

The Commoner

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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Record of Wilson and Democracy Deserves Indorsement of the American People

Outline of Speech Made by William Jennings Bryan During the Campaign of 1916

(After discussing such local issues as were pertinent, and giving indorsement to state candidates, Mr. Bryan emphasized the importance of electing a democratic senate and house to support the President during the next four years, asserting that the splendid record made during the past three and a half years would have been impossible if the President's efforts had been obstructed by either a republican senate or house. He then took up national issues.)

THIS IS THE SIXTH presidential campaign in which I have taken a prominent part. In three I was myself a candidate; in three I have supported the candidacy of others, and I call you to witness that I have labored in behalf of others as earnestly as in my own behalf. In the five campaigns preceding this I have presented the promises of my party; in this campaign I present a record of achievement which surpasses promise and prophecy. I am able, therefore, to make a more convincing argument in favor of the re-election of President Wilson than I was ever able to make in behalf of my own candidacy. And what I say for the President I say for the democratic candidates for senate and house, for without a congress to support him he can not continue his progressive work.

TWO SUPREME ISSUES

There are two supreme issues of this campaign—one is domestic and one deals with our international relations. The first is whether this government shall continue to be administered by those now in control, or shall be turned back to the reactionaries from whom the government was taken four years ago. That is the first question. I shall present the details later when I present the record of reforms accomplished.

In order that you may form an opinion on this question—whether it is wise to return it to those in power prior to 1912—let me remind you that the men from whom this government was taken four years ago had behaved so badly that a majority of the members of the republican party had repudiated those men at the polls on election day. Their conduct had been so reprehensible, their administration so odious, that more than half of the voters of the republican party repudiated their last president's administration, left their party, and voted for Colonel Roosevelt.

REACTIONARIES IN FULL CONTROL

These men are now in control of the republican party. The reactionaries controlled the convention at Chicago this

year without opposition; they controlled it four years ago in spite of opposition. And they were so reckless this year, they felt so confident of having secured complete control of the republican party, that they did some very foolish things. One of the most foolish things, I thought, was to invite Cannon and Depew to make speeches at that republican convention, after refusing to invite Roosevelt. Mr. Roosevelt offered to go to Chicago and address the convention; he sat in his home at Oyster Bay with a telegraph instrument in one hand and a telephone receiver in the other—waiting for the invitation that never came. And, to add insult to injury, the delegates listened to speeches from Cannon and Depew, who did more, probably, than any other two men to bring odium on the republican party. It was because of Cannonism in the house and Depewism in the senate—both standing for corporate domination of that great political organization—that four million republicans revolted. Cannon gave his name to a system of rules since abolished, and Depew led the last fight in the senate against the proposition to elect senators by direct vote. And yet these two men were invited to speak at that republican convention where the reactionaries were in full control. When I heard Cannon and Depew making speeches there it reminded me of a story I heard, many years ago, of a poor woman whose husband died of dissipation. She selected a very modest casket for him, and then the undertaker asked, "What about the trimmings?" "Don't mention trimmings," she protested, "that is what Jimmie died of." It was of Depewism and Can-

nonism the republican party died four years ago, and yet this convention had the impudence to bring these reactionaries out as the two prominent exhibits at that convention! The first question, I repeat, is whether the American people want to turn the government back to the reactionaries, who, for sixteen years spread a Belshazzar's feast before the predatory interests.

The second question is whether we shall repudiate a President who has succeeded in keeping us out of war with Mexico, and out of war across the ocean. Now, these are the two questions that will be decided by your votes—the two supreme issues of this campaign—for you can not defeat Woodrow Wilson without putting this government back into the hands, not of the republican party merely, but of the REACTIONARY members of the republican party; and you can not defeat Woodrow Wilson without rebuking the man who has succeeded in keeping this country at peace while war rages throughout Europe.

I will take up these questions, one at a time, and show you the record this administration has made since the government was taken out of the hands of the reactionaries; and it is a wonderful record. No wonder the President said, in reviewing it, that it was so extraordinary, that it sounded more like the promises of a platform than a record of what had actually been done.

TARIFF REFORM

If you wonder how it was possible to bring about so many reforms in such a short time, just remember that the republicans had accomplished so little during the sixteen years preceding that the democrats found a large accumulation of work that should have been done before. In the first place, as soon as the democratic party took possession of the government it reduced the tariff. We not only have the best law that we have had in fifty years; we not only have a law written from the standpoint of the whole people, instead of from the standpoint of a few beneficiaries of the high tariff; but we have a tariff law that, by its success, has emancipated the nation out of the thralldom of fear and made it impossible for the republicans to carry an election again by the threat of a panic. For twenty years they have refused to discuss this question on its merits; they have simply tried to frighten you by telling you that, if you dared to make the beneficiaries of protection take their hands out of your pockets, you would have a panic. When you recall the history of the panics since 1860, you wonder how a re-

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