

## People Will Indorse League of Nations

MR. BRYAN INTERVIEWED

By Harry B. Hunt

Washington, March 18.—Either the League of Nations will be ratified by the United States senate in the form in which it is brought back from Paris by President Wilson, or the campaign of 1920 will center around that one great issue and the people of the United States be given an opportunity to settle the question directly by their votes.

That is the opinion of William J. Bryan, democratic leader and former secretary of state. Bryan does not believe, however, that the issue will have to go to the people for settlement, republican senatorial round-robins notwithstanding. He believes that certain changes in the league constitution are desirable, chiefly in the interest of clarity, and he believes that some amendments will be made. These amendments, he thinks, will provide a loophole through which the republican senators pledged against the original draft can logically support it, and that most of them will do so.

If they do not—if the senate which meets this summer refuses to ratify the league plan as it will be presented—that will not mean the end of the treaty. It will, instead, merely mark the beginning of the fight for its ratification; and that fight will be carried directly to the people in the campaign of 1920.

"The republican senators who seem so confident that they will be able to get one more than one-third of the senate on their side and thus be able to prevent ratification of the league of nations treaty, seem to be laboring under the delusion that the minority can rule in this country," said Bryan. "But they are greatly mistaken. In this country a majority rules.

"Under the constitution, one more than one-third can prevent ratification of a treaty. But that isn't the end; it is just the beginning.

"A minority cannot declare the policy of the country. It cannot instruct the President what kind of a treaty to make. It can only obstruct or stay action until the next election.

"One-third of the senate will be elected in 1920. And when the people vote they can at that one election substitute new senators for the objectors whose terms expire, and they can scare the others to death.

"For another one-third will be elected in another two years, and a senator is almost as much inclined to keep an ear to the ground as a member of congress, and some of them would keep both ears to the ground if they could.

"You can't look far ahead in politics, and there never was a time when things were more chaotic than now. There is a great deal of scattering talk at present and naturally so, because the issue is not yet presented in concrete shape. I think a large majority of the people would like to see amendments made to the league constitution as originally drawn. Some emphasize one amendment, some another, but when the constitution of the league is finally drafted and presented in completed form the people will have to choose between the league as it then is and the old plan that has written the history of the world in characters of blood.

"We will then have to decide whether to take the risks that come with the league or the risks that come with rejecting it. I have no doubt how the people will decide.

"The reaction against war is swelling into an irresistible tide. A man who stands out against a league which, like this one, almost makes war impossible, will soon be engulfed. For the American people will, if they can, make this the last war to redden the earth with blood.

"And remember—it is very likely that the women will vote in 1920; and woe to the man who talks war to the women who have passed through the anguish of the last two years!

"I believe we shall secure some important amendments to the league constitution before it is finally completed. But make no mistake: The American people will endorse the league of nations."

The question of getting the league proposition before the people in some sort of referendum was suggested to Bryan. This, it was pointed out, might be done indirectly if senators insisting on a referendum would resign their seats

and run for reelection on a straight anti-league platform. If the people approved their opposition to the league, undoubtedly they would be reelected to succeed themselves. If, instead, they were defeated, it might be well argued that the people were for the league.

"I believe in the referendum," Bryan said, "I'm not afraid to trust the people on any question. But I would much rather have a referendum on a proposition than a referendum on a man. First, because the people can understand a proposition better than they can a man; second, because a proposition can't change after the election and a man sometimes does. But whether we have a direct referendum on the proposition, or an indirect referendum on the candidates, the people will vote on this question in 1920 unless it is settled before then."

During the period in which the league of nations issue has been developing, Bryan has been ill at the home of a Washington friend. He is just now recovering, and although he has not yet regained his strength he is able to be out of bed and about. It was in his bedroom, however, in skull-cap and dressing gown, that he received his interviewer.

During his period of enforced confinement Bryan has been able to give close study to the proposed peace covenant and to analyze it in all its details. This study has convinced him that certain changes ought to be made—not changes in actual provisions, so much as changes in wording that would clear up and make specific certain situations now left open to differing constructions.

### BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS

The lower house of the Nebraska legislature, composed of eighty-five republicans and fifteen democrats, unanimously passed a resolution congratulating Mr. Bryan on his fifty-ninth birthday and transmitted it to him by telegraph at Baltimore, Md. The resolution follows:

#### RESOLUTION

March 19, 1919.

Mr. Speaker:

Whereas, For over twenty years Honorable William J. Bryan has by reason of his prominence as a presidential candidate contributed in no small way in keeping Nebraska in the limelight of the entire western continent, and

Whereas, William J. Bryan, by his example and efforts, has always stood for the better things of life,

Whereas, William J. Bryan has today reached the fifty-ninth milestone in his eventful life, therefore be it

Resolved, By the House of Representatives that the Chief Clerk be directed to send the following telegram:

#### TELEGRAM OF CONGRATULATIONS

House of Representatives,

Lincoln, Nebr., March 19, 1919.

Hon. W. J. Bryan,  
Baltimore, Md.

"The House of Representatives now in session extends its hearty congratulations and best wishes to you in this your fifty-ninth birthday. Presented by Davis and Tracewell.

Unanimous consent was asked to consider the resolution at once, which was granted, and on motion of Mr. Davis the resolution was adopted unanimously.

#### MR. BRYAN'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Mr. Bryan sent the following letter to Chief Clerk Hitchcock of the Nebraska House of Representatives acknowledging the receipt of the congratulatory telegram and expressing his appreciation of same:

Baltimore, Md., March 22, 1919.

Mr. Will F. Hitchcock,  
Chief Clerk of House of Representatives,  
Lincoln, Nebr.

My dear Mr. Hitchcock:

I am in receipt of your telegram and beg you to convey to the members of the legislature my profound appreciation of their congratulatory resolution. It was a generous expression of good will for which I am very grateful.

With best wishes for each of the members,  
I am,  
Very truly yours,

W. J. BRYAN.

If the republicans had not spent so much time finding fault with the league of nations they would not find it so embarrassing climbing on the band wagon.

## Insulting the Soldiers

Some of the wet editors continue to insult the returning soldiers by declaring that they will oppose the enforcement of the prohibition amendment.

These wet editors forget three things: (1st) that in November 1916, five months before the United States entered the war, these soldiers helped to elect the congress that submitted prohibition by more than a two-thirds vote; (2nd) that these soldiers helped to make twenty-eight states dry before they entered the army. Are they coming back to undo what they helped to do? And, it may be added, relatives of these soldiers helped to elect the forty-five legislatures that ratified the amendment; (3rd) every soldier took an oath to support the constitution (the wet editors did not). Will these soldiers, who were willing to support the constitution with their lives, come back and help breweries, distillers and liquor dealers violate the constitution?

A few more weeks and this shameless campaign of slander and defamation will be over; the brewery, the distillery and the saloon will be things of the past, and the people, redeemed from an age-long evil, will move forward with accelerated pace.

W. J. BRYAN.

### GOOD TIME FOR ROAD BUILDING

Following is an Associated Press dispatch:

"Harrisburg, Pa., March 22.—Approximately 35,000 men will be employed during the present year on road building in Pennsylvania. According to plans of the State Highway Department, 600 miles of road will be built. It is estimated that within the next two months contractors will have to go into the labor market and employ at least 10,000 men in addition to their regular forces. The State Employment Service will be relied upon in obtaining the men.

Approximately \$100,000,000 will be spent in road building in the next four years. A bill authorizing the state to issue bonds up to \$50,000,000 is going through the legislature. In addition, the state will receive federal aid and the counties are expected to expend many millions of dollars for roads."

Pennsylvania is wise. This is a good time to build roads. It gives work to the unemployed and benefits the state.

### VASHTI VINDICATED

Poor Vashti, how she would, if alive today, rejoice over the death of John Barleycorn. She was one of the first women in history to raise her voice against intoxicants. (See first chapter of Esther.) It cost her her crown to defy her drunken husband when he wanted to exhibit her leaety to his wine-soaked companions at a seven day feast, but there is no record of her pleading for reinstatement. She lost a palace but retained her self-respect. Let us "raise our glass" of grape juice to Vashti—one of the early martyrs to the cause of temperance.

### ROOT FOR BEER

Mr. Elihu Root has been retained as one of the lawyers to destroy the effect of the War Prohibition Act. He is quoted in the newspapers that in his opinion two and three-fourths per cent alcohol can be sold under war prohibition and that the regulations promulgated by the revenue department are unconstitutional. Mr. Root has been rather unfortunate in his prophecy about the legality of prohibition laws. He was sure that the Webb-Kenyon Act was unconstitutional and made a lengthy speech in the senate against it, but the supreme court did not agree with him. He voted against the Webb-Kenyon Act. He voted for the personal use amendment to the bill and then voted against passing the bill over the President's veto. He did not vote for the Jones-Works Liquor Regulation law for the District of Columbia. He opposed the District prohibition bill by voting with the enemies that the bill required a two-thirds vote for a rule to consider the measure. His record has been consistent against legislation which further controlled or prohibited the liquor traffic. It is interesting now that he is opposing national prohibition, to read one part of his speech in which he advocates national prohibition at a time when it was so remote that there was no danger, seemingly, of its passage.

W. J. BRYAN.