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The World Turns "State's Evidence"

The New York World leader of the re-organizers of 1904, and leader again for 1912, has "turned state's evidence."

The World was very anxious to defeat William F. Sheehan in his candidacy for United States senator from New York. It objected to Sheehan on the ground that he represented special interests. The truth is the World's objections were that Sheehan did not represent the particular faction of special interests for which the World is spokesman. The World's candidate was acceptable to many of the special interests.

But in its fight against Mr. Sheehan the World furnished strong testimony in support of those democrats who object to the World's re-organization scheme so far as concerns the national democratic party.

In its issue of Monday, January 16, the World printed an editorial entitled "Shall the state go republican next fall?" In that editorial the World said:

"Judge Parker assures us that William F. Sheehan 'is as free from alliances that would hinder his usefulness to the people as God's free air.'

"Such being the case, will Judge Parker explain to us why all of Thomas F. Ryan's politi-

cal influence is back of Mr. Sheehan's candidacy? Will he explain why all of Anthony N. Brady's political influence is back of Mr. Sheehan's candidacy? Will he explain why all the political influence of the Ryan corporations and the Brady corporations is back of Mr. Sheehan's candidacy? We have never known the time when either Mr. Ryan or Mr. Brady was greatly interested in the election of public officials whose most conspicuous merit was their 'usefulness to the people.'

Be it remembered that Judge Parker was the New York World's candidate for the democratic nomination in 1904. Then the World told us in effect that Judge Parker was "as free from alliances that would hinder his usefulness to the people as God's free air." But many refused to accept the World's word on this point, for they saw all the representatives of special interests within the democratic party and the influences ever co-operating with those interests lining up behind Judge Parker's candidacy. They reasoned then even as the World reasons now with respect to Sheehan.

Bringing this testimony down to date and applying it to the New York World's 1911 effort to nominate the democratic candidate for the

presidency let us paraphrase the World's anti-Sheehan editorial. Here it is:

The New York World assures us that the candidates it would foist upon the democratic party in 1912 are "as free from alliances that would hinder their usefulness to the people as God's free air."

Such being the case will the New York World explain why the men who aided the special interests in defeating the democratic party in 1896 are back of the New York World's candidates? Will it explain why the representatives of special interests who derided democratic candidates and platforms in 1896, 1900 and 1908 and who contributed to republican campaign funds are back of the World's candidates? Will it explain why newspapers that are known among the profession and to many people as being owned or controlled by special interests are supporters of the World's candidates and enforcers of the World's policies? We have never known the time when any of these representatives of special interests, or habitual contributors to republican campaign funds, or corporation controlled newspapers were greatly interested in the election of public officials whose most conspicuous merit was their "usefulness to the people."

"Bryan Socialism"

"By Bryan socialism," the New York World says, "we mean specifically all that centralization hodge-podge which populism, through the agency of Mr. Bryan, inflicted upon the democratic party. We include government ownership of the railroads, federal licenses for tame trusts that do not control fifty per cent of the product, prohibition, government guarantee of bank deposits and the like."

Now that the World has specified its charges they can be easily met. It might plead ignorance of the subject as an excuse for its errors. It does not mention the two most prominent things that populism has "inflicted" upon the democratic party, namely, the election of senators by the people—now about to be secured—and the income tax. But as a democratic congress, as far back as 1892, "inflicted" the popular election of senators upon the party and the next democratic congress (in 1894) "inflicted" the income tax on the party, the World probably feels that these two populist doctrines ought to be charged against Mr. Bryan.

As to government ownership it may be an-

swered that it has not been inflicted on the party by Mr. Bryan or anybody else. It has never been made a part of any democratic national platform, nor has it been a part of any platform that Mr. Bryan ever helped to write or endorse. He has never advocated its insertion in any platform, state or national. He does not desire government ownership of the railroads, but he has said, and still says, that government ownership is the ultimate solution of the railroad question—not because the people want it but because the railroads will not consent to necessary regulations. They will continue to insist on running the government until the people, for self protection, take charge of the roads. Mr. Bryan is trying to postpone government ownership by urging efficient regulation while the World, and papers like it, are hastening government ownership by opposing the regulations needed.

Mr. Bryan's dislike for centralization is so strong that he insists that when the railroads and their newspaper allies have forced the country into government ownership we shall have state ownership of local lines which will strengthen the states rather than weaken them. But until Mr. Bryan advocates a platform declaration in favor of government ownership, it is hardly fair to accuse him of "inflicting" this doctrine upon the party.

And prohibition, is that a populist doctrine? When did the populist party ever, in a national platform, declare for prohibition? And when did Mr. Bryan ever favor a platform declaration in favor of prohibition? The World will search in vain for a prohibition platform, state or national, that Mr. Bryan ever wrote, helped to write or ran upon. Mr. Bryan has not discussed liquor legislation outside of Nebraska. He has advocated county option in Nebraska, but that cannot be called a populist doctrine. It has been adopted in Texas and other democratic states and by Ohio and other republican states. The World is an ardent admirer of Governor Harmon and yet Mr. Harmon has served two years as governor of Ohio without recommending a repeal of county option, and he ran for re-election recently on a platform that was silent on the question. It ought not be a crime or even populist for Mr. Bryan to

favor, in Nebraska, a system which is, at worst, not bad enough to excite the opposition of Governor Harmon.

Federal licenses for large interstate corporations is another doctrine that the World charges against Mr. Bryan, but it is not populist. It appeared first in the democratic platform of 1900 and reappeared in 1904, and Mr. Bryan pleads guilty of being its author. The World opposes it because it strikes at the root of the evil. It talks about the trusts but it has no remedy. It advocates the nomination of men selected by the trusts and warranted harmless.

The license plan does not enlarge the power of corporations; it restricts the power they now have. It does not increase the power of the federal government; it simply employs the restraining power which it now has. The license system for big corporations adds a national remedy to a state remedy; it expressly reserves to the states the exercise of all the authority over corporations that they now have. The World is very much opposed to effective federal regulation on the trust question, but it is perfectly willing to have breweries use the inter-

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EXAMINE THEIR RECORD

The record of every candidate should be carefully examined to see whether he is so situated as to be able to serve the public without bias in favor of any interest antagonistic to the public. "No man can serve two masters," and those whose environment is such as not to leave them free for the service of the people should not be supported by the people. Is a candidate supported or opposed by the enemies of the people? That should be the inquiry, and those who stand for the common good cannot be far wrong when they get on the other side, and oppose those upheld by the agents of privilege.—Joseph W. Folk, in The Commoner, January 20, 1911.