

A Government Bulletin

Government by the consent of the governed cannot be what it should be unless the people whose consent is asked understand the issues which they decide. At present all the avenues of information are in private lands. Even if we could assume that all the newspaper owners and editors were disinterestedly seeking to promote the public welfare, we would have to take into consideration the unconscious bias which, to a greater or less extent, impairs the vision. Honest men differ on public questions, and an honest difference of opinion makes it impossible for a journalist to present both sides of a subject impartially. In order to decide a public question intelligently, the people ought to have first, a clear statement of the issue, and, second, the arguments on both sides. If the American people understand the issues to be settled and have a chance to weigh the arguments for and against any proposed legislation, they can be trusted to decide wisely and in the interest of the whole country. Unless we believe in the capacity of the people for self-government as well as in their right to govern, we cannot be counted as supporters of popular government. Confidence in the people is the first law in a government like ours, and it is a law founded in fact and supported by experience.

But the people must have reliable information, and this cannot be assured so long as they must rely entirely upon privately controlled newspapers, especially when many of the large newspapers are controlled by representatives of predatory wealth and used, not so much for the dissemination of news as for the misleading of the readers. Such papers are not in any proper sense newspapers, they are merely adjuncts to predatory enterprises — their main object being to deceive the public.

The only way to insure intelligent action on the part of the voters is for the government to issue a bulletin — not a newspaper, but a bulletin — presenting the issues upon which the people are to act with the interpretation of those issues as made by the leaders on both sides. Such a paper would not cost a great deal, and what expenditure is more fully justified in a government like ours than an expenditure for public information. The government bulletin ought to be managed by a bi-partisan board, the parties being represented on the board by persons of their own choosing. For instance, the board might consist of five members, one appointed by the President, one appointed by the majority of the house, one by the majority in the senate, one by the minority in the house and the fifth by the minority in the senate. This would insure representation by the two dominant parties, the party represented by the President having a majority on the board. In order to insure the publication of every important act of the executive and of congress any two of the board should have power to compel the publication of any such official act or law or measure under discussion.

The bulletin should have editorial space, apportioned between the parties — all parties — according to their representation in congress, and to make sure that all lines of thought are represented in the discussion, the space assigned to each party shall be apportioned among factions of the party, as represented in congress according to the voting strength of those factions, each party or faction choosing its editorial representative.

The bulletin should be furnished free to all officials, national, state and local, to all libraries and reading rooms and to all colleges and schools, to all magazines and newspapers and to all post offices, so that every person intrusted with official duty and every organized instrumentality used in the distribution of information would have the advantage of it, and it should be furnished at a nominal price, say twenty-five cents a year, to every person desiring to subscribe for it. The twenty-five cents would not, of course, pay for the cost of the paper, but it would indicate a desire on the part of the voter and thus serve as a protection against waste — it being assumed that anyone willing to pay for it would read it.

The bulletin should be published at intervals, say monthly, semi-monthly or weekly between campaigns, and as frequently during campaigns

- THE ROLL OF HONOR
- List of States That Have Ratified the National Woman Suffrage Constitutional Amendment
- 1—WISCONSIN, June 10, 1919.
 - 2—ILLINOIS, June 10, 1919.
 - 3—MICHIGAN, June 10, 1919.
 - 4—KANSAS, June 16, 1919.
 - 6—NEW YORK, June 16, 1919.
 - 7—PENNSYLVANIA, June 24, 1919.
 - 8—MASSACHUSETTS, June 25, 1919.
 - 9—TEXAS, June 28, 1919.
 - 10—IOWA, July 2, 1919.
 - 11—MISSOURI, July 3, 1919.
 - 12—ARKANSAS, July 28, 1919.
 - 13—MONTANA, July 30, 1919.
 - 14—NEBRASKA, August 2, 1919.
 - 15—MINNESOTA, Sept. 8, 1919.
 - 16—NEW HAMPSHIRE, Sept. 10, 1919.

as may be necessary to insure full publicity for all the questions under discussion.

Such a government bulletin would be worth infinitely more than it would cost, and would hasten the settlement of questions as they may arise and thus shorten the period of agitation and uncertainty. Senators and members without regard to party ought to support a measure providing for such a bulletin. The newspapers ought to support it, because it would give them authentic information as to what the government is doing, together with the best arguments pro and con on the subjects under discussion. The time is ripe for such a publication; the welfare of the nation demands it. W. J. BRYAN.

CONTROLLING THE PRESS

On another page will be found an interview with ex-Congressman Barnhart of Indiana. It will be a surprise to the public to know that former Vice-president Fairbanks was three-fourths owner of the Indianapolis News and had been for a long while — a fact not disclosed even by the law fathered by Mr. Barnhart, requiring disclosure of ownership. Secret ownership of the avenues of information is one of the gravest menaces of today. Great financial interests are at this very moment extending their control of the press. A government Bulletin is the only protection within the reach of the people. It must come.

Senator Knox says that he is opposed to the treaty because it works a horrible injustice on the Germans, and because its enforcement will create in the breasts of the Teutons a hatred that will be manifested in war as soon as they are able to make themselves strong again. Then, in order to be fully consistent, he opposes the League of Nations which is the only method so far devised that tends to prevent future wars.

Several southern legislatures have voted refusals to ratify the suffrage amendment to the national constitution. Apparently it will be necessary to change the personnel of several southern state legislatures. The section that covered itself with glory and honor in leading the battle to make this a dry nation certainly will not refuse the women the right to determine whether it shall continue dry.

Theodore Roosevelt, jr., is touring the country in the interest of the legion of honor, the war world veterans' association, and, it is also suspected, in the interest of Theodore Roosevelt, jr., who has inherited a political estate that may be well worth cultivating in the future.

"The Heart of the League" and the "First Step in the Pyramid" — these are two pretty strong endorsements of Mr. Bryan's treaty plan to come from such high authority in so short a time.

Opposition to prohibition has become so weak that the wets did not ask for a roll call when the enforcement bill passed the senate. How have the mighty fallen!

Chairman Esch of the Interstate Commerce committee of the house does not approve of the dual plan of government ownership, but he was fair enough to give Mr. Bryan a hearing.

Who Will Assume the Responsibility?

Prohibition has been in force now for more than two months and everywhere the police court records show a falling off not only in drunkenness but in other crimes. From murder down to the lowest misdemeanor there has been a reduction in offenses, showing the close relationship between the saloon and crime. Demobilization is likely to slow up as it proceeds because it will take some time to clean up the camps and put things in order.

Demobilization would have to be hurried up beyond the natural speed to complete it before the 16th of January, — the date when constitutional prohibition goes into effect. Who will take the responsibility of speeding up demobilization merely to give the saloons a chance to open up for a few days or a few weeks before constitutional prohibition begins? What official will be willing to take upon his soul the responsibility for the increased murders and other crimes that would come with the restoration of the saloon? The people have buried intoxicating liquor, the world's greatest enemy, — the man who reopens the grave will assume a responsibility that few will be willing to bear. The grave will not be reopened — prohibition has come to stay. War prohibition will brighten into constitutional prohibition as the morning opens into day.

W. J. BRYAN.

ORGANIZED LABOR AND PROHIBITION

Labor Temple, Seattle, Washington, Local Union No. 302, August 18, 1919. Mr. Joseph Proebstle, General Secretary, International Brewery Workers Union, 2347 Vine St., Cincinnati, Ohio. Dear Sir and Brother: Your letter of recent date was received and read before our local union, and I am instructed to inform you that while many of our members were against prohibition before we got it, they were unanimously in favor of a resolution introduced by delegate Duncan at the Atlantic City convention in accordance with instructions by the local central labor council.

It may be of interest to you to know that while organized labor here was largely opposed to prohibition in the wet days, they are now overwhelmingly for it since they have experienced its good effects.

We look upon the demonstration held June 14th, at Washington, D. C., as a disgrace to the labor movement of this country and sometime in the future this will undoubtedly be the almost unanimous verdict. I further desire to say that the supposed representatives of organized labor would have served labor better if they had stayed on the job and wound up the business instead of taking their trip on the "booze special" and having to run over two weeks in session.

With all due respect to President Gompers and giving him credit for whatever he has accomplished for the movement, we look upon him with regard to his attitude on booze as a labor misleader.

In reply to your request that we notify our congressmen of our attitude upon this question, we will most cheerfully comply.

Trusting that our action upon this matter is perfectly satisfactory to all true champions of labor, I am

Yours fraternally,
JAMES A. CROW, Secretary,
Local 302, Hoisting Engineers.

The clothing manufacturers and the retailers say that prices will be 25 to 50 per cent higher next spring than they are at present. The reasons given are that wool has increased so greatly in price and labor is getting so much more than ever before that it will cost from \$15 to \$20 a suit more. This is propaganda pure and simple, profiteering propaganda. A suit of clothes weighs four pounds or thereabouts. If it is pure wool the wool therein cost about \$5.50, which is about twice what it did two years ago. That accounts for \$2.75 of the increase. The tariff hearings of a few years ago showed labor cost to average about 20 per cent. As prices have kept pace with wage increases, this cost does not exceed 25 per cent at the present time, it is safe to say. There is no possibility of justifying a \$20 increase on a \$10 suit of clothes unless the first price represented a grab.