

Mr. Bryan's Part in the Campaign

[The following special correspondence by David Lawrence, of The New York Evening Post, N. Y., gives an interesting account of Mr. Bryan's activities in the recent campaign.]

Kansas City, Mo., October 17.—What is William Jennings Bryan doing in the presidential campaign? This has probably occurred to not a few who recall the dramatic circumstances under which he parted official company with President Wilson seventeen months ago. One day with the ex-secretary of state would convince the most skeptical that he not only is interested heart and soul in Democratic success, but that he is giving more of time, energy, and money combined than any other single man to bring about the re-election of Woodrow Wilson.

Crowds—well, the like of them are never seen except when Bryan comes to town. Applause—the kind that rises from the hearts of a multitude, the approval that is accentuated by the audible comment: "He's right, he's right."

Peace Issue Overshadows Others

For the great Commoner is making a stirring appeal. He touches on many issues, but the one that brings down the house every time is his discussion of peace—the fact that the President has kept the nation out of war. Out in the west this is the issue which overshadows all others, and Mr. Bryan has had such a reception in the fifteen states he has already visited as to make him confident that the mountain regions of the west will go solidly for President Wilson.

Four and five speeches a day for



Childish Craving

—for something sweet finds pleasant realization in the pure, wholesome, wheat and barley food.

GRAPE-NUTS

No danger of upsetting the stomach — and remember, Grape-Nuts is a true food, good for any meal or between meals.

"There's a Reason"

five weeks has been Mr. Bryan's part in the campaign, and he has four more states to cover in the next three weeks. He is paying his own traveling expenses.

"If the republicans credit my time as valuable now," he remarked laughingly when I met him, "as they did when I went lecturing, I must be making quite a contribution."

The same Bryan—not changed a bit—happy, good humored, epigrammatic in his speeches, with a touch of campaign sarcasm in them every now and then; twenty minutes in one town only to be rushed by train or automobile to another, during the day; at least two speeches in the big cities at night, everybody reaching out to shake his hand as he brushes through the crowds, people interrupting him constantly as he gulps a glass of milk or a sandwich at a railroad lunch room, and on he goes.

His Kansas City meeting was typical of those he has had for many weeks. The big convention hall there was jammed to the doors, which means nearly 16,000 people. It seemed larger than the Madison Square Garden crowds that Roosevelt draws. Senator Underwood, of Alabama, and Senator Reed of Missouri, who is running for re-election, spoke prior to the arrival of Mr. Bryan. Both had talked of the horrors of war and the disaster from which the President's diplomacy had saved the nation. But it remained for Mr. Bryan to grip the audience with the kind of argument and appeal that he alone can make. He had hardly entered the hall in the midst of another speech when the crowd caught sight of him and yelled itself hoarse. It was some minutes before the speaker, Fred Gardiner, candidate for governor, could resume. When the Commoner was finally introduced the thousands of people stood up and cheered. Mr. Hughes gets nothing of that kind; even Mr. Wilson seldom inspires such a demonstration. But with Bryan, it is constant. And he told me afterwards he had never had such enthusiasm in all his campaign days.

Deeds Versus Promises

Just why that is may be hard to say, but I suspect he is also making more votes for Mr. Wilson than he ever made for himself. Perhaps his own explanation may account for it.

"I can make a much better argument," he told me, "for the re-election of President Wilson than I ever could make for myself. For four campaigns, I have been able to talk about promises only, but today I can point to a record greater than any administration of our generation. Deeds are so much more convincing than promises."

Mr. Bryan's speeches are entertaining. He intersperses humor with argument, and rakes the republican party so good naturedly yet effectively that his crowds fairly howl with delight. When he spoke in Kansas City, he had only 15 minutes, as he had to catch a train for St. Louis. He begged his audience not to applaud for applause took time, and he had much to say. They didn't obey him at first; they couldn't. But soon they realized that applause was uneconomical, and were content to listen in silence, but it was obviously painful for them to hold themselves in check.

Few things were more delicious than his description of the campaign of 1912 when he said everybody was so anxious to defeat the republican administration that half of the republican party refused to permit the

democrats to do alone the task they were so eager to perform. And has the republican party reformed?

"Why, do you remember," he said amid laughter, "what happened at Chicago last June? Who nominated Mr. Hughes? The same men who nominated Mr. Taft. And were they repentant? Not a bit of it. They wouldn't even let Mr. Roosevelt address their convention after he pleaded for an invitation. Why, they kept that poor man waiting at Oyster Bay while the convention was addressed by such able reactionaries as Cannon and Depew."

His Two Primary Propositions

Mr. Bryan's speech begins usually with these two propositions.

"Should the government be turned back to the reactionaries whose conduct was so odious that it caused more than half the republicans to repudiate their party in 1912? If not, Mr. Wilson should be re-elected with a democratic senate and house to support him. Second: Should the President be rebuked for keeping the country out of war with Mexico and Europe, or should he be commended by a vote that will re-elect him and give him a democratic senate and house to support him?"

From these premises Mr. Bryan develops an argument on domestic questions at first, pointing out that Mr. Wilson's record, for example, on woman suffrage is much better than that of Mr. Hughes; for the President went to New Jersey and voted for suffrage, while Mr. Hughes didn't even go to New York when the issue was submitted to the electorate last year. Mr. Bryan speaks of the tariff, the income tax law, the currency law, the rural credits law, the anti-trust laws, the act creating a trade commission, the shipping bill, the child-labor law, the Philippines bill, the peace commission treaties, and the eight-hour law. And on the last two especially does he get an overwhelming response.

"When before," he goes on, "did any party, in so short a time, present and complete so remarkable a programme for the advancement of the nation's welfare? Is it possible that a party which has thus justified public confidence can be rebuked by the people to whose interests it has dedicated itself?"

All this may sound on reading like the usual campaign drivel, but the people by their every manifestation show that they believe it implicitly. And when Mr. Bryan touches the subject of Mexico or the war in Europe, there is no question that he has his audiences almost unanimously agreeing with him. He tells how the President inherited the Mexican mess from Mr. Taft, justified the refusal to recognize the "red-handed assassin, Huerta," and commends the administration for declining to intervene in Mexico. He drives home his point that intervention would benefit alone the speculators and investors when he asks his audiences if they want to give the blood of their sons and relatives to make good the financial losses of men who preferred to go outside of the United States to invest their capital instead of inside. There is no disputing that with the average man Mr. Bryan makes a ten-strike every time. Mr. Hughes's speeches about the protection of American rights and the fact that underlying all our diplomacy must be the basic principle of the use of force may stir enthusiasm, but it is hardly comparable to the shouts and demonstrations of approval given to the plain talk of Mr. Bryan.

Peroration "Gets" the Crowd

The peace issue is paramount in the west. Not alone Mr. Bryan, but

every other democratic orator, rarely fails to draw an outburst of genuine applause as he paints the horrors of the European war, the battles at Verdun and on the Somme, and tells of the hardships on the women at home, who toil while the vitality of a nation is each day sapped on the battlefield. Obviously the democratic side of the argument about foreign policy is the easier, the more dramatic, for the orator to handle, and one can be forgiven the suspicion that if the cards were reversed the republican orators would work the gag not less effectively.

But it is Mr. Bryan's peroration that "gets" the crowd. In it is a spirit of generosity which comes all the more convincingly from the man who broke with the President a year ago. Here is what Mr. Bryan says to every audience that he addresses—several times a day for seven days a week:

"And who, if not the President of the United States, is entitled to be mediator when the time for mediation comes? Some American president will surely have that honor. Surely, the country will not turn down the President who has borne the burden and carried the responsibility of neutrality, and give the incomparable honor of being mediator to one who has had no part in the work done and who merely finds fault with the President without outlining any policy or proposing any course to be pursued."

Mr. Bryan talks that way because he sincerely believes every word of it. He wants Mr. Wilson to have that honor not alone because of the reward to the man for whom today he has the highest respect, but because he wants especially to see it added to the record of democratic achievement in American history. Mr. Bryan is fundamentally more interested in the welfare of the democratic party than in any person in it. He may have thought at one time, not long after he left the cabinet, that the President was on the wrong track, that by the advocacy of large measures of preparedness and the shaking of the big stick, the administration was drifting into war. Mr. Bryan did not want the democratic party to be a war party. Nothing delighted him more than the turn of events which gave the democratic party the cry that they had maintained peace. It enabled him to forget, for the moment, if not forgive, the large expenditures for preparedness, for the peace policy was closest to his heart. Yet if anything was needed to make Mr. Bryan realize his duty, it was the performances at the last Chicago convention and the campaign arguments of Mr. Hughes. The republican candidate helped to solidify democratic ranks. The eight-hour bill pleased the Commoner immensely. The democratic party—his party—was again on the side of the masses in a big fight for human rights and international peace in foreign policy and for the betterment of the common man in domestic policy. Small wonder that he is enthusiastic and is by his own admission talking more ardently for the candidacy of Woodrow Wilson than he ever did for himself. Which proves that William Jennings Bryan, despite all the criticism that has been visited upon him, cares for a principle far more than a good many men in public life today. For who will assert that, win or lose, there is anything of public office or other reward in it for the man who has been a candidate three times and a secretary of state? His sole interest is democracy, and that it no doubt will be to the end of his days.