

Protection of the Public

Honorable David I. Walsh,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator:

I have read with interest and approval your proposition to empower the President to take over the railroads and the coal mines whenever the private owners are unwilling or unable to respond to the demands of the public, and operate them temporarily until the private owners are able to discharge their duty to the public. I believe you are entirely right; the railroad and mine owners collect their profit from the public and, being in charge of their several industries, are under responsibilities to the public to operate the roads and the mines in such a way as to supply the needs of the public.

Whenever they fail to do this, no matter what the reason may be, the government must, for the protection of the public, assume temporary control—that control to last as long as the disability of the corporations last. If the President has this power then responsibility rests upon him and public opinion will compel him to act whenever action is necessary for the protection of the public.

There is only one alternative to this plan, and that alternative needs only to be stated to be rejected, namely, to turn the army over to private individuals to enforce private and personal opinions. If the railroad executives are permitted to decide what should be done regardless of the opinions of the President and Congress, and regardless of the welfare of the public, and call for the army to enforce their views, the army becomes a body of mercenary troops loaned to private corporations for private use.

The same objection would lie to the loaning of the army to the employees to enforce their views. Either attitude would be indefensible because the army is the agency of the government and can only be used to enforce decrees of the government.

With the business of the country seriously crippled by the railroad situation and the coal supply diminishing at the approach of winter, no time should be lost. The compulsion is so urgent and the reasons which support your proposition so unanswerable that you should have no difficulty in securing the support of both Democrats and Republicans, and thus put an end to an intolerable situation.

A large majority of the people have no pecuniary interest on either side of the struggle and should not be compelled to suffer while a relatively small number fight out their differences. For instance, there are six hundred thousand coal mine workers out. If we count the number of stock holders in the mines at four hundred thousand—and they are probably much less than that number—we have a million men pecuniarily interested on the two sides of the strike. Counting five to a family, that would give us not over five million pecuniarily interested on both sides.

Out of a population of more than one hundred millions, why should ninety-five per cent of the people freeze just because five per cent cannot agree as to wages? The vesting of authority in the President to act when necessary would relieve the present emergency and we should have a permanent tribunal framed on the plan of the Thirty Treaties to provide for the investigation of industrial disputes before they reach the stage of a strike or lockout.

If the treaties can stay the hand of war until after a period of investigation, why should we not be able to delay war in industry until after an investigation that would give the public information as to the matter in dispute and permit the mobilization of public opinion for the settlement of differences before an innocent people is exposed to the loss that accompanies war between labor and capital?

You are rendering a real public service when you renew your efforts commenced months ago to protect the people from great and imminent suffering.

Very truly yours,

W. J. BRYAN.

August 26, 1922.

The shipping board announces a decrease in its payroll of five million dollars, which might be interpreted to mean that it had pulled off about half the lobby at Washington that has been arguing for turning these over to private capital along with a subsidy big enough to prevent any losses in operation.

THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE



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IMPUDENT ATHEISM

A paper that calls itself a seeker after truth and professes to be an exponent of free thought and agnosticism includes among nine demands of "liberalism" (?) that "the use of the Bible in public schools, whether ostensibly as a text-book or avowedly as a book of religious worship, shall be prohibited." Yet it demands that the teaching of irreligion be permitted. It does not want the Bible defended but insists upon the teaching of that which contradicts and discredits the Bible. It gave the name "scientific" to attacks upon the Bible by advocates of agnosticism while condemning instruction in reverence and worship for God. Guesses of scientists can be taught but Bible truths must be excluded!

This shows the shallowness of such pretended searching after truth; this is the intolerance that passes for liberalism. Christians—both Protestant and Catholics—must build their own colleges in which to teach Christianity, why not require atheists and agnostics to build their own colleges in which to teach their doctrines? "Free thought," as they define it, means a substitution of irreligion for religion and the elevation of agnostics and atheists above Christians in their right to propagate their doctrines. Not yet.

A NEEDED REFORMATION

The theatrical managers have named Augustus Thomas as general director of all of their future productions. In their greed for profits the managers wrecked the industry in this country. Misled by their own prurient and the applause of certain groups of New Yorkers whom wealth has deprived of the ancient virtues, they have been staging plays that the people outside of the big cities, who form the court of last resort on public taste, refused to attend. The theaters found themselves up against exactly the conditions that menaced the moving picture industry, and the owners are applying, exactly the same remedy. Men have found that individually it pays them to be decent. The example ought not to be lost on those who control the nation's dramatic entertainments.

CONVINCING PROOF

A Nebraska congressman, voicing the public demand of Nebraskans, introduced a resolution months ago calling for an investigation of the means and method by which T. H. Matters, a Republican politician, whom a Democratic federal district attorney had prosecuted and planted in Leavenworth for assisting in the wrecking of a bank. The resolution was never pressed. The congressman has since resigned and accepted an appointment from Attorney General Daugherty, against whom the resolution was directed, as special counsel to prosecute men charged with defrauding the government when at war. Mr. Daugherty is furnishing convincing proof of the claim that he is the practical politician of the administration.

The newspaper paragraphs are having a lot of fun over the fact that the prohibitionists have undertaken a campaign to make Germany dry. It will be remembered that there was also considerable laughter in certain circles in this country a number of years ago when the movement was started to make America dry. History has a habit of repeating itself, and it may pick Germany for the next scene.

Wall Street Honesty

In a recent issue of a New York paper we read the following:

"Eighty-five Wall street brokerage houses have failed in the last several months, District Attorney Banton said today, and on investigation their assets were found to be less than two per cent of their liabilities.

"In many of these instances, said Mr. Banton, 'money has been stolen deliberately from the customers of the concerns. So many complaints have come in that we have decided to arrange a special court calendar for Wall street cases.

In '96 we used to hear a great deal about an honest dollar. Wall street seemed to be united in denouncing the silver dollar as a fifty-cent dollar. But even fifty cents seems to be worth about twenty-five times as much as the dollar which eighty-five Wall street brokerage houses are using to pay their creditors. According to district attorney Banton the assets of these brokerage houses were found to be less than two per cent of their liabilities. In many instances he says, "money has been stolen deliberately from the customers of the concerns." Might it not be well to investigate these organized robbers who prey upon the public? Piracy has been driven from the seas, should it be allowed on Wall street? A stage robber is a man of high moral character compared with some of the bandits who infest the nation's metropolis. If there is no conscience among the brokers there should be among the legislators who represent the people who are fleeced.

W. J. BRYAN.

LIVING COSTS WENT UP

A Washington dispatch, dated Aug. 18, says: Wholesale and retail costs of food and other commodities took an upward jump during the month of July, retail prices averaging at 1 per cent increase, while wholesale prices registered a gain of about 3 1-3 per cent, as compared with June prices, the department of labor announced yesterday.

The largest retail increases were noted in the sale of granulated sugar, 7 per cent; strictly fresh eggs, 6 per cent; navy beans, 5 per cent; potatoes, 8 per cent; while a 1 per cent increase was registered against certain kinds of meats, cheese, baked beans and prunes.

Thirteen food staples decreased in price, onions dropping 13 per cent; cabbage, 10 per cent; hens, 3; lambs, 29, and flour, 2, while canned goods showed but a slight decrease.

Fuel and lighting materials registered a 13 per cent increase during the last month; farm products, 3 per cent; foodstuffs, 1 1-2 per cent; building materials, 1 3-4 per cent, while clothing and metals increased 1 per cent. Decreases were registered in chemicals and drugs, but no change was reported for the group of miscellaneous commodities, including cattle, feed leather, paper and pulp.

IMMORALITY GROWS

On another page will be found an editorial from a Salvation Army paper complaining of the growing immorality. What else can be expected if children are taught that the Bible is fiction and that man is a descendent of the brute? The inner restraint is the only one that counts. If there is no sense of responsibility to God there is no hope for morality. There is no escape from the logic of Paul: "I after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die."

Senator Hiram Johnson won a decisive victory in his race for renomination in the California Republican primary, in spite of the fact that the business interests of the state felt quite certain they had him beaten. It is but another proof of the already demonstrated fact that this is a year when progressives are making their power felt in the party primaries, and is indicative of what is going to happen at the November election wherever a real progressive with a real progressive record is running.

Senator Capper of Kansas has come out as a proponent of the Democratic plan of paying the soldier bonus by levying such taxes as will extract it from the men who made large fortunes out of the participation of this country in the war. The question of how to reach the war profiteers is not a difficult one to answer. The income tax returns give a very fair indication of who got it, and that class has a faculty of keeping whatever it gets its hands upon.