

President-elect Harding

My conference with President-elect Harding confirmed the opinion that I formed during the campaign, namely, that he would stand for international cooperation in the interest of World Peace. That was pledged in the Republican platform and the pledge was renewed by Mr. Harding both during the campaign and after the election. The details are immaterial. An overwhelming majority of the people want some form of cooperation. The majority against the Democratic plan and in favor of the Republican plan was unprecedented—if the election can be regarded as a referendum on the that issue—but it must not be forgotten that the Republican convention declared for an Association of Nations. The two parties are, therefore, united in purpose though separated in plan. The coercion of events will bring them together but, to avoid any future deadlock, congress should submit some such amendment as that introduced by Congressman Ayers to Kansas permitting a majority of the Senate to ratify a treaty.

But President-elect Harding will have many problems to solve and I do not hesitate to express the belief that he will approach them honestly, conscientiously, and with singleness of purpose. He is singularly free from the obligations that sometimes hamper a president. His nomination came unexpectedly as the result of a combination of circumstances that no one could foresee and his majority at the polls was so large that no one person or group can claim special credit for it. He feels, as any sincere man must, the grave responsibilities imposed upon him and he will try to meet the expectations of the people.

He will not be able to please everybody; he may not please anybody all of the time, but he is entitled to the confidence of all and to such encouragement as each can give. He occupies the highest position in the world and holds it as the express choice of more human beings than ever before entrusted governmental authority to mortal man. The Commoner will be happy to support him as far as it can; it will differ with him with regret if it becomes necessary to differ from him on any subject. Here's hoping that his administration will prove a blessing to the nation and the world and thus give him a high place in history.

W. J. BRYAN.

SENATOR ASHURST'S AMENDMENT

Senator Ashurst of Arizona has introduced a very important constitutional amendment which will be found on another page, together with his remarks introducing it and a report on a similar resolution in 1914.

The Ashurst amendment proposes that the presidential term shall begin on the third Monday in January and that congress shall meet in regular session on the first Monday in January each year. The proposed amendment shortens by about six weeks the interim between the time when the president is elected and the date of inauguration, and it shortens by eleven months the period between the election of a congress and the convening of the first regular session. It also does away with the after the election session that we now have and gives the voters an opportunity to sit in judgment on the completed work of the congressmen who are candidates for reelection.

The amendment is badly needed; it is to be hoped that it will be submitted at once so that the state legislatures that meet this winter can ratify now. Such an amendment will be adopted "eventually—why not now?"

W. J. BRYAN.

TIME FOR ECONOMY

President-elect Harding has correctly sensed the demand of the people for rigid economy in government expenditures by his action in requesting the abandonment of the plans for an inaugural celebration and reducing the expenses of the inaugural ceremonies. Congress was disposed to grant a liberal appropriation, but Senator Harding's action will set a good example and act as a warning to our representatives that the appropriation of public money must now be limited to actual necessities of the government. The great producing classes of the country, who must pay their taxes with 40 cent corn and 10 cent pork, will heartily indorse President-elect Harding's action.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP

December 29th, 1920.

Mr. Bryan N. Railsback,
Howard Motors Co.,
Kansas City, Mo.

My dear Mr. Railsback:

Answering your inquiry, I beg to say that Christian men MUST take an interest in politics. In theory our government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed but in practice it represents the consent only of those who take part in its control. It is only as good as they are.

Plato said that if the good citizens do not take an interest in the government they are punished by having to live under the rule of worse people than themselves. But are there any worse citizens than those who do not feel interested in their own government? Is the man who tries to vote twice any more dangerous than the man who is not interested enough to vote once?

The ballot brings responsibility as well as privilege. We are responsible for the wrong we permit as well as what we actually advocate. The Christian must live his religion in politics and in business as well as at home. Yours truly,

W. J. BRYAN.

BE SPECIFIC

No Democrat should delude himself with the idea that the Democratic party can make any headway in this day and age by appealing for support with mere promises of adherence to its "historic" principles.

The "historic" principles of the party are, of course, all right, even though they are, unfortunately, not understood by the people except in a vague way, and even though the average politician, if driven into a corner, would be hard-pressed to define them. They sound good in platforms and are always tenderly referred to by platform writers, but, of themselves, they mean nothing.

What the public is interested in is the correct application of these "well known" principles. This can only be secured when they are embodied in some concrete, definite measures that show HOW and WHERE the party stands, and just WHAT it proposes to do.

The Democratic party can make no progress by adopting and reiterating platforms that mean nothing. They spell defeat in this day of progressivism and independent action. Success lies in the direction of being able to give the people what they want, and future party platforms must correctly interpret and voice the needs, aspirations and desires of the American people.

No man or woman should aspire to be a candidate for public office unless they have some definite program to put into action that will be of benefit to the public.

STOCK DIVIDENDS AGAIN

If you want to understand the gross injustice of the stock dividend decision read the following:

"McKeesport, Pa., Dec. 21.—The McKeesport Tinplate Co. has declared a stock dividend of \$7,000,000. President E. R. Crawford issued this announcement: This company has today increased its capital stock from \$3,000,000 to \$10,000,000 making a stock dividend of \$7,000,000. This has been done to take care of extensions and improvements made to the plant and property covering the last 10 years and which had not previously been represented by capital stock. Stock is to be issued to shareholders of record Dec. 23, 1920. The McKeesport Tinplate plant is the largest in the world. McKeesport business men started it and still own about all the stock."

Will congress put these excess profits corporations on a par with others or will it confess its partiality to big business?

FEDERAL PRIMARY

Senator Johnson of California has announced his intention of urging a federal primary law. He is to be commended for his efforts to further extend the benefits of the primary system to the selection of presidential candidates for all parties.

Nearly a million votes were cast for Debs, the socialist candidate for president, who was in jail during the campaign and is still there. Which causes us to remark how, under the circumstances, he could be said to have been running for the office.

While We Wait

Those responsible for the fact that we are not yet taking a part in the —call it league or association—of nations for the promotion of world peace will find little consolation in reviewing what is happening while we wait.

The normal status of Europe can not be restored until we take part. Plans for the future can not be made until our voice is heard. WHILE WE WAIT armaments are increasing in Europe, Asia and the United States—each continent blaming the other. None of the great nations are willing to commence reducing alone, or even to stand still. The military and naval load increases WHILE WE WAIT.

Democracy is losing ground and monarchy is regaining its strength WHILE WE WAIT. Greece has recalled her king. Hungary is slipping back toward a throne and a Kaiser party in Germany is clamoring for the emperor's return WHILE WE WAIT.

Every day's delay makes it harder for us to do our part in putting an end to war. Possibly conditions will be so bad by March 4 that our nation will be coerced into IMMEDIATE action in order to make amends for inexcusable delay.

W. J. BRYAN.

PUBLIC PARKS

(Extract from address of William Jennings Bryan before the Miami Real Estate Board, December, 1920.)

The park is a Democratic institution; it is a people's playground. It is economical, too; for it costs less for many to use a park than for each one to have a park of his own. The small park is better than a large park because many sections can be supplied with small parks for what one large park would cost. For a number of years I have been trying to interest the several states in plan which will secure to growing cities all the park space needed without expense to the community. It is as follows: Whenever acre property is platted and divided into lots, the owner should be required to dedicate a certain percentage of it to the public for parks as he now gives a certain part for streets. The increase in value that comes to the owner of property adjacent to a growing city is largely an unearned increment and there is no injustice in appropriating for a public purpose a part of the value that the city creates. The city might without injustice collect a part of the increase in the form of a tax, as a part of the increase in the value of real estate is now taken by the income tax levied by the Federal government, but the dedication of a part to parks would so increase the value of the remainder that the net loss to the owner would be little or nothing.

Some far seeing land owners voluntarily set apart a portion for parks and this practice should be encouraged, but in this case the claims of the public rest upon such a substantial basis that it should not be left entirely to volition; it ought to be required by law.

WALSH RESOLUTION GOOD

The passage of the Borah resolution should not prevent the passage of the resolution offered by Senator Walsh of Montana authorizing the President to send a representative to discuss disarmament with the Allies. Both resolutions should be adopted. We can not have too much in the direction of disarmament or act too quickly.

At the last election the voters of Nebraska, by a referendum, rejected a law passed by the legislature which proposed to restore the convention system of nomination of nine-tenths of the state officers. The adverse vote was four to one. In his annual message the governor said that because a majority of those voting at the election did not express an opinion on the primary, he regards it as the wish of the people that the convention system be employed. It is queer what reasons a man can conjure up for doing what he wants to do.

BRYAN TO OFFER NEW PROGRAM

In the last issue of his paper Mr. Bryan says he will formulate a party legislative program representing as nearly as possible the desires of people and will then call on progressive Democrats to rally to its support. Inasmuch as Mr. Bryan has originated so many progressive measures naturally the public will be interested in what he politically has to offer.—Hastings, Neb., Democrat.