

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY MUST WIN

The democratic party is now face to face with the campaign of 1920. In a little more than a year it will write its platform and nominate its candidates. To the casual observer the situation would look anything but favorable. After the most splendid economic record that a party ever made in the same length of time, and after the successful carrying on of a war, it went down to defeat at the last election. The new congress, which speaks for the people as their latest expression of purpose, is republican. Having accomplished the reforms for which we had labored for a quarter of a century, we cannot use them as a reason for remaining in power. The people do not act through gratitude, but from expectation, and now that the war is over we can no longer call upon the people to support the administration as a patriotic duty. Not only have the old things passed away but we are confronted with issues of the first magnitude. We may hope to secure some advantage from the conclusion of the treaty and from the establishment of the league of nations, based upon principles that appeal to our people, but we cannot overlook the necessity for the immediate mobilizing of strength for the democratic tasks that lie before us. The democratic party is built from the bottom and its strength comes from the masses. It has convictions, and it fights for them, but these convictions must be expressed, and the forces must be organized for effective action. We need as we seldom have before brainy men whose hearts are with the people and who are not afraid to risk their all in the helping of their country. They cannot stop to calculate upon their chances of reward. The patriot serves and trusts the people to ap-

preciate and reward. But whether they reward or not, he finds sufficient satisfaction in the consciousness of doing his duty. The profiteer is abroad in the land. He has been the blot upon the war. He has sucked the blood of the people at home while the soldiers spilled their blood abroad. Has the democratic party the courage to challenge and overthrow the profiteer? The party must provide for the returning soldiers. They were called into the service by conscription. They had to leave their employment no matter what it was. Every man should be able to return to his employment and resume his place in industry. During the period of readjustment care must be taken that no soldier shall suffer, and the unemployed must be taken care of whether they be soldiers or not. The right to live is an inalienable right and the government must feed its people until it can give them work. The war has ripened into maturity the issue between the people and private monopoly. The republican party will be on the side of the private monopoly. Its organization is again in control of the reactionary element and the reactionary element of the republican party is simply another name for predatory wealth. If the democratic party takes the side of the monopolist there is no chance of success. The people need a party—never more so than now. Will the democratic party be their champion?

There is no hope in the selfish politician. He is too much afraid of disturbing the harmony of the party to take a new position or to occupy any advanced ground. We must look to the rank and file. The democratic theory is that in a democracy the leaders arise whenever

needed, called to leadership by their neighbors who know them and by larger circles that have learned to trust them.

The Commoner is anxious to do what it can to help the democratic party to win, and it will be pleased to receive suggestions from its readers—suggestions by them as to things to be done and the men to do them. We need a presidential candidate. Is there not some strong young man who is willing to undertake the marshalling of the hosts of democracy? His task is so important that he cannot accomplish it if he must defend himself from attack. He must be free to do the attacking. He must be a man known to favor the enforcement of the prohibition amendment, and to be trusted as such a man he must be known to have favored the amendment. When forty-five states have outlawed the brewery, the distillery and the saloon, it would be an offence to the whole people to nominate a candidate who fought on the liquor side. He must also favor woman suffrage. With the submission of suffrage a certainty, and the amendment an issue in all the states at the election of 1920, the democratic candidate cannot spend his time explaining his opposition to this great movement.

It need hardly be added that he must not be a Wall Street man, for Wall Street is a power today as it has been in the past. The currency law stripped Wall Street of its power to terrorize the banks, but a Wall Street president could turn the whole banking system over to Wall street, and make the thralldom even worse than it was before. The fight is on. Who will help?

W. J. BRYAN.

"No Beer, No Work"

The few wet branches of the labor organizations are threatening that they will refuse work if they cannot get beer. There are several things that the laboring man should consider before he joins in this appeal to lawlessness. In the first place, he is a part of our citizenship and he has had his share in voting and he has had his opportunity like any other voter in the settlement of this question. He helped elect the congressmen who submitted national prohibition. He helped to elect the legislators who ratified the national amendment; he helped to elect the congressmen who voted for war prohibition almost without an opposing vote. Can he thus have his share in the making of the laws and then claim a veto over those laws because he is a laboring man? The question of an eight hour a day was up two years ago last fall in the campaign of 1916 and the people voted to support the President in his position on this subject. There was opposition—very strong opposition. Many of the big employers of labor fought the President bitterly on this proposition. What would the laboring men think if after they had won, the employers started out with the slogan "no employment" for a laborer if he demands an eight hour a day?

It ought to be remembered also that in the long fight for prohibition the various unions connected with the liquor traffic, the beer makers, bar tenders and bottle blowers have never been able to secure from the national organization a declaration against prohibition. When Mr. Gompers appeared in Washington on the 17th of December 1917—the day the house concurred with the senate in submitting the amendment—he made an appeal on the ground that labor was opposed to it, but he was careful to explain that he did not speak for the National Federation. If prohibition wasn't dangerous enough to justify action by the national organization of labor, is it dangerous enough to justify a revolution against the gov-

ernment? A large percentage of the people in this country of foreign birth have never taken the trouble to become citizens. They have not cared to take upon themselves the burden of American citizenship. Would it not be a little impudent for them to put on a "no beer, no work" button and demand the right to veto the laws passed by those who are citizens?

A man who, having spent more for beer for himself than he has for bread for his family, puts on a button and goes out declaring he will not work for his own child if he can't get beer, will not have much influence upon public opinion. The protest of that kind of a man is not apt to move the conscience of the nation, and the absurdity of his position is so apparent that it is not likely that there will be any buttons worn by July first. The world is moving forward, and alcohol which fills our penitentiaries with criminals and our poorhouses with paupers—alcohol, the menace of the home, the enemy of the wife and the children, and all that is precious, is overthrown, and if a few of its victims are able enough to come out and attempt to strike, it will only prove more convincingly the hellish character of the business and the devilish strength of an appetite that can rob a man of all love, of all that is good and noble.

W. J. BRYAN.

HIS REPUTATION PRECEDED HIM

Colonel Raymond Robins, testifying before the Overman committee last week, said that ex-Secretary Root's ability to render service to Russia, when he went as the head of the commission, was somewhat impaired by the fact that the bolshevists circulated pamphlets containing extracts from American newspapers asserting that Mr. Root was a "jackal of privilege" and that he was trying to make the United States "safe for plutocracy." An international reputation is a great thing, but it may prove at times embarrassing.

By the first of July there be so many of these "bread instead of booze" buttons, that the "no beer, no work" crowd will be ashamed to wear their buttons.

OUR MILITARY COURT MARTIALS

It makes ones blood boil to read of the punishments inflicted on American soldiers by the military court-martials. They are so outrageous in many cases that toleration of them is a reflection on the nation's civilization. To send a soldier to the penitentiary for periods of ten, twenty, and even forty years for trivial offences would shock the conscience of a semi-civilized country. It behooves our government to establish at once a court of appeals where the rights of a soldier can be protected from the cruelty and vindictiveness of officers. It is due to the honor of the army as well as to the good name of the nation.

NO MINORITY RULE

The republican senators who are confident of their ability to muster one more than one-third of the senate in opposition to the treaty ought not to forget that in this country the minority does not rule. A minority may postpone the ratification of a treaty, but the American people will never consent to permanent obstruction by a minority. It would only take the issue before the country, and the result would finally depend upon the will of the majority, who would in a short time be able to make their will felt at the new elections.

A DISGRACEFUL FILIBUSTER

The fact that a handful of senators can block important legislation by use of the rules of the senate, proves anew the importance of a change in these rules. The filibuster will continue to disgrace the closing days of our sessions until the senate rules are so changed as to make it possible for a majority to conduct business.

FEW OF HIS KIND

If the republican party had even a small number of senators like Senator Kenyon of Iowa, there might be hope for it. His heart is on the side of the people, and he has the courage to follow his convictions. But alas, there are few such in the republican galaxy of senators.