

Mr. Bryan Denies Party Split

A Chicago dispatch, dated January 10, says: William J. Bryan, denying that there is any "split" in the democratic party, came to Chicago today and offered a concrete program for the democrats to pursue in securing immediate ratification of the treaty of peace. Speaking before the Iroquois club for two hours, Mr. Bryan presented his program as the sequence of the suggestion that he made in his Washington Jackson day speech. The steps he proposes follow:

1. Direct invitation—presumably from the president or from responsible democratic senators—to the republican senators to sit in at a conference, open to the press, where concessions could be considered from both sides and a system of reservations agreed to whereby the senate could secure a substantially unanimous vote in the senate.

2. Failing in securing a compromise, the democrats to serve notice that the republicans must proceed with their program of reservations; that the democrats would withdraw sufficient number of votes from the senate so that the existing republican majority now committed to ratification would be converted into the constitutional two-thirds majority required for ratification. Peace thereby would be established and ratification thereby would not become the paramount issue of the 1920 campaign nor would peace be delayed for fourteen months.

DIFFER ONLY IN METHOD

"The president and I differ only in method and not in purpose," Mr. Bryan said. "I am an American citizen and I yield to no other American in my interest in my country's welfare. I am a democrat and I yield to no other democrat—not even to the president of the United States—in my interest in my party's welfare. I do not rely on honors conferred upon me by my party to bind my conduct. But when I get through, the republicans and those who are anxious to believe that there is a democratic split will find nothing in my actions or speech hostile to my party's welfare.

"The president's letter, read at Washington, contains words open to construction that indicate to me that compromise is possible. The president did well at Paris. He did more there than we could expect any man to do. He has not been free to consent to changes. I stood behind him in demanding ratification without reservations until we failed. Now the majority must rule.

"The constitution gives the senate the right to ratify upon its own terms. We are in the minority and we must now acquiesce.

STILL IN THE BEATEN TRACK

"Who has the authority to say that the president will or will not accept a reasonable compromise. Suggest a way out. I have not left the beaten track; I only apply old rules to new conditions. We must compromise, if possible, to put this question out of politics, and if we cannot agree, the minority must recognize the right of the majority to rule. After free and open discussion where concessions may be asked and given, if no compromise can be reached, we must acquiesce, for the present, with the republican majority.

"We will say to them that they, the republicans, must accept full responsibility for the treaty with its republican reservations, and we will withdraw enough democratic votes from the roll call on the resolution of ratification so that the republican majority automatically becomes the constitutional two-thirds. Then we will have peace and the league of nations and we can go to work. We can, AFTER ratification, submit to the people any changes the party wants made within the league and it will be up to the people to pass their judgment upon the result, whatever the issue at the polls. It is just the simple old American plan of majority rule, the principle of real democracy, for which our armies fought in Europe."

ISSUE ON ARTICLE TEN CLOUDED

Mr. Bryan said that there is no real difference of opinion as to article 10; that the issue has become clouded by words and much argument, and that all men must agree that the right to declare war cannot be taken from congress. "There is no reason why advocacy of a compromise should be interpreted as opposition to the president. Mr. Wilson is an official and his recommendations travel by their own weight.

105 Subscribers In Two Days

Mr. P. W. Shea, an Orleans, Nebr., merchant, opened up a subscription list for The Commoner at his place of business. In two days' time he enrolled 105 yearly subscriptions, and has promise of many more.

The Commoner relies for its growth upon the activity of its friends. Its influence depends upon the number of subscribers. Each enthusiastic subscriber can, if he will, start a list like Mr. Shea and secure several subscribers in his neighborhood. If you like The Commoner tell your friends and give them an opportunity to become subscribers. Will you do your part to increase The Commoner's circulation and influence in the New Year of 1920?

The constitution gives the president the right to make recommendations to congress. It gives congress the right to disregard these recommendations, just as it empowers congress to pass laws and the president to veto them."

Mr. Bryan said eighty-six senators favor ratification of the treaty, but differ as to reservations. He advocated a compromise so as to keep the treaty from becoming a campaign issue, adding: "If the republicans insist upon reservations that the democrats cannot accept, then the democrats will be in a good position to take it as an issue before the people."

Mr. Bryan almost certainly will not be entered as a candidate in the Illinois primaries as a contender for the preferential vote, and he may not be an active candidate in any direct primary state. He is expected to be a delegate-at-large from Nebraska.

BRYAN AND WILSON AGREE IN AIMS

[From the Chicago News, Jan. 10.]

Chicago democratic circles were stirred today by the unexpected appearance of William Jennings Bryan, fresh from his verbal encounter with President Wilson at the Jackson day dinner of the democrats at Washington. Hurried work on the part of officials of the Iroquois club obtained a promise from Mr. Bryan to attend the noon luncheon of that organization.

Mr. Bryan told the local democrats that he is not engaged in a campaign of personalities with the president and has no planned campaign. The nation was his forum when he made his talk in Washington and he says that through the newspapers he has reached the entire reading public, his proposition for compromise on the treaty and league of nations is being discussed and opinion developed.

Mr. Bryan announced at Washington that he is not a candidate for president. He does intend, however, to make a number of political speeches and probably will be one of the most active campaigners in the country up to the time of the democratic national convention. He speaks before the constitutional convention of Nebraska next Monday, will attend a political dinner at Omaha, Nebr., Monday night, will be at another political gathering in Des Moines next Tuesday night, goes to Washington to attend a celebration of the adoption of constitutional prohibition January 16, will attend a pan-American congress in New York city and return to Washington a few days before going to Florida to spend the remainder of the winter with Mrs. Bryan. He expects to make a few political talks through the south.

At the University club, where Mr. Bryan spent most of the day, he received a number of political callers, though he had no conferences planned for his brief stay in Chicago. He talked freely of the political situation that he has created through his opposition to President Wilson's plans, though disclaiming any idea that he will split the democratic party through his opposition to the president's plans. Mr. Bryan says he differs from the president merely on the question of method, both wanting immediate ratification of the treaty and the establishment of the league of nations. He holds, though, that as the republicans are in control of congress the democrats should be willing to compromise and then take an appeal to the nation.

NO REASON FOR PERSONALITIES

"There is no reason why the discussion should be diverted from its proper plane into personal-

ties," said Mr. Bryan. "It is simply a difference of opinion over a method—not over a purpose. The president and I agree in purpose. The vote in the senate showed that eighty-one out of ninety-six senators want ratification of the treaty and establishment of the league of nations. They differ, however, as to reservations. My plan is intended to hasten action and to carry out what I think is an almost unanimous desire on the part of the American people.

"While the plan may seem new as applied to the present situation it is not at all new in principle. It is supported by unbroken precedent. It is nothing more than acquiescence if necessary in the right of the majority to decide for the time being, with an appeal afterward if the decision is not satisfactory. When the republicans are in power and write a new tariff law the democrats acquiesce in the law and take an appeal to the people with a view to a change by newcomers.

"My plan is not only simple, but based upon an indisputable principle of popular government. Filibustering is not popular in this country. It was stopped in the house thirty years ago, was curtailed in the senate recently and will soon be stopped there by a rule allowing the majority to close debates. My position simply establishes principles to a new condition. We cannot afford to filibuster against a majority. The constitution requires a two-thirds vote to ratify a treaty, but that constitution was written long ago and I am sure that the provision would not remain if the constitution were re-written.

HARDER TO STOP THAN START

"According to the constitution, a majority can declare war. Why should a two-thirds vote be required to conclude peace? With what consistency can the democratic party take advantage of that two-thirds rule and make it more difficult to stop this war than to begin it?"

"I do not propose a permanent surrender of any position that the democrats think necessary for the country's welfare. I simply advocate a compromise if a compromise can be secured, and I think it can be secured because I think the republicans will see that the importance of a settlement that will prevent the treaty from becoming a campaign issue.

"But if the republicans insist on reservations which the democrats are unwilling to accept, the democrats can throw the responsibility upon the majority and by their votes permit the recording of a two-thirds vote and then make their appeal to the country for the restoration of any part of the covenant that they think necessary. This plan will enable the democrats to appeal to the country without having the responsibility for fourteen months' delay in ratifying the treaty and taking the risk of things that may happen while the world waits for America's counsel in the league of nations."

CAMPAIGN YEAR

Readers of The Commoner who believe in the principles advocated by Mr. Bryan and his paper, and who want to enact those principles into law, now have an opportunity to assist. The Commoner will make a strenuous effort to secure a progressive platform and a progressive candidate at the democratic national convention next summer to lead the fight against the demands of the special interests of the country. Your help is needed to educate, organize and direct the efforts of the masses to curb the greed of the profiteer, to perpetuate the People's Rule, and to preserve Jeffersonian democratic principles.

Will you help to extend The Commoner's sphere of influence by extending its circulation among the free democrats and free republicans in your community? A special campaign rate of 75 cents from now until after the presidential election next year is made for that purpose.

Suggestions as to platform and candidates from Commoner readers are also desired. There are so many vital issues to be settled during the coming four years that every citizen should be alert. Campaign subscriptions will be accepted in clubs or singly at 75 cents. Kindly let us know at once what part you will take in the all-important contest now at hand.

CHARLES W. BRYAN, Publisher.