

NEWS NARRATIVE

Week ending Thursday, Sept. 14.

Bryan and the Presidential nomination.

On the eve of his departure for a year's journey with his family around the world, William J. Bryan was given a complimentary dinner by the Jefferson Club (p. 359) at Chicago on the 12th. About 400 guests were in attendance. William Prentiss presided as toastmaster, and the speakers, besides Mr. Bryan, were Congressman Henry T. Rainey of Illinois, Mayor Dunne of Chicago, Congressman Ollie M. James of Kentucky, Alexander Troup of Connecticut and ex-Judge James R. Tarvin of Kentucky. Letters were read from Gov. Folk of Missouri, Gov. Johnson of Minnesota, ex-Gov. Garvin of Rhode Island, and Norman Mack and Bird S. Coler, of New York.

Mr. Bryan's toast was "Democracy versus Centralization," and his response was an eloquent analysis and application to present conditions of the only two principles of government—that in which power resides in and is readily executed by the people governed, which is democracy, and that in which the exercise of power is removed as far as possible from the people governed, which is centralization. Mr. Bryan explained that no existing government is either wholly democratic or wholly centralized, and that the practical question with reference to every political movement in any country is whether it is in the direction of less democracy and more centralization, or of less centralization and more democracy. As the dinner in question was widely reported to be intended to launch a Presidential boom for Bryan, and as some of the speakers named him as the Democratic candidate for 1908, his exact words on that matter are of general political interest and importance. He said:

All references to the possibility of my ever being a candidate again are premature, and the kindly expressions of my friends as to such possibility do not make the impression on me that they might a few years ago. I have heard so many prophets declare that some day I should be President of the

United States that I was led to look up the facts concerning the prophets of old, and I found that unless they had been anointed they had not the power to foretell the future. I am going to look up the modern prophets and see if they are anointed. I said just after the election in 1900 that I would not be a candidate in 1904, and to the best of my recollection I kept my word. I told a newspaper man that while I said I would not be a candidate in 1904, I would not give bonds that I never would be a candidate again. A few days later I read a squib in a newspaper stating that if I changed my mind and wanted to give a bond I should find plenty of persons willing to go my security. That struck me as one of the wittiest paragraphs I ever came across. I say now that I do not know that I ever shall be a candidate for any office again, and my happiness does not depend on holding any office within the gift of the people. My place in history, I have made up my mind will depend not on what the people may be able to do for me, but upon what I may be able to do for the people. I believe none of us is wise enough to look ahead and say who should be the candidate of the Democratic party three years from now. I should not deserve your good will if I said I was a candidate unless at the time I could best represent the principles to which my life has been consecrated. While I appreciate your kind words and your good will, I shall insist that the Democratic party shall choose its candidate for 1908 when the circumstances of the party at that time have thrown their light on its pathway. You should put above everything the triumph of your principles. I want to be fully understood. I am not only not announcing my candidacy, but I am not permitting it to be announced. I insist that the Democratic party reserve that right for the proper time, and I pray that God will raise up some man who will do the Democratic party more good than I can possibly do.

The Chicago traction question.

In responding to his toast at the Jefferson Club dinner to Bryan on the 12th, Mayor Dunne concisely described the progress since his election, and the present condition, of the traction question (p. 359) in Chicago. After explaining that he had been hampered by a long and vexatious labor strike, which had just begun as he came into office, and telling of the discovery by his legal representatives of the fact that 270 miles of traction rights, serving a population of 1,100,000, would be at an end in two years and at the disposal of the city, whereas at the time

of his election only 30 or 40 miles were supposed to be available, and after reporting that he had submitted to the City Council his plan for immediately utilizing these rights by and for the city, and the action of the Council thereon, Mayor Dunne said:

They ask why, during the months my administration has been in office, more has not been accomplished. I will tell you. The Executive of the city of Chicago is only one arm of the municipal government. The other arm is the City Council. When one arm is reaching out for municipal ownership little can be accomplished if the other arm is lying paralyzed at the body's side, or a traction company has got hold of the other arm and is pulling it back. There will be municipal ownership quick enough when the Mayor and Council together work in harmony with the expressed sentiment of the people. The committee on local transportation has put aside for the present the contract plan suggested as a practical means of arriving at municipal ownership in the shortest order, and asks the traction companies again to come and negotiate with the city. I do not wish to criticize the committee. It is a very important transaction and the very importance of the matter may have occasioned deliberation or caution in their minds. But if it comes to a question of granting any further franchises or giving attention to the so-called tentative ordinance, the people, who already have spoken on the little ballot, may send representatives to the Council who will carry out their will. Let the City Council pass the contract system which the city Administration has offered, and in 30 days there will be no traction problem.

The action of the local transportation committee referred to in Mayor Dunne's speech, had occurred on the 11th. After several meetings in secret session (p. 359) without considering the Mayor's contract except in a loose and general way, the committee, according to the Tribune of the 12th, "shelved" it, and made overtures to the traction companies whose best franchises have expired and are expiring, to renew them. Aldermen Bennett and Foreman were the leaders in this policy. Alderman Bennett took the first step by offering the following resolution:

Resolved. That the further consideration of this ordinance [the one for the Mayor's contract plan] be deferred until after the existing companies shall be heard and until such proposals as they submit shall be considered fully,