

MR. BRYAN TO MR. ROOSEVELT

At Rock Island, Ill., Mr. Bryan gave to the press his reply to Mr. Roosevelt's letter made public Monday, September 28. Mr. Bryan's letter follows:

Rock Island, Ill., September 29, 1908. Hon. Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, Washington, D. C.—Dear Sir: A brief reply to your last letter is all that is necessary to call attention to your attempt to shift the issues raised. In your letter attacking Mr. Foraker you inserted an attack upon Governor Haskell and attempted to use the charges against him to connect the democratic party and me as its candidate, with the trusts. I asked you to name a tribunal before which the charges could be investigated, or, if you would not do that, offered to leave you to say whether, in your judgment, the charges justified Mr. Haskell's withdrawal from the organization. You did not deign to suggest a tribunal, but proceeded to pass judgment upon him. He immediately resigned his position that he might be more free to prosecute those who brought accusations against him. Thus his connection with the organization ended.

I had no authority to submit, and did not submit, to you the question of his guilt or innocence for final decision. Even the president can not deny to the humblest citizen of the land the right to protect his reputation and vindicate his name in courts established for the purpose, where witnesses can be examined and evidence submitted according to the rules of law.

In my first letter to you I resented the imputation that any charges made against Governor Haskell could be justly construed as connecting the democratic party, or me as its candidate, with any trust or law-defying corporation. You replied that the charges were a matter of general notoriety, and I asked you why Mr. Taft did not mention them when he made speeches against Mr. Haskell in Oklahoma. You at once endeavored to connect me with new matters which arose after the Denver convention, and, conscious that those charges were insufficient, you have since given wings to accusations that no disinterested party would make against another without investigation.

I am willing that all your charges against me shall be submitted to the voters of the country, and with your charges I submit my denial of any knowledge or information that could, in the remotest way, connect me with any trust, monopoly or "law-defying corporation." My record is sufficient answer to your insinuation. I have lived in vain if your accusations lose me a single friend.

I challenged you to name a trust official who is supporting me, and, after searching the country, you produce the name of one man, not a trust official, but the local attorney of a trust. Without inquiring whether he votes for me because of his connection with a trust, or in spite of it, or because of his "fear of business adversity" under Mr. Taft, you accept his statement that he will vote for me as conclusive proof that I am in league with the trusts, although you admit that trust officials are supporting the republican ticket.

You compliment me when you measure me by a higher standard than you do your political associates, for you insist that Mr. Rockefeller's contribution to Governor Hughes' campaign fund was no reflection upon him, and I take it for granted that you do not criticize Judge Taft's recommendation of a Standard Oil attorney to the federal bench, a place where the judge might have to pass upon charges against the very trust for which he had been attorney.

While the trust attorney to whom you refer is not an official of a trust, I will warn him and through him his clients that if I am elected, I will not only vigorously enforce against all offenders the laws which we hope to have enacted in compliance with the democratic platform, but that I will also vigorously enforce existing laws against any and all who violate them, and that I will enforce them, not spasmodically and intermittently, but persistently and consistently; they will not be suspended, even for the protection of cabinet officers.

You say "the attitude of many men of large financial interests" warrants you "in expressing the belief that those trust magnates whose fear of being prosecuted under the law by Mr. Taft is greater than their fear of general business adversity" under me, will support me rather than Mr. Taft. You have attempted to word that statement in such a way as to claim the support

of all the trust magnates, and yet put it on the ground that they are supporting your party for patriotic reasons rather than for the promotion of a selfish interest. That is ingenious, but it is not sound.

The trust magnates are supporting the republican party and the Bible offers an explanation—"the ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib." You admit that you gave permission to the steel trust to absorb a rival, and thus increase its control of the output of steel and iron products. I will leave the American people to pass judgment upon that act and compare your position on the trust question with mine.

You refer to our campaign fund in 1896 and accuse us of allowing two men to contribute largely to the small fund with which the committee conducted the campaign. I am not sure about the figures because I have not seen an authentic statement of the contributions, but I was informed that the largest of the two sums which you mention was not all contributed by the man to whom it was credited, but included contributions from others as well as that which he gave himself.

But if you want to be fair why do you not give the amount of the republican campaign fund that year and the sources of it? I am willing to have both funds published, are you? If some of those who contributed to our fund of less than \$300,000 had a pecuniary interest in the result of the election, how will you explain the enormous contributions made to the republican fund? If you will remember, the democratic platform candidly declared the party's purpose. If the carrying out of that policy would have been of advantage to anyone, the whole public had knowledge and the publication of the contributions would not have affected the result. Publicity as to campaign funds is not needed to make known that which is disclosed by the platform, but to direct attention to secret agreements, expressed or implied, which would otherwise be concealed from the public.

You certainly pay more attention to the mote than to the beam when you find fault with our national campaign fund in 1896 and ignore the significance of a fund almost as large, which, at your request, was collected from a few persons in 1904 and was used in one state and was only a small item in the fund collected that year.

But your letter presents a defense of your party's position and an accusation against the voters which emphasizes an issue already prominent. You are the first conspicuous member of your party to attempt an explanation of the party's opposition to publicity before the election, and the admission which you make will embarrass your party associates. Your position is that the publication before election of the contributions made to your campaign fund would furnish your political opponents an opportunity "to give a false impression" as to the fitness of the candidates. You cite as illustrations the contributions made to Governor Hughes' campaign fund, the contribution collected by Mr. Harriman and the contributions which are now being collected for Mr. Taft's campaign fund. You charge, in effect, that the people are so lacking in intelligence that they might condemn as improper contributions which you declare to be proper.

If the voters differ from you on this question are they necessarily ignorant and wrong? Must the members of the party organizations act as self-appointed guardians of the people and conceal from them what is going on, lest the people be misled as to the purpose and effect of large contributions? Is this your explanation of the action of the republican leaders in the national convention in voting down a publicity plank?

If you will pardon the suggestion, I believe that a better explanation can be found in holy writ, for we do not read of men loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil?

You attempt to make a personal question of it and ask whether anyone will accuse such men as you, Governor Hughes and Mr. Taft of being influenced by contributions. That is not the question. If it is found that a party to a suit has given a sum of money to one of the jurors, the court does not stop to inquire whether or not the juror is an incorruptible man or whether in accepting the money he explicitly stated that it was accepted with the understanding that he was under no obligations to consider

it in making up his verdict. The court would hold that the giving of money by an interested party or the receiving of money was a contempt of court and an interference with the administration of justice. Public officials occupy much the same position as jurors. They are constantly called upon to decide questions between the favor-seeking corporations on the one hand and the people on the other, and there is a very general impression that officials of these favor-seeking corporations do not put up large sums of money from purely patriotic motives.

Mr. Havemeyer testified before a senate committee some years ago that the sugar trust made it a business to contribute to campaign funds, and that it was its custom to give to the party in power in the state.

I do not mean to say that Mr. Hughes was influenced by the contributions made to him by the trust magnates whose names were given in the after-election report. I do not mean to say that you were influenced by the contributions collected by Mr. Harriman, neither do I mean to say that Mr. Taft will be influenced by the contributions that are being made to his fund by the trust magnates, but I do mean to say that the American people have a right to know what contributions are being made, that they may judge for themselves the motive of the givers and the obligation imposed upon those who receive. The reflection upon the people involved in your charge that they would misuse the knowledge which publicity would give is unworthy of one who has been elevated to so high an office by the votes of the people, and I venture the assertion that you can not procure from Mr. Taft an indorsement of your defense. He is now before the people; he is offering himself as a candidate for the presidency; he dare not tell the people to whom he appeals that they have not sense enough to form a just and correct opinion as to the purpose which leads parties interested in special legislation to make big contributions.

You fear that we would misrepresent the motives of those who are contributing to the republican campaign fund, and cast an unjust suspicion upon republican candidates if the names and amounts were made known before the election. Your argument, if sound, would prevent publication after the election, for why should an unjust suspicion be cast upon officials after the election any more than before? Does not the secrecy before the election increase this suspicion?

We are going to give you an opportunity to misrepresent the motives of those who give to our campaign fund, and to arouse all the suspicion you can; we are going to prove to the people that we are making a fight for the whole people and not for those who have been enjoying privileges and favors at the hands of the government, and we expect that the honest sentiment of the country will rebuke the party whose convention refused to indorse any kind of publicity and whose candidates are not willing that the people should know until after the polls are closed what predatory interests have been active in support of the republican party. With great respect, etc.

Yours truly,
WILLIAM J. BRYAN.

SINCE WHEN?

Secretary Loeb announces for Mr. Roosevelt that he will not reply to Mr. Bryan's latest letter. Mr. Loeb says that Mr. Roosevelt feels that "inasmuch as Mr. Bryan's letter was simply an attack upon him personally, was no reason why he should answer."

It will be difficult for the average reader to look at Mr. Bryan's letter in that way. But it might be pertinent to ask since when did Mr. Roosevelt become so averse to personal controversy?



MR. TAFT AND CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

While at Lincoln, Neb., Mr. Taft gave out the following statement in reply to Mr. Bryan: "Mr. Bryan challenges me to take the same position that President Roosevelt takes with reference to the time when publicity should be made of campaign contributions, and I accept the challenge. I take exactly the same position that the president takes. I have always been in favor of a law which will require publicity of both contributions and expenditures immediately after election. Mr. Bryan seems to favor