

The Commoner

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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TWENTY-SIX PEACE TREATIES SIGNED

More than one billion, one hundred million people are now pledged to each other by treaty not to begin war until after the matters in dispute have been thoroughly investigated. Treaties were signed September 15, 1914, with Great Britain, France, Spain and China. These governments, together with the government of the United States, exercise authority over more than a billion souls. The twenty-two treaties previously signed add one hundred and fifty million more, making in all more than two-thirds of all the population of the globe. The peace plan is a success. It goes further and has spread more rapidly than any previous plan. The principle is simple, so simple that thirty-four nations have endorsed it, including Germany, Russia and Austria. It is only a question of time when treaties will be concluded with these nations and all the other important nations, and then we may expect treaties between other nations until investigation will be the rule.

W. J. BRYAN.

Economic Reforms Secured

This administration has dealt with a number of economic questions, among which four may be mentioned as of special importance:

First, a reduction has been made in the duties on imports.

For twenty years the democratic party has been trying to secure a reduction of the tariff. The revenue law of 1894, the only successful attempt, did not have a fair chance. It began with a compromise forced upon it by a few democratic senators in the interest of manufacturers in their own states; then it was blamed for a panic which was really due to the financial situation; and, to make matters still worse, the income tax for which it provided was held unconstitutional, so that it failed to produce the necessary revenue.

The law of 1913 has had much better luck than the revenue law of 1894, and it has met a much more favorable reception; in fact, it is now accepted and approved by a large majority of the people.

Second, the income tax provision of the new law is also an improvement over the income tax law of 1894 and it has the advantages of being authorized by a constitutional amendment, so that there can be no doubt of its validity. The two parts of the law taken together—the import duties and the income tax—make a most creditable showing in the matter of taxation.

The republican party, because of the influences that controlled it, was powerless to bring relief to the country either by the reduction of import duties or by the enactment of an income tax law.

The third economic question to which the president invited the attention of congress involved the currency system. In this his success as a constructive statesman was even more pronounced than in the tariff-income-tax law. The country scarcely realizes yet the magnitude of the change effected by the new currency law. For the first time since the war the government asserts its sovereign right to issue paper money; for the first time since the war state banks are

admitted to the benefits of treasury deposits on equal terms with the national banks; for the first time since the war banks, both state and national, have been put in a position to respond immediately to emergencies existing in a community; for the first time since the war the federal government has assumed the responsibility of safeguarding the commercial and industrial world by affording protection from panics; and, what is not least important, for the first time since the war the power of Wall street over the political, as well as the financial world, has been broken.

The republican party was likewise powerless to bring relief to the country from the currency system which had operated in the interest of the big money magnates.

The president is now engaged in what will be a successful effort to protect the people from private monopolies. The bills which have been prepared by a democratic congress, acting in conjunction with the president, promise relief to the people from the heavy tribute which the trusts have collected. These bills also include relief to the wage-earners from government by injunction.

The above record is without parallel in our economic history and ought to win from the country a unanimous endorsement of President Wilson and the democratic congress, senate and house of representatives.

W. J. BRYAN.

August 13, Peace Day

On another page will be found an editorial which appeared in a recent issue of the St. Louis Republic, suggesting that the 13th of August be observed as peace day in commemoration of the ratification of the eighteen peace treaties on that day. The Commoner takes pleasure in seconding the motion. Probably on no other day in the history of the world have so many treaties been ratified, and the day is more worthy of note when it is remembered that these treaties are the first that have provided for investigation in ALL cases. They leave no gap; every dispute of whatever nature, which is not otherwise provided for, shall, when diplomatic means fail, be submitted to a permanent commission for investigation before any declaration of war or commencement of hostilities. This leaves nothing which can in a moment of anger be made an excuse for war. The contracting parties covenant with each other to refrigerate their misunderstandings — to keep their disputes in cold storage, as it were—until passions subside, reason resumes its sway and an opportunity has been given to separate questions of honor from questions of fact. If, after a thorough examination of all the matters in dispute, the nations feel that they must go to war, they can do so, but who believes a war probable at the end of a year's deliberation?

Yes, let August 13 be put down on the calendar as the day upon which the public mind shall be turned to the peace movement; when expression can be given to that rapidly increasing sentiment which demands the substitution of reason for violence in the adjustment of international difficulties. The Republic is to be congratulated upon the suggestion which it has launched.

W. J. BRYAN.

Neutrality may not stir the blood like participation in war, but it does not have to bear the blame for vacant chairs by the fireside and it is much more pleasant to look back to.

What has become of His (Satanic) Majesty's ship "Piffle"? The jingo press has not made fun of the battleship, "Friendship" since the European war broke out.

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