporations, he does not appreciate the purifying influence that popular elections would have upon the senatorial body, and his failure to recognize this

can be accounted for by his Hamiltonian views of government. And yet, looking at the subject from his point of view, he reaches the same conclusion on some questions that the democrats reach, as they view the subject from the democratic view-point. Among the rank and file of republicans, there is a democratic sentiment, for Hamilton's doctrines do not appeal to the imagination or to the reason of the average man. These republicans have been quick to recognize the president's good purpose and to see in his recommendations a tendency toward better things. It is proof that the reform sentiment in the republican party is not only large but militant, that the corporate interests, powerful as they are, have not been able to coerce the middle west into the support of any of the republican candidates who are regarded as reactionary. This in itself is the most hopeful sign of a democratic victory, for, the president having aroused this sentiment, the republican party must satisfy the expectations excited or lose the support of the rank and file of the party.

Now what prospect is there that the republican national convention will satisfy the urgent demands of reform republicans? I venture to predict that no serious attempt will be made to satisfy these demands. Two things are necessary to establish confidence in the intention of the republican party to repeal its own laws and to reform the abuses which have grown out of republican legislation and administration; and these two things are, first, a platform specifically pledging the party to clearly defined reforms, and, second, the nomination of a ticket composed of men endowed with a spirit of reform.

It will not do to say that the platform is immaterial. The president has felt the need of an honest platform; if he had been elected on a platform which candidly outlined a course of action, he could have used that platform to line up the republican leaders in favor of the promised legislation; but without such a platform he has been impotent to lead, and republican senators and members have laughed at his recommendations. If, in the coming campaign, the republicans have an ambiguous platform, filled with glittering generalities, and fragrant with bouquets thrown at the republican party, a republican president, elected upon it, would be as powerless as the present president has been. I say powerless—for what has the president succeeded in doing? There are more trusts today than there were when he entered the office, and he has never succeeded in getting a law enacted to strengthen the present law. He has not succeeded in putting a trust magnate in the penitentiary, and the only large fine that has been imposed has aroused more criticism than commendation among republican leaders. He has not secured any tariff reform, and yet he has been in office for over seven years. He has not secured the enactment of the necessary labor legislation. He has not secured an income tax, and the republican senators forced him into a compromise on the railroad question.

But even a good platform would be worthless without a candidate who embodied the spirit of the platform. And what candidate have they? If the president had picked out Senator LaFollette, a real reformer; if the republican party had rallied to Senator LaFollette's support, it could have compelled the confidence of reform republicans. Senator LaFollette has a record as a reformer; he has fought corporate domination in his own state for a decade. As a United States senator, he has boldly denounced the rule of the favor seeking corporations, and has uncovered the double dealing of some of his party associates. He stands forth a champion of the doctrine of equal rights and has the courage of his convictions. But they put him out of the last national convention, and he will have but little influence in the coming convention.

The president has picked out Secretary Taft and given him the support of the administration. Without the support of the administration, the secretary would scarcely have a state in the convention, and with the president's support, he is having an uphill fight. He has no record as a reformer, and his speeches do not indicate a definite purpose or a courageous program. He may be the best man that the president could find among his cabinet officers; but Secretary Taft's superiority over his colleagues is due, not to his positive virtues but to the fact that none of the rest of them have any reform tendencies whatever. In fact, the widespread reform sentiment among the republican masses is not reflected to any considerable

extent among republican leaders.

What does Secretary Taft stand for? What does he denounce as wrong? What does he propose as a remedy?

What would he do with the trusts? He tells us that he would not exterminate them, but simply regulate them. But the republican party has tried that, and instead of regulating the trusts, the republican party has been regulated by the trusts. Does he advocate any strengthening of the anti-trust law? No. On the contrary, he favors the weakening of the law. He wants to insert the word "unreasonable," so that the law, instead of prohibiting all combinations in restraint of trade will prohibit only unreasonable combinations. In other words, he would transfer the case from the jury to the judge. Instead of proving to the satisfaction of a jury that there was a combination in restraint of trade, the government would have to prove to the satisfaction of a judge that the restraint was an unreasonable one—that the industry strangled by the trust was not strangled in a polite and genteel way.

What does he propose on the tariff question? Revision—but not until after the election. He has been the president's close adviser for several years, and yet he has been able to restrain his tariff reform ideas all this time. The extortion practiced under the cover of high tariff has never disturbed him. It is only when he becomes a candidate and has to meet a growing sentiment in favor of tariff reduction that he blossoms out as a revisionist. But even in his most passionate utterances, he does not allow himself to be carried away from the protective theory. He wants it distinctly understood that the revision must be in the hands of the friends of the tariff—that is, in the hands of those who think that they are benefited by the tariff. And he resurrects the fraudulent argument that has been used to build up the present tariff wall, namely, that we must have a tariff "just high enough to cover the difference between the cost of production here and abroad." When did the republican party ever ask for more tariff than this? What republican has ever advocated a higher tariff than this? The trouble is that they leave the protected interests to determine for themselves how much tariff is needed; and Secretary Taft shows no disposition to depart from that custom.

What reform does Secretary Taft propose for the benefit of labor? The laboring men insist that they are entitled to trial by jury; but Secretary Taft went all the way to Oklahoma to find fault with a provision in the Oklahoma constitution securing this protection to the laboring man.

What relief does Secretary Taft propose to give us from the burdens which imperialism has imposed upon the country? The appropriation for the army and navy has increased more than a hundred millions a year since we entered upon our colonial experiment. Our army is more than twice as large as it was in 1896, and we are still denying in the Philippine Islands the doctrine set forth in the Declaration of Independence, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

What is Secretary Taft going to do on the railroad question? In one speech, he took occasion to explain that the president was not responsible for rate reductions; this would indicate that Secretary Taft does not favor rate reduction. Is he in favor of authorizing the interstate commerce commission to ascertain the present value of the railroads? Is he willing to prevent the future issue of watered stock? Does he urge reduction in freight and passenger rates, wherever and whenever such reductions can be made without injustice to honest investments? He has given no assurances on these questions, and we must judge what he would do by what he now says or fails to say. If when he is trying to secure the support of reform republicans, he is so evasive on the subject, what could we expect of him if he were elected?

But we have a sidelight on Secretary Taft's views, which shows conclusively that he has no intention of relieving the public at large from the abuses that have grown up under railroad management. He appeared before the insular committee of the house some three years ago and testified to matters relating to the Philippine Islands. In this testimony, which was a matter of record, he stated that when governor of the Philippine Islands he tried to compromise a railroad's claim against the government for