

## Denounces Primary Repeal

[From the Nebraska State Journal, Lincoln, April 17.]

Former Mayor Charles W. Bryan in a statement made public Wednesday denounced the action of the legislature in repealing the Nebraska primary law as a surrender of the rights of the people to the special interests who act through political bosses. Mr. Bryan also points out other acts of the present legislature to indicate the influence that has dominated the Nebraska legislature during the past two weeks. He calls on the governor to recommend specific legislation to quiet the growing unrest in Nebraska and urges him to veto the bill that repeals the Nebraska primary law. Mr. Bryan's statement follows:

"The action of the Nebraska legislature in practically repealing all of the Nebraska primary law that gave the public the right to select by direct vote its public officials will be a shock to the people of Nebraska. The question of repealing the primary law was not discussed before the voters of Nebraska. No political boss had the courage to face a Nebraska audience and intimate that there would be an attempt to take away from the people the right to select by direct vote the state officials who were to conduct the state's affairs.

The defeat of other bills by this legislature that were intended to repeal parts or all of the primary law gave the public the assurance that this legislature could be trusted to protect the people's rule in Nebraska. When the house mustered enough votes to pass the present bill repealing practically all the effectiveness of the primary law, members of the state senate, in response to inquiry, said that they felt sure that the senate would kill the measure that was passed by the house as they had killed the other similar measures that had been up this session. The action of both the senate and house in taking this backward, reactionary step without the knowledge, approval or consent of the people of Nebraska is inexplicable. The Nebraska primary law was passed in order to enable the people to shake loose the stranglehold that the railroads, packing houses, stockyards, telephone companies and other special interests that had dominated Nebraska politics. After getting rid of domination by public service corporations through the primary act that permitted the people to select their own state officials by direct vote, the liquor interests organized and in conjunction with other special interests in the state, had succeeded for the past six years by the control of the state senate in preventing the people from passing any progressive legislation along economic lines. To break up this combination, the progressive and moral forces of the state joined hands and put the liquor interests and their representatives and lobbyists out of business in Nebraska last year.

### ELECTED AS PROTEST

The present legislature and state administration were elected largely as a protest by the progressive forces of Nebraska against the failure of the former Nebraska legislature and the state administration to give the public any relief from special interest domination and for failure to give the people any protection against the organized greed and profiteering that was going on unmolested in the state. This legislature now hands back the people of Nebraska hog-tied to the political bosses, otherwise known as special interest lobbyists by the repeal of the Nebraska primary law. The country has been asking for a reconstruction program that will protect the common people and the American soldiers from the unconscionable profiteer who has preyed upon the patriotism of the people during the war. The people's expectation for relief from this legislature has been answered by the defeat of the trade commission bill, which was patterned after the federal trade commission bill and was the only measure before the legislature that was designed to give the state officials power to investigate profiteering and expose the profiteer in the interest of the public to secure the necessities of life without paying more for them than a reasonable profit. This measure passed the senate unanimously, and was defeated by the house.

The people's expectations for relief have also

been met by the defeat of the co-operative banking bill that was intended to protect the people against the bankers' trust.

The people's expectations for relief through co-operation was met by the defeat of the co-operative credit association bill.

The people's expectations for relief have also been met by the defeat of the bill fixing a standard of weight for loaves of bread to correspond with the action of the federal government during the war. The defeat of this bill turns the public back to the mercies of the bakers' trust, which juggles the weight of bread and secures unknown and enlarged profit.

The people's expectations for aid to the soldiers whose supreme sacrifice has made it possible for the profiteer to survive has been answered by the defeat by the legislature of the bill recommended by the secretary of the interior for states to co-operate with the federal government in land grants and employment to enable them to again make a start in life.

### MUST QUIET UNREST

The course of the present Nebraska legislature will not quiet the unrest among the people that the president and the progressive statesmen of both parties are warning the state executives and legislators of. It should not be necessary for the farmers to feel compelled to quit their work in the fields and organize themselves into political bodies to protect themselves against so-called business men's organizations. It should not be necessary for the wage-earners of the country to organize a political party as has just been done in Illinois for the purpose of securing control of the municipal and state governments to protect themselves against the organized so-called middle men who are systematically keeping up the war prices, which prevents the man with a small fixed income from buying the necessities of life and supporting his family on the basis that he was able to do before the war.

If a small part of the time that has been spent by the present legislature in the discussion of bills that arouse antagonisms between one group of Americans against another group of Americans and arouse one religious sect against another was devoted to providing legislation that would give the people protection through legislation against the many combinations and plans that the profiteers have devised for taking advantage of them, a great deal of the present unrest, throughout the state would disappear. The non-partisan leagues, labor parties, socialist parties, I. W. W. parties, through which their respective members now believe that it is necessary for them to act in order to get relief, would lose their force of appeal where they now find ready converts. A few practical measures to protect the public against the many forms of profiteering would go a long way towards quieting the unrest.

### MUST HAVE SOME RELIEF

Will the governor permit the legislature to adjourn without recommending some relief for the people? The creation of a state trade commission with power to investigate and expose the many plans for raising prices and reaping fortunes out of the sacrifices of the people would help. The creation of a state grain bonded commissioner similar to what the states of Illinois and Washington have and almost every country, would save the farmers of this state from two to ten cents a bushel on each bushel of grain produced in Nebraska by preventing the manipulation of grain-gradings by the exchange and elevator combines. The creation of a state bonded livestock commissioner similar to what was recommended by the federal government after its investigation of the stockyards at St. Paul, Minn., would save the live stock producers and feeders of this state several million dollars that is now mulcted from them by the stockyards and packing houses.

The adoption of a general state law that would give every city, town and village authority to establish public markets, municipal coal yards, municipal produce stores and municipal slaughter houses without having to stop to amend their own charters, without the expense and delay of local elections to amend charters and give these municipalities authority to create or appropriate funds for these purposes, would shorten the route between the producer and consumer and would greatly reduce the cost of living, which is one of the real causes of a good deal of the unrest in the larger towns and cities. This unrest and discontent cannot be relieved by

(Continued on page 12.)

## Not a Fair Trial

The opponents of government ownership are rejoicing over the proposed return of the telegraph and telephone lines; they seem to think that the issue is settled in favor of private ownership. This is a hasty judgment. "No question is ever settled until it is settled right," and these franchise questions will never be settled right until the natural monopolies are owned and operated as GOVERNMENT MONOPOLIES, as the postoffice is to

There can be no real competition between telegraph or telephone systems without great inconvenience to the public, not to speak of costly duplication of plants and running expenses. They are by nature monopolies and, being monopolies, must be owned by the people and operated in behalf of the people.

Government ownership has not had a fair trial. The lines were taken over as a war measure and war conditions made operation abnormal. War prices increased expenses, and changes due to the government's military plans necessarily impaired efficiency. The difficulties being at a maximum the benefits could not but be at a minimum, and, to still further embarrass the government, some of the high corporation officials were anxious to advance the cause of private ownership by proving government ownership a failure.

No one who is reasonable or open minded can regard our brief experience as a fair test of the government's ability to administer these monopolies to the advantage of the whole people.

The postoffice department is a standing illustration of efficient operation under the government. There is no reason why the telegraph lines and long-distance telephone lines cannot be operated by the government as successfully when the government is at liberty to consolidate and introduce economies.

In the final adjustment it is probable that the local exchanges will be owned and operated by the municipalities. Each community will then be in charge of its own telephone system and conduct it to its own advantage, connecting with the long-distance lines at the postoffice. This dual plan of government ownership avoids centralization and yet puts the people in control. The issue is government ownership vs. private monopoly, and government ownership is bound to win.

W. J. BRYAN.

### WHAT OF THE PROFITEER?

And, what of the profiteer? How many of the states have dealt effectively with the subject?

Why do civic oppose trade commissions and boards of inquiry? The business men are indignant when farmers and wage-earners organize for self-protection, and yet these organizations find their origin and the necessity for their existence in the failure of legislatures and congress to afford protection to the helpless masses. The individual is powerless to protect himself against the profiteer — he needs the aid of the government. As long as the commercial interests shelter the profiteers from punishment so long will the masses seek to secure through organization the protection which the government should furnish.

### ALWAYS "UNPROVOKED"

The proposed alliance binds us to aid France in case of an "unprovoked" attack; but when did a nation ever admit that it provoked an attack? And what time would we have to investigate? Those who favor an alliance will favor a high state of preparedness so that we will always be ready for the attack.

### MOVING TOWARD MONOPOLY

Railroad Director Hines advocates a consolidation of all the railroad systems into about twenty. That is moving toward monopoly fast enough, but it will be five next and then one. The aim of the private ownership advocates is one gigantic private monopoly — the biggest the world has ever seen.

Up to the hour of going to press no cases of indigestion had been reported among the German delegates to the peace conference due to the number of banquets and dinners tendered them by the representatives of the allies.