

## Democracy's Greatest Need

Democracy's greatest need today is publicity. The republicans have an enormous advantage in the number and circulation of their papers—especially in the larger states. They can not only present their own side but they can misrepresent the democratic position. Our party must have an overwhelming majority of the people on its side to win against such odds.

There is no hope of overcoming this handicap except by government action. The large daily is a big business proposition, and those who are rich enough to own such papers are, as a rule, more or less intimately connected with favor-seeking corporations and they are by class consciousness drawn to the support of the republican ticket.

In the December, 1915, issue of The Commoner attention was called to this need in the following editorial:

"For a long time the government has been publishing a Congressional Record which gives a complete review of the action of the senate and house, together with a full report of the speeches made. A number of the departments also send out bulletins covering their special work, but the time has come for the government to enlarge its activities in this direction. The Congressional Record is limited in circulation and too bulky for the average reader; and the department bulletins only cover a part of the government work. The public welfare demands the publication of a digest of the government's work in the form of a bulletin, published weekly, or at such other intervals as may be found best, and sent free to all postmasters, state, county and city executives, libraries, colleges, high schools, newspapers, periodicals, and other public centers of information. It should also be furnished at cost to such individuals as may desire to subscribe for it, as the Congressional Record now is.

"Such a bulletin, under the control of a bipartisan (not non-partisan) board, giving the things done by congress, a digest of less important things done by congress and by the various departments of the government, reporting the important speeches delivered, and furnishing voters with the information necessary to pass intelligent judgment upon the actions of public servants, would be of incalculable value.

"Without attempting to go into detail it is suggested that a board of the majority in the senate and house, acting jointly, and one by the minority party in the senate and house, acting jointly, would give assurance that both sides would be properly represented in the control of the paper.

"Congress could from time to time direct what MUST be put into the paper and what should be left to the discretion of the managing board.

"To make the plan complete a certain amount of space should be left for editorial comment, and this space should be divided among the parties represented in congress in proportion to each party's strength in congress. This would enable the readers of the bulletin to know not only what was being done, but why it was being done, and at the same time have the benefit of the views of the opposition. Such a bulletin would be an authentic source of information, and the voters of the country would find in it the best arguments from the highest source on each side of every disputed national question. The democratic theory of government is that the people THINK FOR THEMSELVES and select representatives to give expression to public opinion. This is the theory of our government, but the masses find it impossible at present to secure that reliable information to which they are entitled. The local press has not the space necessary to furnish the information needed, and the metropolitan press is not always disposed to furnish impartially the matters necessary for the formation of an intelligent judgment.

"This democratic congress could render no greater or more lasting service to the country than to establish such a bulletin as is above outlined. Once established it would remain, for no

party would dare to withdraw from the people the advantage of such a publication.

"It would not interfere with any legitimate newspaper enterprise; on the contrary, it would give to the press of the country what every editor ought to desire, namely, an unimpeachable source of information, a reservoir from which to draw facts that can not be controverted and arguments worthy to be considered."

If any one has a better plan The Commoner will gladly support it—but something ought to be done, and done at once. If governments are to derive their powers from the consent of the governed, it is of the first importance that consent shall be intelligently given, and how can a voter act intelligently unless he hears both sides?

A bulletin published monthly except during campaigns, and then for two or three months published weekly, would be tremendously helpful to the citizen. The cost would not be great, and what expenditure would be more easily defended? Such a government publication, setting forth the important issues with editorial comment from all viewpoints, and going into the home of every voter would do more to insure deliberate and intelligent action on the part of the electorate than any other means yet proposed.

The Commoner earnestly brings to the attention of democratic senators and representatives this very imperative need.

W. J. BRYAN.

### MR. ROOSEVELT'S SHARE

The democrats would be ungrateful if they did not acknowledge with appreciation the indispensable service rendered to the President in the recent campaign. Had the Colonel gone to Chicago and put into ACTS his professed belief that the "country must be saved from Wilson," the result might have been different. But to do that would have required him to lay aside his own ambition—an impossible sacrifice.

His second mistake was to put the republican candidate in the attitude of favoring war with Mexico and war with Germany. Every speech he made alarmed the public and Mr. Hughes could not protect himself from such speeches.

The result does not add any cap of Col. George Harvey, the celebrated predictor. Mr. Harvey announced before the election that Hughes would be the winner, and gave the precise number of votes which each contestant would win, which was considerably different from the finals. In making the prediction it was stated that the colonel had been remarkably successful in the past. The colonel made the mistake this year, however, of making his prediction before the election was held.

### THE PRIZE CARTOON

The Commoner awards the prize for the best cartoon to the author of "Listen to the Knocking Bird." It was a brilliant idea and it was well carried out.

That trip to California was but one of the many mistakes of the Hughes' campaign, but it was sufficient to lose a state.

### THE PAST SECURE

With a democratic President for four years more and a senate for two years at least, the past is secure. The reforms already secured will have time to fully vindicate their worth, and time is all that is necessary. They will be unrepealable when fairly tested.

That Los Angeles adding machine with the faulty gear may yet become famous in political annals. The republicans always did depend upon the machine for most of their political triumphs.

It will be readily admitted that when it comes to claiming things a republican national chairman is just as good after the election is over as before the polls were opened.

### CAMPAIGN COMMENT

[From The Nebraska State Journal, Nov. 13.]

Some of the eastern newspapers have been amazed over the trail of victory for President Wilson that followed Mr. Bryan's campaign tour. They find that he delivered speeches in nineteen states, including Pennsylvania, which he merely touched to oblige a friend who wanted help in a congressional fight. All of these nineteen states with the exception of such rock-ribbed republican strongholds as Iowa, Illinois, Michigan and Pennsylvania, were carried by Wilson. Mr. Bryan did not go to Indiana, and it was carried by Hughes. He cancelled his original date in South Dakota and gave the extra time to North Dakota. South Dakota goes to Hughes and North Dakota to Wilson. It appears that California and Washington, and possibly New Hampshire are the only states in which the landslide can not be claimed as having been influenced by Mr. Bryan's oratory. When the returns are completed and ready for complete analysis it may appear that the Bryan influence was only superficial, but when a map of his itinerary is compared with a map of election results, the coincidence is not only interesting but startling.

Mr. Bryan's closing campaign speeches indicate his purpose to begin at once a fight to commit the democratic party to national prohibition. With twenty-three states dry, all of them except Maine and Michigan belonging to the new western and southern alignment, he is not facing an impossible task. Mr. Bryan still retains excellent health and vigor. He may be an active participant in many more national campaigns. If foreign relations still engross our attention in 1920, the chances are that by 1924 they will be sufficiently cleared up to leave the field open for a national battle over prohibition. The number of dry states will naturally be increased by that time, even allowing for a probable temporary reaction in the movement, enough to make it a real issue. Events may move fast enough, indeed, to bring the question before the country prominently in the next campaign. The Nebraska democrats who have been gleefully burying Mr. Bryan once more will find in due time that their labor is wasted. While he met with a defeat in the success of some of his personal enemies in Nebraska, he succeeded in digging the ground from under the wet Nebraska democrats by helping to secure the past prohibition amendment. The victory is fundamental. It gives Mr. Bryan an advantage in future contests the importance of which can hardly be over-estimated.

### CLEAN STORIES

The Rotary club of Louisville, Ky., recently adopted the following resolution:

"Resolved, That no story, stunt, or joke is proper or fit to be placed before any Rotarian or any gathering of Rotarians which would not be perfectly fit and proper before such Rotarians if each one were accompanied by his mother, wife or daughter."

Good. The Rotarians are to be congratulated. There are plenty of clean stories to illustrate every truth worth illustrating. It is time to abolish the vulgar story. It is increasingly offensive and never safe. Even if there are no ladies within hearing, there may be gentlemen present.

A statistically inclined gentleman has figured out that there are a million jobs in the United States that are barred to the man who drinks, whether he imbibes regularly or now and then. The open saloon is a constant invitation to men to drink. Good sense will dictate that every man who really desires to climb the ladder of success will use his vote to remove all barriers from his path.

### MR. BRYAN'S CAMPAIGN SPEECHES

Mr. Bryan spoke in twenty states during the recent presidential campaign, visiting the states in the order named: New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Nebraska.

The report that Mr. Bryan also spoke in Idaho, South Dakota, Minnesota or Indiana, is incorrect.