

"It is the same old Bryan," concluded Mr. Roberts.

BRYAN'S CHANCES HURT.

Democrats from All Sections Believe He Has Gone Too Far.

It seemed yesterday that William Jennings Bryan had seriously injured his chances of being considered the leader of the Democratic party by his advocacy in his speech on Thursday night of government ownership of railroads.

This radical stand was the chief topic of conversation yesterday among the Democratic leaders gathered in this city, and it was conceded that it had shaken the confidence of that element of the Democratic party who had come to believe that, in spite of his former radical views, he was the logical leader of the party and the logical candidate for President on the Democratic ticket two years hence.

The doctrine of government ownership of railroads is particularly distasteful to the Democracy of the South, where Mr. Bryan's leadership of the party has hitherto been most strong.

But prominent members of the party from all over the country expressed the opinion that he had gone too far in coming out for this policy.

Members of the Democratic National Committee and Democrats of like prominence were extremely chary about talking for publication on the subject, but it was on their minds and could not be suppressed.

There are thirty-five of the fifty-one members of the committee in town, one of its members said. "I have seen most of them to-day and also seen Senators, ex-Senators and members of the House of Representatives from all parts of the country, and they universally deplore that part of Mr. Bryan's speech in which he advocated the government ownership of the railroads.

The other doctrine he enunciated met with general approval.

Another influential member of the committee was finally persuaded to talk on condition that his name should not be used. He was asked whether Mr. Bryan's speech had not caused a lot of dissatisfaction.

DISSATISFACTION IN SOUTH. "Yes, a very great deal of dissatisfaction," he replied. "This is particularly true among the Southerners. This dissatisfaction is caused most largely on account of what Mr. Bryan had to say in advocacy of government ownership of railroads. In the first place, it is not Democratic doctrine. Then the Southerners oppose it because they are naturally states' rights people."

Governor Blanchard of Louisiana, who is also a member of the national committee, admitted that he had heard members of the committee strongly criticize certain parts of Mr. Bryan's speech, particularly the governmental ownership feature. He skillfully avoided making any direct statement of his own views of the speech.

"Do you think that Mr. Bryan's discussion of the issues has strengthened or injured him as the leader of the Democratic party?" he was asked.

"I have this to say," he replied, "that it was a bold, courageous and able exposition of the opinions of a man who is recognized as a leader of the Democracy. You must consider that Mr. Bryan did not profess to outline the next platform of his party. Many things may happen between now and the next Democratic convention."

Governor Blanchard was asked to give his private opinion of the doctrine of government ownership of railroads.

"My opinions regarding that are merely tentative," he said, after a pause. "and I should not care to express them at this time. I have not had time to consider the question in all its phases." As to how the speech would be generally received in the South, Governor Blanchard said: "I will undoubtedly please thousands there, but, on the other hand, there are many who will take exception to some parts of it."

Major E. J. Hale, of Fayetteville, N. C., who is a member of the Democratic State Central Committee and was a member of the committee which drew up the platform of the national convention when Bryan was first nominated in 1896, is an enthusiastic supporter of the Nebraska statesman. But he is not prepared to accept the doctrine of governmental ownership of railroads without careful consideration.

BRYAN AS HEARST ANTIDOTE. "The only thing in Bryan's speech that stuck me," he said, "was the advocacy of governmental ownership of railroads. It may be that we will have conditions which may seem to make such a policy a wise one, but it is a radical doctrine."

"As for the other parts of the speech, they were most satisfactory. In our state we have passed resolutions favoring such constitutional amendment as would make it possible to pass a law for an income tax and would provide for the election of United States Senators by a direct vote of the people."

"I think it is settled that Bryan is to be the leader of the Democratic party, and that he will be the next Democratic candidate for President. Two years is a long time to wait, but so many states have already endorsed him as to make his candidacy almost an assured fact. It seems to me that Bryan's strength comes from the fact that the old conservatives feel that he, with his broadened mind, is the real conservative force, and that to support him would be to keep the party, and perhaps the country, from the domination of a more radical element."

"There was some Hearst sentiment in North Carolina two years ago, although none of the delegates to the national convention were instructed for him, but I think what Hearst sentiment there is in our state now will be absorbed by the Bryan idea. I do not believe that Hearst will be any menace to Mr. Bryan, so far as the Presidential nomination is concerned."

Several other Southerners said they thought Mr. Bryan's radical utterances on the railroad question would check his popularity in that part of the country, and that future state conventions in the South would be slow to pass resolutions endorsing him. In addition to the repugnance which such a suggestion arouses in the minds of those raised on the states' rights doctrine, the proposition, that the government should own the railroads brings up the race question. Under governmental ownership the "Jim Crow" cars, in which the Negroes are obliged to ride in the South, would be abolished. The opposition to such a change would be of the strongest kind.

It was said on the best of authority yesterday

that certain close friends of Mr. Bryan had pleaded with him to cut out of his speech his declaration for government ownership of railroads.

"But, you know, he is a 'heady' man," said the speaker, "and it is almost impossible to turn him from his convictions. But when some of his friends get hold of him in private after this excitement has blown over they will tell him just how foolish they think he was."

EVEN FOLK DOUBTFUL. Governor Folk of Missouri, who is a strong admirer of Mr. Bryan, was loath to criticize him yesterday, but felt constrained to express his doubts as to the feasibility of government and state ownership of railroads.

"Whatever Mr. Bryan may say is entitled to careful consideration," he said, "but the question of government ownership of railroads is one of great importance, and cannot be considered off-hand."

"Mr. Bryan is an earnest and sincere man. Undoubtedly his speech contains the issues which he thinks should become planks of the party platform in 1908, and if he is nominated by the party he will want those planks to be adopted. I do not think, however, that he would refuse the nomination because any particular one of those planks was left out."

"I regard as the chief planks desired by Mr. Bryan for the platform in 1908 the issues laid down by him on the railroads, the trusts and the tariff."

Governor Folk spoke particularly of the experience that Missouri had had in the ownership of railroads. He said:

"The time may come when it may be feasible for the national government to own and operate the railroads of the country. I doubt very much, however, if the people of Missouri will ever vote to bond the state for the sum of from \$300,000,000 to \$400,000,000 necessary to buy the railroads within the state boundaries."

The State of Missouri practically owned all the railroads in the state forty years ago, and the people have just finished paying the debt incurred. The state at that time issued bonds to aid in the construction of certain railroads, including the Wabash, the Missouri Pacific, the Iron Mountain, the Burlington and the Hannibal & St. Joseph.

All of these roads, except the latter, defaulted. In their payments, the liens were foreclosed and the railroads bought in by the state. Later commissions were appointed to sell the railroads. The transaction resulted in a loss of \$25,000,000 to the state. Regarding this Governor Folk said:

It must be said, however, that much of this loss was accomplished by shameful fraud and corruption. The commissions were bribed to sell the roads to certain parties, and members of the Legislature were bribed to authorize the sale of the roads and to release a certain part of the debt to the state.

Governor Folk said that other states might not be similarly situated, but he thought that the experience of Missouri might serve as a warning. He finished:

Conditions may be different to-day, but the possibilities of between \$200,000,000 and \$400,000,000 in bonds outstanding and the efforts that would be made by corrupt persons to get control of the railroads bid any careful man to hesitate. The result might be that the people of Missouri would find themselves in the end with millions of bonds to pay and the railroads back where they were before.

"BRYAN'S PLAN UNWISE."

Henry Watterson Against Government Buying Railroads.

[By Telegraph to The Tribune.] Louisville, Aug. 31.—"The suggestion as a plank in the Democratic platform at this time is not only impracticable in the highest degree," Henry Watterson will say in to-morrow's "Courier-Journal," in discussing that part of Bryan's Madison Square Garden speech relating to government ownership of railroads, "but if it were adopted as a fighting line would cost us the election. It could not be carried out as a policy even if by some cataclysm we should come to power in spite of it and it ought not to be adopted or contemplated as a policy by any party having the real good of the people at heart. It is un-American and un-Democratic—illogical to all our professions on the side of simple, efficacious and upright government—like the winged horse in the Irish legend—impossible to catch and not worth having when caught."

This paragraph is the keynote of a strong but kindly arraignment of the Nebraska statesman on this particular point by the dean of the Kentucky Democrats. In a long editorial Mr. Watterson attempts to point out the fallacies into which the twice defeated Democratic candidate for President has fallen, saying:

It is with positively lamenting that we read, mark and inwardly digest what he says of the purchase and public ownership of the railways because we do not only think it the height of unwisdom, but we also think it a policy that is full of error from the Democratic and Republican point of view.

Well may Mr. Bryan doubt whether the country is ready for this change, whether "a majority of the people favor it," though it may be conceded that "an increasing number of the members of all the parties see in public ownership the sure remedy for distinguishing between the two parties." But he is not prepared to concede that the rate for the carrying of freight and passengers, "the increasing number" embracing for the most part those who fail to differentiate between the advantages of a public and private service, with its too frequent disregard of private rights, and the relation of the business of transportation to the character and conduct of the government of the country.

And the system he advocates the government of public opinion, upon which, in spite of organized money, the people yet retain a certain hold, would become a tyrannical, partisan autocracy, the President as pious monarch and the people the merest appendages of the politicians. The land would bristle with officials, the spirit of the times would be officialism, and the people would be literally jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

NEBRASKA "HOME FOLKS" HAPPY.

Greatly Pleased with New York's Treatment of "Peerless Leader."

The Nebraska "Home Folks" were bubbling over with enthusiasm yesterday over the way in which the man whom they worship had been received on Thursday. Mayor J. C. Dahman of Omaha, who became famous by trying to get Mr. Bryan off the steamship by lassoing him, said:

We have been much gratified with the way in which Mr. Bryan has been received. It was one of the greatest receptions ever given to a private citizen here, and we are proud to say that we will have a chance to greet him some day as President. There is no question about his nomination.

Mayor Dahman said he did not think Hearst was a menace to Mr. Bryan's chances. Rather, he thought, Mr. Hearst was working in accord with Mr. Bryan.

The letter will start West on the special of the "Nebraska Folks" on Tuesday afternoon at 4:30 o'clock. Stops will be made at Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Detroit and Chicago, where a banquet has been planned for Tuesday night.

The Nebraska delegation sent a telegram of sympathy to Victor Rosewater on hearing of the death of Edward Rosewater, father and the Editor of "The Omaha Bee," yesterday.

MR. BRYAN TO GO TO DETROIT.

Det. Aug. 31.—National Committee Campaign to-day telegraphed to "The News" from New York, announcing that arrangements have been made for William J. Bryan and the delegation from Nebraska to stop off in Detroit next Monday on their way West, and hold a reception and meeting in this city.

They will be met by the delegation from Michigan and will be escorted to the Michigan Hotel, where they will be met by the Michigan delegation.

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