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Mr. Bryan at the Republican Convention

Mr. Bryan wrote special reports from the republican national convention for various newspapers; some of them are as follows: Chicago, June 16.—There is a liberal education in a national convention but much that one learns is not useful to him afterwards. Nowhere else does one see in full bloom this special phase of convention life that politics develops in a free country. The headquarters of the various candidates are in charge of skillful politicians enlisted under the respective banners, and these have their assistants and understudies who are in training. The delegates as they come in are badged, tagged, and buttonholed. The prophets are revising their lists as they learn of additions or defections and the corridors of the hotels resound with the cheers of partisans. These things are to be found at every convention, but they are here in unusual abundance.

The republican party contains a larger number of prominent and experienced politicians than are to be found in the democratic party, for prominence usually goes hand in hand with official positions. For the last half century the republican party has been in almost uninterrupted control of the nation and has been supreme in a majority of the states. It has had an opportunity, therefore, to lift its members into conspicuous positions.

As one passes through the increasing throng he hears men addressed as "governor," "senator," "secretary," etc., until he becomes bewildered at the array of officials now holding offices, or with the prefix "ex" before their titles, a prefix which courtesy drops in salutation. I am enjoying my first day renewing acquaintances with the adherents of the various candidates and with the numerous representatives of the press.

I called upon Representative McKinley at the Taft headquarters, upon Senator Dixon at the Roosevelt headquarters, upon Senator Kenyon at the Cummins headquarters, and upon Mr. Houser at Senator La Follette's headquarters. I am now trying to reconcile the predictions that they make. At the Taft headquarters the president is as good as renominated. He has the necessary votes and can read his title clear. There may be a variation of a few votes, but the margin is sufficient so that a few desertions, not anticipated, of course, but allowed for out of an abundance of caution, would not change the result. This would seem to settle the question in favor of Mr. Taft but for the fact that a different story is told at the Roosevelt headquarters. Here it is all over but the shouting, and even that has been entered upon. With the ex-president's followers, the exact number of votes is not so important because they feel that they have on their side a sentiment that will compel additions. They are banking on the fact that Mr. Roosevelt has a majority of the votes from the northern states where the republican vote is located and they are using this argument for all it is worth. They will not admit that there is any doubt as to the final outcome.

After one has visited these two headquarters he feels that while the issue is in doubt between the president and the ex-president, the choice must lie between the two, but Senator Kenyon and Mr. Houser have carefully prepared tables which show that neither of the principal candidates can be nominated, and that in a long drawn out contest, such as they expect, the party must turn to some third person, and each thinks his candidate the logical man for the place.

I am not prepared to venture a prediction. In fact, no one who views the subject impartially would care to risk a guess and the predictions that are being made by interested parties illustrate the old truth that man's

opinions of what is to be is half wish and half environment. Senator Kenyon wants it distinctly understood that Senator Cummins will not consider the vice-presidency in connection with either President Taft, ex-President Roosevelt, or anybody else. Those in charge of Mr. La Follette's candidacy are equally emphatic in denying that they have any intention of taking sides with either Mr. Roosevelt or Mr. Taft.

I called on Mr. Roosevelt and found him cheerful and as buoyant as I have ever seen him. Opinions differ as to the effect of his presence here. His opponents think his personal participation in the convention is so unusual a manifestation of interest as to offset any good that he can do. His friends on the other hand are cheered by the audacity of his course. They are counting on his strengthening any wavering friends, as well as upon his winning over any opponents who are not riveted to the Taft candidacy.

The X or unknown quantity in the republican situation is the colored vote from the south. It is the weakness of the Taft cause. It is a weakness not only because it does not represent a voting strength proportionate to its influence in the convention, but a weakness also because it cannot be depended upon to stand tied.

There is a break in the Mississippi delegation and another in the Georgia delegation. One of the Mississippi delegates has returned some money which was given to him for traveling expenses for the delegates. But there are Taft supporters who are uncharitable enough to charge that this money would not have been returned, had not a larger sum been received from "sources unknown." In fact, it looks now as if this convention might turn on the size of the honorarium, as the magazines describe the complimentary compensation paid to those who write for them.

A western senator used to tell at Washington a story that does not seem as absurd now as it did then. He used it to show the honesty of some of the western legislators. One of them arose in the legislature during a senatorial contest and thus addressed the speaker: "I have received \$1,000, from Mr. ——— (we will call him Mr. Smith) and I intended to vote for him for senator but since receiving the money and promising him my support, I have received \$1,500 from Mr. ——— (we will call him Mr. Brown) and being an honest man, I desire to return Mr. Smith's money." It is unfortunate that the forces are so evenly divided as to make it possible for the scale to be turned by influences which would deprive the victor of the right to claim a real triumph for the principles for which he stands.

HOW THEY FOUGHT FOR CONTROL

Chicago, June 17.—One notes a difference in the manner of the delegates as they come pouring into the city and report at their respective headquarters, the Taft men, excepting the southern delegates, are, as a rule, of the conservative type. They speak more deliberately and show less animation. Many of them are politicians of long experience who have been accustomed to the methods of the inner circle. They speak cautiously, act deliberately, are more inclined to "view with alarm" than to enthuse. They feel that things have been going along fairly well, and are anxious that such changes as are necessary may be made "slowly and only after careful investigation."

The Roosevelt men, on the contrary, are largely of the aggressive type. They have already decided and they have no doubts to settle. They are not waiting for investigation and they are not weighing reforms in an apothecary's scale. A great many young men have come into prominence as Roosevelt champions, some of them appearing younger than they really are.

Governor Johnson of California is the most interesting figure from the west. His state, so long a victim of railroad rule and servitude to favor-seeking corporations, has leaped at one bound into the front rank of the reform states. With the zeal of a new convert, California points with pride to an army of militant progressives, and only awaits the signal to fight standpattism on any field.

Stubbs of Kansas, Hadley of Missouri and Aldrich of Nebraska are untiring workers and they do not talk in whispers. While the personality of Mr. Roosevelt is a considerable factor in the contest, it is evident from what one hears that the progressive republicans are using Mr. Roosevelt, not because they approve of all that he stands for, but because they regard him as the best means of overthrowing the Taft regime.

They regard the president as the personification of the reactionary sentiment in the nation and would support almost any one in preference to him. Some of them admit that the anti-third term argument is a handicap but feel that it is not a sufficient objection to deter them from casting their lot with the ex-president.

I can not agree with them in putting aside this objection so lightly. It has not yet been considered by the public. President Taft is not in a position to urge the strongest objections to a third term, and the sharp line drawn between the administration and its opponents precludes a fair discussion of the third term issue.

If Mr. Roosevelt is pitted against a progressive democrat there will be a better opportunity to give weight to the objections which are honestly and earnestly advanced. The unfortunate phase of the controversy is that the discussion of an issue so fundamental will turn attention from the economic questions upon which the people seem ready to act. That this would be the result of Mr. Roosevelt's nomination is certain.

Had he espoused the cause of any other progressive and given to it the time and energy that he has devoted to his own candidacy, he could have controlled the convention and made himself master of the organization of his party. The bitterness aroused by his candidacy would have been avoided and his party would have been committed to the reforms for which the progressives stand. The democratic party then would have had a rival that would have spurred it on to even greater activity in the support of remedial measures.

But there is time enough to philosophize on what might have been. The question just now is, how many Taft delegates can the Roosevelt leaders, aided by the ex-president himself, draw from the president's fold. The desertions claimed at the Roosevelt headquarters are discredited by Mr. McKinley.

It is conceded that one Mississippi delegate heretofore counted for Mr. Taft has joined the Roosevelt forces and that one of the Georgia delegates has followed his example, but the standpatters expect that the effect of these desertions will be reduced to a minimum by a discussion of the considerations which are supposed to have brought about the changes.

While the charges made in former republican conventions against some of the colored delegates have prepared the public mind to accept without much evidence the charge that money is being used, it must be remembered that the patronage argument has a powerful influence on whites as well as blacks. The most powerful weapon in the Roosevelt armory is the argument that Mr. Taft can not possibly be elected and can not therefore reward his delegates from the southern states.

Mr. Roosevelt's friends take it for granted that he can win, and their confidence in his success enables them to play upon the ambitions of delegates, especially in the democratic states where the republicans can not hope for local