

Alliance With France Unnecessary

Now that the proposed Treaty of Alliance with France is before the senate the country is prepared to consider and pass upon it. Believing that the treaty should be rejected by the senate I submit the following objections:

First: It is unnecessary. In his message presenting the treaty to the senate the President says: "It is believed that the treaty of peace with Germany itself provides adequate protection to France against aggression from her recent enemy on the east." If that is true it is not worth while to deviate from our course in the past and set a dangerous precedent for the future merely because "the years immediately ahead of us contain many incalculable possibilities." The possibilities of injury to us are more difficult to calculate than the possibilities of harm to France.

Second: The proposed alliance is a reflection upon the League of Nations and discredits it in advance. It proclaims to the world a lack of faith in the sufficiency of the League of Nations. We cannot afford to destroy confidence in that which we present as a cure for war.

Third: The proposed alliance forms a league within a league, the very thing which the President only a few months ago denounced as objectionable to the American people. It would create jealousies and enmities that would menace the very existence of the league. We cannot afford to risk the very effect of such an alliance on the league. And it must be remembered that France opposed the league and would be pleased if the alliance destroyed the league, while the United States would be greatly disappointed and humiliated before the world if the alliance wrought the overthrow of the League of Nations.

Fourth: The United States cannot afford to be "unequally yoked together" with a nation which does not have our point of view and has not yet caught the vision of the new era. France relies upon the sword and only desires a combination of powers strong enough to maintain peace by terrorism. We cannot afford to surrender our moral prestige, forfeit our position of independence and descend to her level. For more than a century we have protected the republics of Central and South America from European aggression and we have not demanded compensation in money or concessions. Under Mr. Cleveland's administration we were willing to go to war with Great Britain to protect the boundary line between Venezuela and a British possession. In 1898 we did go to war with Spain to aid Cuba to secure her independence, and when that independence was secured we hauled down our flag in order that the flag of a Cuban republic might be raised in its place. We went into the world war in order to make democracy safe everywhere and when the war was over we asked for no recompense except the satisfaction of seeing the world benefited. Our reward is sufficient if the late war can be made the last war to redden the earth with blood.

The President went to France realizing that he must fight a single-handed battle against the selfish demands of other nations, and he made a great fight. Considering the difficulties he had to overcome it is astonishing that he secured as good a treaty as he did. Having rendered the world a great and disinterested service we must maintain our independence and be in position to throw our influence on the side of justice in any controversy that may arise and thus make the League of Nations a power for the promotion of peace.

Fifth: The proposed alliance is to remain in force until the council of the league shall agree that the provisions of the covenant of the league affords sufficient protection to France. In other words, the proposed alliance not only discredits the league but puts the termination of the alliance in the hands of a council in which foreign nations have control. We cannot afford to surrender the right to decide when this special protection of France shall cease. It is an abdication of sovereignty of which our nation cannot think of being guilty. In the League of Nations the council advises when and what force the nation shall employ but, as the President plainly points out, each nation reserves the right to decide whether it follow the advice and employ military force. In the proposed alliance with France no such right is reserved. We not only pledge the employment of force before the

League of Nations can make any investigation but we permit the council of the League of Nations to decide how long we must continue to pledge our army and navy to the protection of a nation whose conduct we are powerless to control.

Sixth: We cannot afford to transfer to another government the right to decide WHEN this nation shall go to war. We now know what modern warfare is and it is more necessary than ever before to keep the war-making power in the hands of our own people. France does not pay us a very high compliment when she will not trust us to decide the question when the time for action arrives. In spite of the service that we have rendered to her she demands that we shall tie our hands and permit a French assembly to decide when American blood shall flow and American billions be spent.

The advocates of the proposed alliance have argued that congress will still retain the right to declare war but that right is merely nominal—a shadow—if a declaration of war is pledged in advance.

Congress must be as free to say NO as to say YES if it is to retain its constitutional authority to decide the question of peace or war. If it is pledged in advance to a declaration of war whenever France demands it, it cannot exercise its right to decide against war without declaring the treaty to be a scrap of paper.

The word "unprovoked" (it is an "unprovoked" attack that we promised to repel) is no protection to us because no time is allowed for investigation. We must act at once and investigate afterwards.

What the world needs is the cultivation of the spirit that DESIRES peace and WILLINGNESS to have peace on the basis of brotherhood. This spirit will not be encouraged by the formation of alliances for war—they have been the fruitful cause of war in the past and invite a reliance upon force instead of friendship. This nation is teaching the doctrine of brotherhood and in giving to the world the plan of the League of Nations it has embodied the spirit of brotherhood in the machinery that is to furnish a substitute for war. Its actions will belie its words if it encourages France to reject the only hope of world peace—the doctrine of brotherhood proclaimed by Him at whose coming the angels sang "On earth peace, good will toward men."

W. J. BRYAN.

"HE SAID SOMETHING THEN"

During an opening prayer at a recent democratic convention, a delegate "brought down the house" by shouting, "He said something then," as the preacher concluded an eloquent eulogy to the candidate. One is tempted to repeat the compliment when he reads the statement attributed to Lord Cecil by a recent London dispatch. He said he did not think the "alliance between the United States, France and Great Britain would materialize." Such alliances, he added, always break down just when they are wanted. That is encouraging; he might have strengthened the statement by adding that they are not needed with a League of Nations.

A LANDMARK GONE

The demise of the St. Louis Republic removes one of the ancient landmarks of the middlewest. Until 1896 it was a political power in the democratic party; it lost its influence when it went against the party in that campaign and never regained it. Its death points a moral; never regained it. Its death points a moral; namely, that the democratic party can not depend upon the big dailies of the north for effective support. How many big democratic dailies have we north of the Mason and Dixon line?

The reason is not difficult to find. A big newspaper represents a large amount of capital invested and a heavy daily expense. A man who is rich enough to own such a paper is usually connected with franchise-holding corporations and has financial interests which prevent his taking the people's side in the municipal fights with franchise corporations. And, if a man could be found who was able to own a big paper and yet free to champion the people's side he would stand little show as against a paper supported by the financial interests which work with the favor-seeking corporations. The democratic party must rely upon the weekly rather than the daily press (that is, the LARGE dailies), and it is this inability to reach the masses in the cities that makes a National Bulletin imperatively necessary as a means of getting both sides of every political question before the voters. W. J. BRYAN.

A Military Candidate

General Wood seems to be leading in the straw-votes for the Republican Presidential nomination. He is the one candidate who has secured a state (South Dakota). His popularity is probably due, for the most part, to the belief that his selection would be a triumph for the Roosevelt element of the party, and his strength is likely to be greatest in those sections where the former president had the largest following. Some favor his nomination because of resentment against the President for not giving him a position of leadership in the army in France, but, as the generals who did cross the ocean do not seem to have made much political capital out of the war, it may have been a favor to him to have kept him in the United States.

But will a military candidate be popular next year? The regular army officer is in his element when he is at the head of a military unit; he is indispensable in time of war, but the very training that makes him an efficient soldier tends to unfit him for the duties of the higher offices of the government in time of peace. In a government like ours power comes up from the people—they are in command; in the army authority comes down from the top. In politics, persuasion is the means usually employed for securing action; the army officer commands. In civic affairs progress is sought through conciliation and compromise between the conflicting opinions; it is the business of the man in uniform to obey without question, not to ask the reason why. The statement deals with preventives and healing remedies; the soldier knows only the science of surgery.

If there ever was a time when the ideals of peace should be cultivated and harmonious policies employed that time is now. The world has just passed through its bloodiest conflict; the air has been rent with the shriek of bursting shells and red with the glare of liquid fire. The poisonous gas has done its deadly work and tears enough have been shed to wash out all the sins the world has ever known. War debts, unparalleled in their staggering weight, lay a heavy mortgage upon the future. The people yearn for peace; they long for the spirit of brotherhood and the charity of the good Samaritan. They turn from the martial music of the carnage-covered field to the songs that usher in the glad day when faith shall inspire, when hope shall quicken the hearts of men and love bind up the wounds of the world.

W. J. BRYAN.

WARTIME DRY ACT VALID

By unanimous vote the United States supreme court upheld the validity of wartime prohibition, and has decreed the enforcement of the act until peace is proclaimed. The decision is a sweeping victory for the contentions of the dries and the government. One by one the props are falling from under the liquor forces, and January 16, 1920—the day of final emancipation from booze—looms only a few weeks ahead.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS

If you like The Commoner tell your friends. Each enthusiastic reader can, if he will, secure several subscribers in his neighborhood. The Commoner relies for its growth upon the activity of its friends. Its influence depends upon the number of subscribers; will you increase the number?

The head of the Retail Millinery association recently remarked that "there is no intrinsic value in millinery." The fact that no woman can get a hat that she regards as fit to wear for less than \$25 would indicate that some tradesmen are able hypnotists.

"START 1920 WITH A COMMONER CLUB"

As a suggestion for the New Year, a Commoner reader states that "the best way for every friend of The Commoner to start the New Year right is to send a club of subscriptions for the year 1920."