

REFERENDUM  
ON  
WAR?  
THE GENERAL ELECTION  
OF 1916 IN  
NORTH DAKOTA

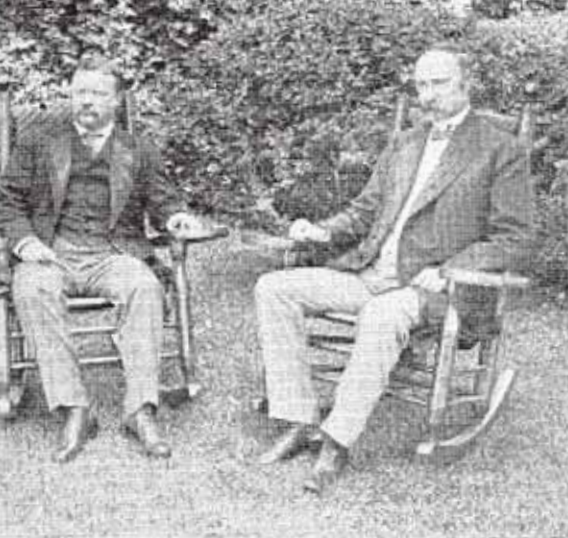
By ROBERT P. WILKINS

The role of the people in determining national foreign policy is discussed by Dr. Robert P. Wilkins with reference to the Great European War of 1914-1918. Wilkins received the doctorate from the University of West Virginia in 1954, and is Professor of History at the University of North Dakota. Both an author and an editor in his fields of interest, Dr. Wilkins has previously contributed to *North Dakota History*, and has for some years specialized in problems concerning North Dakota during the 1914-1918 War. He recently edited and prepared an introduction to a reprint of Orin G. Libby's *Geographical Distribution of the Vote on the Constitution*, published by the University of North Dakota Press in 1969.

President Woodrow Wilson and Mrs. Wilson riding with Governor Lynn J. Frazier and Mrs. Frazier during the President's visit to Bismarck (10 September, 1919). President Wilson spoke at the conclusion of the parade. "1"



— Photo State Historical Society of North Dakota



**Theodore Roosevelt and Chas. W. Fairbanks in front of Roosevelt's home at Sagamore Hill, Oyster Bay, N. Y.**

— Photo: Underwood and Underwood

In early summer, 1915, Theodore Roosevelt was returning from the West via the Northern Pacific railway. Upon reaching Enderlin, North Dakota, he had the train stopped for fifteen minutes so that he might talk with friends of his ranching days in the 1880s. In the course of his remarks, he predicted that in the upcoming presidential election the country would place a “decent American citizen” [in the White House] . . . , one . . . true to the principles of liberty and to the best interest of the United States.”<sup>1</sup> As the former president was making his remarks, a Republican editor sensed that the Democrats would “force a war issue in the next campaign.” The Democratic leaders, he declared, were riding for a fall, for they underestimated the peoples’ power of discrimination. Furthermore, as it could be foreseen that President Woodrow Wilson’s attitude toward Germany would bring complications, one could only conclude that the “proposition” would be of dubious value to the Democrats.<sup>2</sup>

Looking forward to the election in which Republicans were anticipating stunning victory over a faltering Wilson, the Democratic Devils Lake *Daily Journal* made two remarkably insightful observations. It commented that Eastern Democratic leaders did not seek the advice of Westerners or Western newspapers. Easterners believed that they had to please the New York press in selecting a candidate and a platform. The *Daily Journal* further predicted that the Republican strategy would be to attack Wilson for failing to defeat Germany when, in fact, he had achieved victory by peaceful means. The “crushing answer” to the Republican party would be the sentiment which would be “foremost in the minds of millions of Americans next year — HE KEPT US OUT OF WAR.”<sup>3</sup>

As the year drew to a close, the spectre of that sentiment, “He kept us out of war,” began to trouble Republicans. One editor sought to exor-

<sup>1</sup>Fargo *Forum*, July 14, 1915.

<sup>2</sup>Bismarck *Tribune*, July 24, 1915.

<sup>3</sup>Devils Lake *Daily Journal*, Oct. 15, 1915, “Any Democrat in office or out who thinks the party can be frightened into frenzied preparedness makes a serious mistake.” *Ibid.*, Sept. 25, 1915.

cise it with the incantation, “Nothing to it.” After all, had not other presidents, many of them Republicans, occupied the White House while wars were in progress elsewhere in the world. The United States had not become involved in those wars. Had not Theodore Roosevelt, for example, kept the United States out of the Russo-Japanese conflict?<sup>4</sup>

In the spring of 1916, with the approach of the presidential preference primaries, the position of the United States in a world at war and the adequacy of her defenses were certain to be made a campaign issue by Republican leaders. President Wilson, had, however, reduced their value to the Republicans when in December, 1915, he reversed his stand, now favoring some increase in armaments. At the same time he created problems with his own party, particularly in those regions in which fear of war and dislike of munitions profits were great. Nevertheless, both friend and foe of the Grand Old Party sensed that it had a club with which to belabor the administration. In the face of “Democratic opposition,” wrote a leading Republican editor, the party of Lincoln and McKinley would make preparedness “the leading issue in the campaign.”<sup>5</sup> It was, averred a foe, one Republicans could “conscientiously insert in their platform for it cannot even be pretended that it is for the benefit of anyone but the capitalists.”<sup>6</sup> But the men in charge of the party in North Dakota, the Republican State Central Committee, had met twice after the December, State of the Union, message without making a statement on the so-called “leading issue.”<sup>7</sup> Equally gingerly was the treatment of the hot potato by the Democratic State Central Committee. Meeting in late December, 1915, after Wilson’s call for a larger army and navy, the committee had avoided all mention of national defense. It did not go beyond commendation of the rebuilding of the merchant marine.<sup>8</sup> Meeting at Grand Forks, in February, 1916, and again in Fargo in the third week of April, the committee avoided the preparedness issue.<sup>9</sup>

The failure of the Democratic committee to make an official statement reflected the split in the party. Grave doubts about the President’s foreign policy found expression in North Dakota in both the Republican and Democratic press. Bryan’s resignation over the second *Lusitania* note of June, 1915, brought the differences in the Democratic party to a head. Frank O. Hellstrom, prominent in party circles, was by summer opposing the President.<sup>10</sup> Bryan’s magazine, *The Commoner*, was soon “raising thunder in the state” by its criticism of the submarine policy as one certain to lead to war. Its editorials were reprinted in both Republican and Democratic newspapers within the state. H. D. MacArthur was the “accredited Bryan representative in the state . . . and quietly working to

<sup>4</sup>Jamestown *Daily Alert*, Oct. 27, 1915.

<sup>5</sup>Bismarck *Tribune*, June 6, 1916.

<sup>6</sup>Minot *Iconoclast*, May 26, 1916.

<sup>7</sup>Devils Lake *Daily Journal*, April 28, 1916.

<sup>8</sup>Grand Forks *Daily Herald*, Dec. 23, 1915.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, April 26, 1916.

<sup>10</sup>John Burke to John Andrews, March 21, 1916, Burke Papers, Orin G. Libby Historical Manuscripts Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota.



**John Burke and  
William Jennings Bryan  
in Fargo.**

*Photo: Carl Anheier*

secure . . . a delegation opposed to Wilson's set policy."<sup>11</sup> The pro-Bryan press was declaring early in 1916 that there was "no question as to the attitude of North Dakota Democrats and North Dakota people on the new question of 'preparedness' which has come to the surface within a short time . . . if they know it in time, the Democrats of North Dakota will not elect a single preparedness advocate."<sup>12</sup>

A cloud no larger than a man's hand appeared on the horizon when one Republican paper praised Bryan on the occasion of his fifty-sixth birthday for consistency, pluck, and his devotion to the masses who in turn were loyal to their attachment to him. "It will take the profits of all the munitions men along the Atlantic sea coast to control the St. Louis convention against the *Commoners*," it declared.<sup>13</sup>

The June primaries featured a number of keen competitions in the Senate race as well as for the state offices. The most formidable contender for Porter J. McCumber's seat in the Senate was Governor L. B. Hanna, a conservative, and an efficient administrator. He announced his candidacy with remarks on rearmament and foreign policy. Nobody believed more

<sup>11</sup>Burke to Patrick E. Byrne, Feb. 28, 1916, Burke Papers, Orin G. Libby Historical Manuscripts Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota.

<sup>12</sup>Devils Lake *Daily Journal*, Jan. 22, 1916, p. 4. In a list of likely candidates for delegates to the Democratic National Convention at St. Louis, it listed two Norwegian Bryanites, Hellstrom and Halvor Halvorson.

<sup>13</sup>Jamestown *Daily Alert*, March 23, 1916.

strongly in peace than he did, declared Hanna, but it must be "consistent with virile Americans." The United States should aim to protect the lives and property of its citizens abroad. To secure forces strong enough to "command the respect of all nations of the earth," he favored conscription.<sup>14</sup> R. A. Nestos took a more moderate position, calling for government manufacture of armor plate and munitions. Only under such an arrangement, "taking the profit out of war," could the issue of preparedness be "considered calmly by a patriotic people."<sup>15</sup>

The old master, McCumber, called attention to his record on farm legislation, on tariff protection for wheat and other grains, and his recognized role as champion of Northwestern agricultural interests.<sup>16</sup> He stood for "reasonable preparedness," opposed America's having the largest navy in the world, and ridiculed the idea of an invasion of the United States. Referring to foreign relations, he noted the difficulty of achieving strict neutrality when "new conditions of warfare have made international law difficult of interpretation. In the western German regions of the state, he declared that he was "neither pro-German or pro-Ally."<sup>17</sup> He criticized Wilson's diplomacy for failing to inform Germany precisely what it was the United States demanded. But by early May he announced that it was clear that the United States did not insist on complete abandonment of U-boat warfare against merchant shipping.<sup>18</sup>

At the Republican National Convention at Chicago, North Dakota's ten man delegation was pledged to Robert M. LaFollette. M. B. Olbrich of Milwaukee, who nominated him, declared: "For . . . the inarticulate millions who sell no munitions of war, who float no war loans, who strive for no official place, who have no part in all this wild alarm" there was but one policy, peace, and one candidate, LaFollette.<sup>19</sup> Judge Robert M. Pollock of Fargo seconded the nomination of the Wisconsin Senator.<sup>20</sup> Seeing that the LaFollette candidacy was hopeless, the North Dakota delegation then swung into the Hughes column.<sup>21</sup>

The regular Republican press approved the Convention's choice of Charles E. Hughes as candidate, and victory was predicted. The Grand Forks *Daily Herald* called approving attention to the second plank of the platform, which pledged the party to "maintain unflinchingly" the rights of Americans abroad and on the seas.<sup>22</sup> Hughes' more moderate declaration on behalf of "honorable" peace with reference to "wise and practical

<sup>14</sup>Williston *Herald*, June 8, 1916; New Leipzig *Sentinel*, June 1, 1916; Grand Forks *Daily Herald*, May 23, 1916. Hanna was undoubtedly influenced by the view that the Roosevelt popularity stemmed from "his virility and his sturdy advocacy of Americanism." Bismarck *Tribune*, May 21, 1916.

<sup>15</sup>Grand Forks *Daily Herald*, June 4, 1916.

<sup>16</sup>Fargo *Forum*, June 24, 1916; Hettinger *Adams County Record*, May 16, 1916.

<sup>17</sup>Hettinger *Adams County Record*, May 18, 1916.

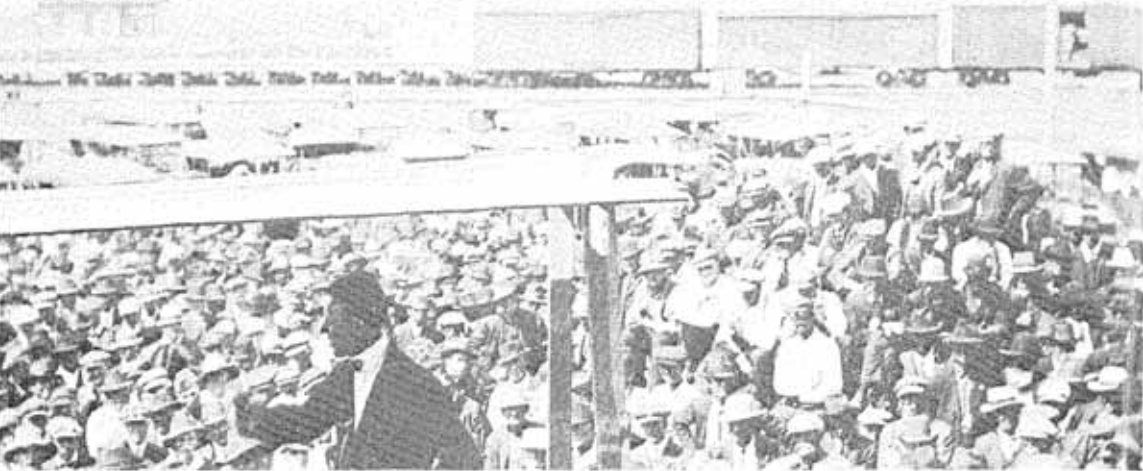
<sup>18</sup>Grand Forks *Daily Herald*, May 5, 1916.

<sup>19</sup>Jamestown *Daily Alert*, June 13, 1916; The text of the nominating speech was printed on June 17, 1916.

<sup>20</sup>Grand Forks *Daily Herald*, June 6, 1916.

<sup>21</sup>Fargo *Forum*, June 12, 1916; Of the many persons suggested for the Republican nomination only Elihu Root, an "ultra-reactionary" was universally opposed. Fargo *Forum*, May 30, 1916.

<sup>22</sup>Grand Forks *Daily Herald*, June 13, 1916. Voters were urged to get the commitment of all Republican candidates regarding this plank, an obvious acknowledgment that the four men — McCumber, Helgesen, Norton, and Young — up for re-election were at best unreliable on the issue of American rights.



A. C. (Arthur Clark) Townley speaking at Crosby, North Dakota.  
— State Historical Society of North Dakota

measures for the just settlement” of differences with Germany met with the approval of the *Bismarck Tribune*.<sup>23</sup> Doubt about candidate and platform crept in, however. To the editor of one weekly, the Hughes nomination “ought to bring victory in November.” But he was not certain what changes Hughes’ election would bring, if it did occur.<sup>24</sup> Sever Serungard, a Progressive of Devils Lake who had attended the convention in Chicago, indicated that Hughes was “acceptable” to the “northern progressives” but added: “So far as this ‘Americanism’ talk is concerned, it appears to me that it is being worked overtime.”<sup>25</sup>

At the close of the second week in June, delegates to the Democratic convention began assembling in St. Louis. There was no question as to who would be the party’s nominee. Wilson was certain of the nomination, for as Bryan had observed in April, there was no one to put up against him.<sup>26</sup> The tone of the convention and the principal campaign issue were determined by the keynote address of the temporary chairman, Governor Martin H. Glynn of New York. Glynn, whose address Wilson had approved with only “slight changes,” said at the outset that the avoidance of war would be “the paramount issue” in the forthcoming campaign.<sup>27</sup> He charged that the Republican party’s policy of “fighting for every degree of injury would mean perpetual war, and this is the policy of our opponents, deny it how they will.” This line of reasoning appealed to many delegates whose enthusiasm so infected Glynn that he was carried away by it.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup>*Bismarck Tribune*, June 13, 1916.

<sup>24</sup>*Rugby Pierce County Tribune*, June 15, 1916. The paper forecast a stiff competition, saying that whoever the candidate might be, he would “have a real job on his hands to beat Woodrow.” *Ibid.*, June 8, 1916.

<sup>25</sup>*Devils Lake Daily Journal*, June 12, 1916.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, April 17, 1916. Frederick Bartholomew, a Grand Forks hotel keeper and delegate to the convention, devised a “preparedness hat,” a straw hat of regulation army shape with red, white and blue corded band with a Wilson campaign button at the front, and the inscription, “America First” on the button. They were soon on display in hat shop windows and a common sight on the street. *Grand Forks Daily Herald*, June 15, 1916.

<sup>27</sup>Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters* (Garden City, 1940) VI, 250.

<sup>28</sup>J. Bruce Kremer, *Official Report of the Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention held in St. Louis, Missouri, June 14, 15 and 16th* (n.d., n.p.), pp. 15-29.

Even as Glynn had coupled maintenance of America’s rights on the sea with the preservation of peace, so did Senator Ollie James of Kentucky on the following day. “Without the shedding of a single drop of blood,” Wilson had “wrung from the most militant spirit that ever brooded over a battlefield an acknowledgment of American rights. . . .” References to victories of diplomacy “no less renowned than war” brought tremendous applause and cheering. The demonstration took the form of a parade with standards of many states which lasted for twenty-one minutes.<sup>29</sup> Bryan made his contribution to the selection of a campaign issue by declaring that he had differed with Wilson on “some of the methods employed” in the conduct of foreign relations, but joined with “the American people in thanking God that we have a President who does not want this nation plunged into this war.”<sup>30</sup>

The platform declared: “In particular we commend to the American people the splendid diplomatic victories of our great President, who has preserved the vital interests of our Government and its citizens, and has kept us out of war.”<sup>31</sup> Thus it was that the Democratic convention gave the party a candidate and a slogan with which it could snatch from the Republicans the victory they dreamed of as they left Chicago.

Smarting under the defeat of 1912 in which their party for the first time lost the electoral vote of the state, local Republican managers laid plans for the post-primary campaign. As presidential candidates seldom came to North Dakota.<sup>32</sup> Senator McCumber in late July traveled to New York City to arrange for Hughes to stop in the state.<sup>33</sup> His request was more than met. Hughes entered the state from the east, and made three major addresses in the Red River Valley. At Grand Forks where he appeared with Louis W. Hill, multi-millionaire son of the “Empire Builder,” James J. Hill, he spoke at length on domestic issues, efficiency in government, the tariff, and other problems of economy. He declared: “I stand for preparedness,” adding that in rearmament there was no danger of militarism. It was “almost an insult to the intelligence of the American people to discuss it.” He stood for the

. . . unflinching protection of American rights. I do not believe that we can hold our heads up in self-respect . . . if it is regarded that our words are not meant to be followed by deeds. I believe that it is the great source of weakness and difficulty. . . . Weakness breeds insult; insult breeds war. Honest, firm, consistent determined defense of known rights establishes peace and respect throughout the world.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Kremer, *Official Report of Democratic National Convention*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 98-99. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson*, v. VI, pp. 250-254. Bryan’s minimization of the difference between his stand and that of the President was noted by the Republican *Jamestown Daily Alert*, June 17, 1916. “The President’s words and policies of peace somehow fail to live up and correspond with the Wilson acts as President, and his demands on Congress for war supplies, his trip and speaking tour in the West last February, and his changed attitude on the war within the past twelve months.”

<sup>31</sup>Baker, *Woodrow Wilson*, v. VI, p. 257.

<sup>32</sup>*Valley City Daily Times-Record*, Aug. 11, 1916.

<sup>33</sup>McCumber to Lemke, Aug. 7, 1916, Lemke Papers, Orin G. Libby Historical Manuscripts Collection, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota.

<sup>34</sup>*Grand Forks Herald*, Aug. 11, 1916.



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At Fargo speaking of foreign policy, he remarked that "firmness, clear definition of rights, with a manifest ability to enforce them do not produce a state of war. They are the best guarantee of peace [applause]. . . . We want reasonable preparedness. . . ." <sup>35</sup> Hughes was well received in Fargo, but he paid more attention to the Stalwart wing of the party than he did to the Progressives, much to the annoyance of the latter. <sup>36</sup>

Following his Fargo address, Hughes showed signs of fatigue. Nevertheless, McCumber succeeded in having him make the planned stops at Bismarck, Mandan, Dickinson, and Beach. <sup>37</sup> At Beach, as he was to leave the state, in his only reference to foreign affairs west of Fargo he declared: "I stand for reasonable measures of preparedness. Not in a warlike spirit, but that we may be respected. . . ." <sup>38</sup> Following the tour, some leaders of both parties believed that he had "made some votes in the state." <sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Fargo *Forum*, Aug. 11, 1916.

<sup>36</sup>Interview with Usher L. Burdick at Washington, D. C., Aug. 22, 1952. Burdick, who had been the Progressive candidate for the nomination for governor in June, was present in Fargo to hear the address — and to be introduced to the candidate, which he was not.

<sup>37</sup>Valley City *Daily Times-Record*, Aug. 11, 1916.

<sup>38</sup>Bismarck *Tribune*, Aug. 12, 1916, p. 2. Subsequently the Republican state central committee distributed from its Fargo offices a film record of his trip from Grand Forks to Medora. At the Badlands capital, cowboys approached Hughes' automobile to shake hands with the candidate; New *Leipzig Sentinel*, Oct. 26, 1916.

<sup>39</sup>William Lemke to Mary A. Lewis, Aug. 10, 1916, Lemke Papers. John Carmody to John Burke, Aug. 11, 1916, Burke Papers. The western trip was generally held to be a failure. "The trouble," an Easterner wrote, "was that he did not have his speeches prepared and did not have that kind of publicity which gave the eastern papers the chance to state the facts as they actually were." James R. Garfield to Theodore Roosevelt, Sept. 25, 1916, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Post Presidential File, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. At Grand Forks this lack of briefing on the situation led the campaign managers to release a text of the speech with a reference to the "fine upstanding representative of North Dakota, Mr. Fraser." As the meeting was reported in the Grand Forks *Herald*, Aug. 11, 1916, the mis-spelling of Frazier's name occurred only in the text of the speech.

The campaign, started in the grand manner by the candidate, was carried on with the greatest energy by a corps of local speakers and editors, aided by many prominent out-of-state Republicans. As fought by speakers and editors there was something old and something new. The Wilson administration was attacked for its extravagance. <sup>40</sup> The old shibboleth, "prosperity," was refurbished as voters were reminded that that to which the Democrats were prone to point to as prosperity was false. <sup>41</sup> With the nation floundering in the depths of financial depression in 1914, the Democrats had turned to huge war orders. <sup>42</sup> The "good times" experienced since the autumn of 1914 were due to war orders — there was no such thing as a Democratic formula for prosperity. <sup>43</sup>

The Republicans formula for prosperity was in no small measure the protective tariff. Editors and speakers emphasized its importance to North Dakota. <sup>44</sup> Speakers were not to be outdone by the editors. Prominent citizens and politicians declared the tariff to be of "paramount importance." Charles W. Fairbanks, vice-presidential candidate, though he ignored foreign policy in his speeches at Bismarck and Mandan, devoted much time to the tariff. Senator McCumber, North Dakota's expert on the tariff, traveled far and wide about the state urging Hughes' election in order that an adequate protective system could be established. <sup>45</sup>

Other domestic issues received less attention. Republicans were in a difficult position as a result of the threat of a strike on the nation's railroads. Their speakers denounced the Adamson Eight Hour Act by which Wilson averted a crippling railroad strike during the campaign. The strike and the eight-hour law aroused some interest in North Dakota, and petitions had been sent to the Congressional delegation from groups of businessmen, <sup>46</sup> as well as railroad employees. <sup>47</sup> Many, though not all, businessmen opposed the settlement of the strike in this manner. <sup>48</sup> On the

<sup>40</sup>Mohall *Tribune-News*, Oct. 26, 1916; Mott *Pioneer Press*, Oct. 19, 1916.

<sup>41</sup>Hettinger *Adams County Record*, Oct. 10, 1916.

<sup>42</sup>Jamestown *Daily Alert*, Oct. 18, 1916, advertisement of the Republican Central Committee; Grand Forks *Herald*, Nov. 7, 1916; *Cong. Rec.*, 64 Cong., 1 sess., pp. 14090-93, a speech by Norton on the floor of the House, clearly intended for campaign use (Sept. 7, 1916).

<sup>43</sup>LaMoure *LaMoure County Chronicle*, Oct. 27, 1916.

<sup>44</sup>Hettinger *Adams County Record*, Oct. 10, 1916; *Lakota Nelson County Observer*, Oct. 27, 1916; *The Minot Daily Optio-Reporter*, Nov. 3, 1916, and Nov. 5, 1916, urged the necessity of repealing the free grain clause of the Underwood tariff; Mandan *Daily Pioneer*, Oct. 13, 1916; Jamestown *Daily Alert*, Nov. 3, 1916; Napoleon *Homestead*, Nov. 3, 1916; Valley City *Daily Times-Record*, Sept. 15, 1916, speech by Fred Dennet; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 27, 1916, remarks by A. I. Hunter, a Grand Forks banker; Mandan *Daily Pioneer*, Oct. 31, 1916, Patrick D. Norton at Wilton; Bismarck *Tribune*, Oct. 14, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 14, 1916.

<sup>45</sup>Minot *Daily Optio-Reporter*, Oct. 14, 1916, p. 1; New Rockford *Transcript*, Oct. 20, 1916. Here McCumber spoke one hour on the tariff alone; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 18, 1916; Fargo *Forum*, Oct. 21, 1916, at Valley City; Jamestown *Daily Alert*, Oct. 23, 1916, at Jamestown; LaMoure *LaMoure County Chronicle*, Oct. 27, 1916, at LaMoure; Hettinger *Adams County Record*, Nov. 2, 1916, at Hettinger; Bismarck *Tribune*, Nov. 5, 1916. Here he did not mention foreign policy.

<sup>46</sup>*Cong. Rec.*, 64 Cong., 1 sess., p. 9001 (May 31, 1916), Mott Commercial Club protesting the threatening strike; *Ibid.*, p. 11719 (July 27, 1916), memorial from Commercial Club of Drayton; p. 12,522 (Aug. 11, 1916), Larimore Commercial Club favoring submission of differences to the I.C.C.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12125 (Aug. 4, 1916), resolution by Railroad Brotherhoods meeting at Grand Forks on July 2, 1916, protesting compulsory arbitration.

<sup>48</sup>H. M. Creel to Lemke, Aug. 29, 1916, Lemke Papers. Creel declared that "Wilson's attitude is one of a demagogue playing to the galleries." The roads' employees were in "an unjust and almost anarchistic position, when they refused arbitration." On the other hand, Samuel C. Torgerson whole-heartedly approved passage of the act. Daniel E. Willard to Torgerson, October 6, 1916, Torgerson Papers, Libby Collection.

## PUT UP OR SHUT UP!

### President Wilson's Ringing Challenge to His Re- publican Critics

(President Wilson's Address Before American Electric Railway Association, Washington, D. C., January 29, 1915.)

ALL I ASK IS THAT IF ANYTHING IS BEING DONE THAT OUGHT NOT TO BE DONE, THE FAULT IN IT BE CONCLUSIVELY POINTED OUT AND THE WAY TO CORRECT THE MISTAKE BE EXPLICITLY SHOWN. THERE IS AN OLD RULE THAT OUGHT TO OBTAIN IN POLITICS AS IN EVERYTHING ELSE, AND IT IS EXPRESSED IN A VERY HOMELY WAY. IT IS THE RULE OF "PUT UP OR SHUT UP." SOME ONE SAID, "IF YOU WISH ME TO CONSIDER YOU WITTY, I MUST REALLY TROUBLE YOU TO MAKE A JOKE." IF YOU WISH ME TO CONSIDER YOU WISE, I MUST REALLY TROUBLE YOU TO SHOW THE CONCRETE PROOF; TO SHOW HOW THE THING CAN BE DONE; TO SHOW HOW IT CAN BE BETTER DONE. BECAUSE NOBODY IS FOOL ENOUGH TO SUPPOSE THAT THE WAY HE HAS DETERMINED THAT THE THING OUGHT TO BE DONE IS NECESSARILY THE BEST WAY TO DO IT. BUT IT IS THE BEST WAY TO DO IT UNTIL YOU SHOW A BETTER WAY.

*The Democratic Text Book 1916* (p. 132)

other hand, the Nonpartisan League counted on the support of "the boys" employed by the railroads.<sup>49</sup>

"Preparedness" was so intimately bound to world affairs that it was half a domestic policy, half a foreign policy issue. At convention time it had been predicted that it would be a critical issue in the impending campaign.<sup>50</sup> Hughes' position on preparedness — calling for "reasonable" enlargement of the nation's forces — "should satisfy the most ardent patriot, and . . . be fully acceptable to the great rank and file of the people."<sup>51</sup> While Republican editors stressed the need for greater defensive armament,<sup>52</sup> George M. Young, Representative from the Second District, was attacked by his Democratic opponent for failing to "vote enough preparedness." Unlike the editors who did not walk the tightrope of public favor, Young had to strike a balance between the nation's needs and his constituents' fears of rearmament. He favored "adequate and rational preparedness as distinguished from the kind . . . which would play into the hands of the graft of government contractors, and . . . a personnel in the navy browned by sea service rather than . . . wearing tinsel uniforms in Washington." The American navy, he said, had already more admirals than those of Great Britain and Germany combined. The Naval Appropriations bill, which he opposed, added 160 to that inflated number. "These extra Admirals will doubtless adorn Washington society, but they are not needed for the Navy."<sup>53</sup>

The Wilson foreign policy was fair game for Republicans of all shades of opinion. To some it seemed vacillating and weak; others viewed it as dangerously provocative. With the presidential candidate taking the former line, most editorial comment on the President's foreign policy adopted it.<sup>54</sup> In particular, Wilson was attacked for his neglect of the nation's honor. North Dakota editors reiterated the charge, coupling with it assurance that under the new administration Americans would need to hang their heads in shame.<sup>55</sup> What the citizen read in his Republican newspaper he heard also from the Republican candidates and their advocates: "If you want to see the honor of America flouted to the four winds, vote the Democratic

<sup>49</sup>C. R. Kositzky to Lemke, July 13, 1916, Lemke Papers. Senator Warren G. Harding speaking at New Rockford called the law "the greatest legislative glory of the Democratic party." *New Rockford Transcript*, Oct. 6, 1916.

<sup>50</sup>*Lisbon Free Press*, June 15, 1916.

<sup>51</sup>*Fargo Forum*, June 12, 1916; *Lakota Nelson County Observer*, Aug. 4, 1916; *Langdon Cavalier County Republican*, Aug. 10, 1916.

<sup>52</sup>*Grand Forks Herald*, Sept. 16, 1916; *Williston Herald*, Oct. 19, 1916.

<sup>53</sup>*Grand Forks Herald*, Nov. 3, 1916. A clue to the impossibility of winning support for Hughes in North Dakota on the preparedness issue may be had in statements in a campaign advertisement by the Socialist party on that question. Attention was called on the proposal of the Democratic administration to spend \$660,000,000 in arms in 1917 — \$200,000,000 more than Great Britain spent in 1913 at a time when Britain was spending more than any other European power. "The Republicans are even worse." Hughes and the party were criticizing Wilson for not spending more. What would Hughes spend? "A BILLION, perhaps?" "The North Dakota farmers do not favor spending billions of dollars for Militarism." *Fargo Nonpartisan Leader*, Nov. 2, 1916.

<sup>54</sup>*Grand Forks Herald*, Aug. 2, 1916; *Mohall Tribune-News*, Oct. 26, 1916; Nov. 2, 1916; *Pembina Pioneer Express*, Oct. 13, 1916; *Williston Herald*, Nov. 2, 1916; *Sheldon Progress*, Oct. 19, 1916.

<sup>55</sup>*Hettinger Adams County Record*, Oct. 10, 1916; *Lisbon Free Press*, Nov. 2, 1916; *Mandan Daily Pioneer*, Oct. 5, 1916; *Carrington Independent*, Nov. 2, 1916; *Maddock Standard*, Nov. 2, 1916; *Oakes Times*, Nov. 2, 1916, said: "Americans . . . are not proud of their citizenship."



Cartoon from **THE NONPARTISAN LEADER**, July 20, 1916, p. 11 (vol. 3, no. 3). Hughes is shown standing on Theodore Roosevelt.

MR. HUGHES WILL STAND ON THE PLATFORM  
From the *Star* (St. Louis)

ticket. . . .”<sup>56</sup> “The Wilson administration is . . . [a] menace to the honor and safety of the nation,” declared State Chairman William Lemke.<sup>57</sup> “I am for Hughes,” Lynn J. Frazier, candidate for governor was quoted as saying, “because Hughes will make American citizenship something to be proud of, not to blush for.”<sup>58</sup>

Nevertheless Republican leaders recognized that the electorate was impressed with the claim that Wilson had kept the country out of war. Editors set to work to disabuse their readers of this mistaken idea.<sup>59</sup> Who was it, they asked, that kept the European neutrals out of the war? Were they not out of it because they did not want in? Wilson deserved no credit for keeping the United States out of the war, for what free, non-colonial state in the Western hemisphere was in the European war? If Wilson was responsible for American neutrality during the 1914 war, it was U. S. Grant who had kept the nation out of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. There was no basis in fact for the Democratic slogan, “He kept us out of war”;<sup>60</sup> it was a “bunkism” which presumed that the United States was a nation of cowards.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Sept. 22, 1916, speech by Congressman Clarence B. Miller of Minnesota, at Grand Forks; Oct. 27, 1916, statements by J. B. Wineman, W. H. Alexander, and E. J. Lander, all Grand Forks businessmen.

<sup>57</sup>Bismarck *Tribune*, Nov. 5, 1916. For another Lemke statement, see the *Havelock American-German*, Nov. 3, 1916.

<sup>58</sup>Bowman *Bowman County Pioneer*, Nov. 2, 1916.

<sup>59</sup>Lemke to Frederick Davenport, Aug. 20, 1916, Lemke Papers; Bowman *Bowman County Pioneer*, Sept. 21, 1916; Minot *Daily Optic-Reporter*, Oct. 3, 1916; Mott *Pioneer Press*, Oct. 26, 1916; Pembina *Pioneer Express*, Oct. 20, 1916.

<sup>60</sup>Langdon *Cavalier County Republican*, Oct. 19, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 14, 1916; Ellendale *Dickey County Leader*, Oct. 5, 1916; Lisbon *Free Press*, Oct. 12, 1916; Williston *Herald*, Nov. 2, 1916.

<sup>61</sup>Bismarck *Tribune* Oct. 20, 26, 1916. In advertisements, the Republicans tried to destroy the credibility of the Wilson slogan. Fargo *Nonpartisan Leader*, Oct. 19, 1916. Another declared that the purpose of the slogan was to blind the people to the fact that the “whole DRIFT of his MEDDLING POLICY IS TOWARD WAR.” Grand Forks *Herald*, Nov. 3, 1916.

From the platform the “debunking” continued. It was “the silliest assertion ever made,” in the words of H. T. Helgesen who, in bidding for the votes of the villages of Lisbon and Calvin, ridiculed the claim. “All this bugaboo about war,” he noted at the end of the campaign, “is seen by the intelligent American citizenship to be a playing to the galleries, as it were — all done for political effect, but with very little to back it up.”<sup>62</sup> Helgesen’s efforts were supported by McCumber, the “articulator from Wahpeton,” as the *Saturday Evening Post* had called him, who at Minot, New Rockford, and Jamestown, as at Casselton, “was most happy in ridiculing the plea that Wilson has kept us out of war.”<sup>63</sup> Outsiders enlisted in the fight on the “Kept us out of war” slogan were Representatives Fred Britten of Illinois and Richard Barthold of Missouri, Senator Knute Nelson of Minnesota, Gifford Pinchot, and Warren G. Harding.<sup>64</sup>

In a flanking attack on the potency of the Democratic slogan, Republicans in the state sought to link Wilson with the munitions interests of the East. It was alleged that he was being supported vigorously by the “Morganized” press of New York. Railroads and industrial leaders were backing the Wilson campaign; financial interests which had invested heavily in the bonds of the Entente powers were working to keep the President in the White House. Senator Gronna declared that a close alliance existed between Wilson and the munitions makers who financed his campaign. On the other hand, “No Fat Munitions Makers want Hughes for President. . . . He is not the candidate of the Morgans. The Munition Makers do not want him.”<sup>65</sup> Hughes was the man of peace who could get the United States out of the blind alley down which Wilson was stumbling to war. In the closing days of the campaign, Republican advertising drove home the message, “To save the nation from war, vote for Charles E. Hughes.” To city and country voter alike, the party’s final message was “Hughes for peace. . . .”<sup>66</sup>

But in great measure North Dakota Republican efforts to discredit the Democratic contention that Wilson had kept the peace, and to link Wilson with those classes and persons interested in war, failed because of the belligerence of their party’s Eastern spokesmen. Early in the campaign, prior to Hughes’ arrival in the state, the public was assured that there

<sup>62</sup>Lisbon *Free Press*, Oct. 26, 1916; Calvin *Times*, Oct. 12, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Nov. 3, 1916. Later at Grand Forks, employing “ridicule, satire and sarcasm,” Helgesen “drove home . . . the apparent falsehood” of the Democratic claim. *Ibid.*, Nov. 5, 1916. In his political advertisements, Helgesen made no reference to war or preparedness. *Ibid.*, Nov. 5, 1916.

<sup>63</sup>Devils Lake *Daily Journal*, Dec. 23, 1916; Minot *Daily Optic-Reporter*, Oct. 14, 1916; New Rockford *Transcript*, Oct. 20, 1916; Jamestown *Daily Alert*, Oct. 23, 1916; Bismarck *Tribune*, Oct. 20, 1916.

<sup>64</sup>Lemke to J. R. McCarl (undated), Lemke Papers. McCarl was manager of the Republican National Congressional Committee at Chicago. Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 29, 1916, speech at Grand Forks; Fargo *Forum*, Oct. 21, 1916, speech at Fargo; Lisbon *Free Press*, Oct. 26, 1916, speech at Lisbon where the audience “nearly” filled the Knights of Columbus Hall; New Rockford *Transcript*, Oct. 6, 1916, at New Rockford Opera House.

<sup>65</sup>Bismarck *Tribune*, Oct. 19, 1916; Fargo *Forum*, Oct. 18, 1916. An advertisement in the Fargo *Nonpartisan Leader*, Oct. 26, 1916, pictured Wilson as the candidate of the Morgans and the munitions makers. It also spoke of Wilson as “a Professor whose mind rotates within the confines of a library.” Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 26, 1916.

<sup>66</sup>Bismarck *Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 27, 1916, statement by H. B. Finch, Grand Forks broker. Jamestown *Daily Alert*, Oct. 25, 1916; Pembina *Pioneer Express*, Nov. 3, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 26, 29, 31, 1916; Fargo *Forum*, Nov. 1, 1916; Bismarck *Tribune*, Oct. 29, 1916.

**Mr. Hughes, what would you have done in the British or German negotiations that Woodrow Wilson has not done? And what has President Wilson done that you would not have done?**

*The Democratic Text Book 1916 (p. 102)*

would not have been a *Lusitania* crisis had Hughes been president in May, 1915. A stiff note to Germany as to the rights of neutral Americans on the seas would have stayed the hand of German torpedo-men. But the candidate himself shifted the emphasis by insisting that once the vessel had been sunk, he would have broken relations with Germany. This changed position with its inherent threat of war was accepted by the editor of the Republican Grand Forks *Herald* as the "surest guarantee of peace." Hughes, seeking to capitalize on the vague discontent believed to exist in much of the country, insisted at Tacoma, Washington: "I would not shrink from war." The statement was headlined in the North Dakota Republican press.<sup>67</sup>

Some Republican weeklies carried "boiler plate" of the Theodore Roosevelt speeches made on behalf of the national ticket. At Lewiston, Maine, the ex-President declared that he would compare Wilson's neutrality policy to the infamous actions of Pontius Pilate, except that to do so would be unfair to Pilate. Speaking at Battle Creek, Michigan, on Hughes' behalf, the Colonel asserted that Washington and Lincoln had not hesitated to put "righteousness" before "peace" — and both had accordingly led their country into war. Roosevelt returned to that theme at Chicago without the reference to righteousness. And the editor of one of the most influential Republican dailies in the state, the Grand Forks *Herald*, stated that the manner in which the United States had kept out of war did not inspire pride.<sup>68</sup>

It must be noted that Senator McCumber, who was campaigning for re-election against a rather formidable opponent, John Burke,<sup>69</sup> took a different tack. He early branded the Wilson foreign policy as "wobbly" and had no praise for the President's achievements if such they could be called. "We first shook our fist and then our finger. In the language of the West, we tried a bluff game, but backed up when it came to a show-down." The "right course" would have been for the United States to determine whether it was right, then to have exhausted every diplomatic

<sup>67</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Nov. 5, 1916; Fargo *Nonpartisan Leader*, Nov. 2, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Aug. 9, 1916; Bismarck *Tribune*, Oct. 13, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 13, 1916. Hughes' speech at Louisville, Ky. Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 17, 1916; Bismarck *Tribune*, Aug. 16, 1916.

<sup>68</sup>Mohall *Tribune-News*, Sept. 28, 1916. This paper during the campaign carried much material of Eastern origin containing "alarming" statements, Oct. 5, 12, 18, 1916. Stanton *Mercer County Republican*, Oct. 26, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 14, 27, 1916.

<sup>69</sup>The Republicans expected a close race between McCumber and Burke. John W. Weeks to Knute Nelson, Aug. 21, 1916, Nelson Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. McCumber was "very anxious" to have Nelson campaign for him and at his request the Speakers Bureau of the Republican National Committee assigned Nelson to North Dakota. C. B. Slemp to Knute Nelson, Aug. 23, 1916; Ralph D. Cole to Knute Nelson, Sept. 14, 1916, Nelson Papers.

recourse.<sup>70</sup> In dealing specifically with the *Lusitania* sinking, he alleged that it would never have happened if Wilson had confined his demands to "the boundaries of international law" and stood by them. Instead of so doing, he had made unreasonable demands and in the ensuing "wobbling" period of note-exchanging, the United States was left in a most contemptible position.<sup>71</sup> Bryan, he asserted, had resigned from the cabinet in June, 1915, because he saw the inevitable consequences of the course the President was following.<sup>72</sup>

The Republican party was in trouble in North Dakota. It was not simply that Hughes was pitted against a candidate who had at his disposal all the resources of a man at the helm of government, with the control of patronage. The party within the state was torn by factionalism. On the one hand it was necessary to conciliate the Progressives, whose slate of candidates, headed by Usher L. Burdick for governor, had been trounced in the June primary. The Nonpartisan League having swept the nominations, it was necessary to gain Progressive support for it. Some Progressives, approving Frazier but not "all of the platform," would agree to support the Republican state ticket as they believed that not all the persons nominated as League candidates approved the League program in its entirety. Patrick D. Norton, U. S. Representative from the Third District, had supported Burdick but agreed that Frazier was "doubtless all right." William Lemke, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee well as Nonpartisan League manager, attempted to close the breach between the Republican factions in order to secure "co-operation in full" the Progressives.<sup>73</sup> It was not easy, as the League journal, the *Leader* attacks on Norton for having supported the Progressive slate continued. This was viewed as "a mistake for Norton's enemies are of the League. His loyalty to friends and principles make him valuable to the League." The breach was closed when the Progressive Party, at meeting at Fargo on August 30, endorsed Hughes for President, voting to retain its party organization.<sup>74</sup> The endorsement stated "America efficient" must mean carrying out the Progressive "Social Jus

<sup>70</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, June 25, Oct. 18, 1916. In June at Grand Forks, he declared that there was real danger in the Far East because the United States had offended Japan on "several occasions. . . . Someday we shall be called to reckoning."

<sup>71</sup>Langdon *Cavalier County Republican*, Oct. 5, 1916. Gronna, who did not come up for re-election until 1920, does not appear to have campaigned much in North Dakota. At Fargo he granted an interview in which he explained that although not "an admirer of Roosevelt in many things," he believed he would have saved America from the diplomatic crisis which developed under Wilson. Lisbon *Free Press*, Oct. 5, 1916.

<sup>72</sup>New Rockford *Transcript*, Oct. 20, 1916. Bryan was criticized for supporting the candidacy of Wilson. The Jamestown *Daily Alert*, which, while Republican, followed the Bryan line, felt that he had "lost status" by returning to Wilson. Jamestown *Daily Alert*, Oct. 16, 1916. The Grand Forks *Herald* questioned how he could support Wilson in view of the "great lack of harmony" in their views of neutral rights, preparedness, industrial mobilization, etc., Sept. 26, 1916.

<sup>73</sup>William G. Owens to Lemke, July 1, 1916. Owens was states attorney at Williston. Patrick D. Norton to Lemke, July 3, 1916; Lemke to William G. Owens, July 6, 1916. Lemke Papers.

<sup>74</sup>William G. Owens to Lemke, July 1, 1916; D. V. Brennan to William Lemke, July 10, 1916. Lemke Papers. Brennan was an attorney at Devils Lake. Fargo *Forum*, Aug. 31, 1916.



# WOODROW WILSON Has Stuck by You, Mr. Farmer -- Will You Stick by Him?

Is Wall Street and Big Biz putting up the money for the Hughes campaign because Hughes will be a good President FOR YOU? NO.

The same Big Biz which has always fought the Equity and the Nonpartisan League is solidly lined up behind Hughes and McCumber and is furnishing the money and speakers to try to defeat Wilson.

If you want war, vote for Hughes

If you want peace, elect WILSON

OFFICE TO BE VOTED FOR	REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRATIC
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS	HUGHES <input type="checkbox"/>	WILSON <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	A. B. COX F. M. JACKSON C. E. JOHNSTON S. H. NELSON JOHN M. WERNER	GEORGE A. GILMORE DAVID J. GORMAN JOHN MAHON S. L. NICHOLS JOHN A. WRIGHT
UNITED STATES SENATOR <small>Term ending March 3, 1923.</small>	PORTER J. MCCUMBER <input type="checkbox"/>	JOHN BURKE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Roosevelt, as agent for Wall Street and the munition makers, will run Hughes if he is elected and Roosevelt has declared in advance for War on Germany and Mexico

When you North Dakota farmers work out your program and Big Biz tries to stop you at Washington, which man would you rather have in the White House then? Wilson or Hughes?

## Big Biz Wants Hughes

Wilson Independent League of North Dakota

program, but made no mention of foreign affairs.<sup>75</sup> As the campaign drew to a close, the Progressive League of North Dakota in advertisements reminded voters that the Wilson record on domestic and foreign issues prevented a Progressive from voting the Democratic ticket.<sup>76</sup>

Much more trouble was to develop from the entrance of the Nonpartisan League into state politics. The League victory in the primary did not remove suspicion of the conservative elements in the Republican party that the League was "socialistic in its outlook," but there was some feeling that the farmers could be "trusted."<sup>77</sup> The Conservatives were equally uncertain that the League intended to support the national ticket. The necessity for supporting Hughes and McCumber was emphasized: there must be "no chicanery or fraud . . . to . . . prevent the League to a man from supporting McCumber". Doubts as to the Nonpartisan League attitude toward the national ticket stemmed from the "peculiar circumstances" under which the League's state candidates had been nominated. The conditions in many particulars were "unprecedented and warranted some measure of hesitation." When appearing at Grand Forks with Hughes on August 10, the League gubernatorial candidate, Frazier, placed himself "unreservedly" behind Hughes. This declaration was expected to create a "unity of purpose" which nothing could withstand.<sup>78</sup>

Republicans recognized, nevertheless, that Wilson and Burke had many followers among the League farmers. William Lemke, attorney for and manager of the Nonpartisan League candidates, was uncertain as to the percentage of farmers who would swing to Wilson. Hughes was strong in the towns and cities, he believed, but an active campaign would have to get under way early in the autumn. Such an effort would be impossible without a considerable grant — perhaps of \$10,000 — by the National Committee. Thanks to the bitter factional fight in the primary and the disinclination of the farmer candidates "to mix very much into the national issues," the party was without funds.<sup>79</sup> In early October, the committee was sending speakers but no money. As a result, there were no funds to advertise the speakers or to rent halls.<sup>80</sup> In late September Lemke had traveled to Chicago to plead with the Republican National Committee for

<sup>75</sup>Grand Forks Herald, Aug. 31, Sept. 1, 1916. The Republican state platform, while "heartily" endorsing Hughes and Fairbanks and "ratifying the national Republican platform," did not refer to foreign policy. Bismarck Tribune, Sept. 7, 1916, Lakota American, Sept. 21, 1916.

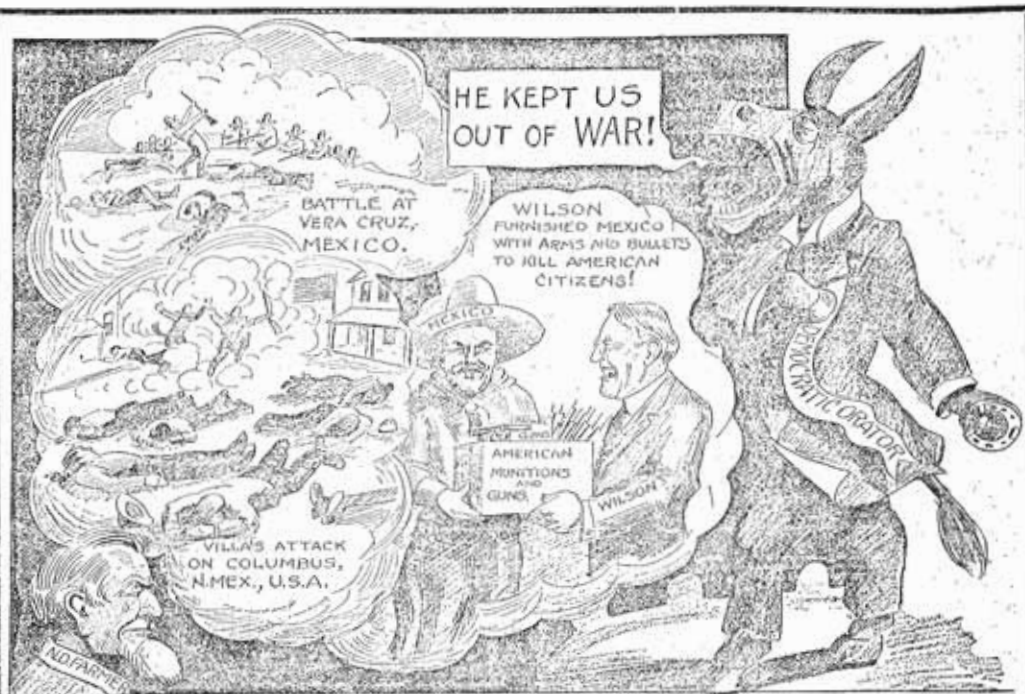
<sup>76</sup>Fargo Forum, Oct. 31, 1916; Jamestown Daily Alert, Oct. 31, 1916; Grand Forks Herald, Nov. 1, 1916.

<sup>77</sup>John M. Baer to Lemke, Aug. 31, 1916, Lemke Papers. Baer, writing from Beach where he was Wilson's appointee as postmaster, mentions concern over the "socialistic" measures of the League. Grafton Walsh County Record, July 26, 1916.

<sup>78</sup>H. M. Creel to Lemke, Aug. 2, Aug. 14, 1916, Lemke Papers. L. T. Guild, publisher of the conservative Fargo Courier-News, wrote to Lemke questioning whether he was "really desirous of carrying the state for the national ticket. . . ." He was writing "under the presumption" that Lemke was "actually interested in North Dakota's vote being counted for C. E. Hughes." Guild to Lemke, Sept. 16, 1916, Lemke Papers. The problem of preventing a left-right split in the party re-appeared in 1920. See Warren G. Harding to Gutzon Borglum, Aug. 27, 1920; Gutzon Borglum to William Lemke, Aug. 28, 1920, Lemke Papers. Grand Forks Herald, Aug. 11, 1916.

<sup>79</sup>Lemke to Frederick Davenport, Aug. 20, 1916, Lemke Papers. The Leader had a circulation of 40,000 in North Dakota. Lemke urged the National Committee to place advertisements in it emphasizing the merits of Hughes. Lemke to A. T. Hert, Sept. 18, 1916, Lemke Papers. Hert was western manager of the Republican National Committee.

<sup>80</sup>The Nonpartisan League financed its own candidates. Its members were not contributing to the state and county Republican committees.



## To Save the Nation from War Vote for Hughes for President

The National Guard is on the border to save us from invasion; American soldiers—sent there by Woodrow Wilson—are fighting and giving up their lives in Santo Domingo today; American troops by force of arms are holding possession in Hayti and in Nicaragua; an American invading force is encamped within the national boundaries of Mexico; the soil of Vera Cruz, of Carrizal, of Santa Ysobel, of Columbus, is drenched with the blood of young Americans who wore the uniforms of the Republic; hundreds of Americans have been butchered by Mexican bandits, the flag has been shot at and spat upon and American citizens ridiculed, robbed and beaten—it is going on today—

—and yet there can be found some citizens of the United States who have the hardihood to echo the false and brazen boast: "He kept us out of war."

### WILSON THE CHRONIC MEDDLER

Mexico wanted nothing; but to be left alone to work out her own salvation. Wilson would not leave her alone. He insisted on dictating what the Mexicans should do. He landed troops at Vera Cruz; he furnished arms to the bandit Villa, with which to shoot down Americans as well as Mexicans; he sent an army of "special envoys" into Mexico to tell the Mexicans how to handle their own affairs; he blew hot and cold on one faction after another. The result has been an orgy of blood and ruin which brings the blush of shame to the cheek of every American.

In the brief rule of Wilson at the White House the United States has been twice at war with Mexico—once with Villa and once with Carranza—it has been at war with Nicaragua, at war with Hayti and at war with Santo Domingo. It is true that these are all puny nations, but if any real power had wanted war, it is more than probable that Wilson—weak and timid as he is—would have blundered into it, just as he has blundered into mess after mess in his relations with the little countries of Latin-America.

### WE NEED A STRONG MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Charles E. Hughes is the man. Hughes was the spontaneous choice of the American people for nominee of the Republican party. The bosses did not want him. Big Business fears him. His record as governor of New York and later as supreme court justice shows that he is his own master, a fearless, manly, able, independent citizen—one fit to be the president of the whole nation.

"It is a great mistake to say that resoluteness in protecting American rights would have led to war. Rather in that course lay the best assurance of peace. Weakness and indecision in the maintenance of known rights are always sources of grave danger; they forfeit respect and invite serious wrongs, which in turn create an uncontrollable popular resentment. We should not have found it difficult to maintain peace, but we should have maintained peace with honor. During this critical period the only danger of war has lain in the weak course of the Administration."—CHARLES E. HUGHES in his speech of acceptance.

Vote for Frazier, Hughes, McCumber, and the Entire State and National Republican Tickets.  
REPUBLICAN STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

\$15,000, a sum which he considered "very conservative and yet sufficient." By the first week of October -- with the election but a month off -- he had not yet received it. "Kindly let us hear from you," he begged A. T. Hert, "so that we can figure out where we are at. If we can't get any assistance it will be useless to send further speakers into the State."<sup>81</sup>

The conservatives were further irritated when the new Republican State Central Committee was chosen at a meeting held at Bismarck's famous Grand Pacific Hotel, giving the Nonpartisan League twenty-three out of the forty-two places.<sup>82</sup> Governor Hanna, leader of the most extreme conservatives, announced, nevertheless, that he would support the ticket from "president to poundmaster."<sup>83</sup> Lemke in turn urged League members to vote the Republican ticket from "top to bottom." One editor in reporting the request declared that the Nonpartisan League leaders had opposed this recommendation. The League had not taken a stand on candidates for national offices. The Nonpartisan League *Leader* was not discussing political contests other than those for state offices. On September 29, the League announced that it would not take sides in the Senatorial race unless one side or the other "provoked" it.<sup>84</sup> This position was reaffirmed by Fred B. Wood, manager of the Equity Livestock Exchange at Minneapolis, and one of the "Big Five" of the Nonpartisan League:

The NPL absolutely has no favorites in the national . . . races. Neither the League nor any of its officers has declared openly or privately for Wilson or Hughes, for McCumber or for Burke. . . . I know it has been reported that there is a quiet movement under way in behalf of national candidates. It is absolutely untrue. . . .<sup>85</sup>

Twice in the *Leader* of October 26, the question of an endorsement for President and Senator was raised. "The League has not endorsed candidates for the United States senate or for congress. Don't believe anyone who tells you he has League endorsement. . . ." And over A. C. Townley's signature, as president, this notice appeared:

### WARNING TO LEAGUE MEMBERS:

Unscrupulous politicians hope . . . to carry the state for Burke and Wilson or Hughes and McCumber by spreading the report that the League had endorsed one or the other. Be on your guard.

Members were warned that neither the League nor the *Leader* "have made or will make any endorsements for any of the national offices."<sup>86</sup>

<sup>81</sup>Lemke to A. T. Hert, Oct. 3, 1916, Lemke Papers. Speakers were drawing "small crowds owing to the fact that they were not sufficiently advertised."

<sup>82</sup>Bismarck *Tribune*, Sept. 7, 1916. Valley City *Daily Times-Record*, Sept. 7, 1916. Lemke was elected chairman; Ray McKaig, secretary, Halvor L. Halvorson treasurer.

<sup>83</sup>Fargo *Forum*, Oct. 10, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 10, 1916. A plea for conservative support of the NPL ticket was made on the basis of "the majority should rule." All state candidates had been nominated in "a fair and square campaign." Dickinson *Press*, Oct. 21, 1916.

<sup>84</sup>Rugby *Pierce County Tribune*, Oct. 5, 1916, Fargo *Nonpartisan Leader*, July 20, 1916, carried six cartoons on the campaign. One from the St. Louis *Star*, showing Hughes standing on Roosevelt making a speech, carried the caption: "Mr. Hughes will stand on the platform." Dickinson *Press*, Sept. 30, 1916.

<sup>85</sup>Bismarck *Tribune*, Oct. 13, 1916. Wood was the first farmer recruited by Townley in Feb., 1915, for the Nonpartisan League.

<sup>86</sup>Fargo *Nonpartisan Leader*, Oct. 5, 26, 1916.



**ASLE J. GRONNA**

Photo: Copyright by  
Harris and Ewing

Townley's statement disassociating the League from the race for national offices was reaffirmed by Republican state headquarters at Fargo. Lemke was bent on defeating Wilson through his positions as Republican State Chairman and attorney for the Nonpartisan League. Seeking to drive the Nonpartisan League members into the Hughes camp, he announced that the League was not endorsing Burke and Wilson. David Lawrence wrote from Fargo, as correspondent for the New York *Evening Post*, that the state was not "a bit interested in national politics," but that despite their silence, the Non-partisan League leaders favored Hughes — "nobody doubts it." Lemke continued his efforts to persuade the farmers that their leaders did favor Hughes. An advertisement of the Republican State Central committee carried a statement by Lynn Frazier: "I am for Hughes because Hughes will make American citizenship a thing to be proud of, at home and abroad."<sup>87</sup>

An uncertain factor in the outcome of the election was the German vote. The Democrats had made a bid for this vote when they brought Bryan into the central and western parts of the state. Beyond that there was little they could do, given Wilson's record. His actions on German submarine warfare were probably more concrete to German voters than Hughes' threats. During the campaign the Nonpartisan League was active among the Germans. The Republican State Central Committee was in search of effective German speakers on national issues, but curiously

<sup>87</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 26, 1916; Bismarck *Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1916; Fargo *Nonpartisan Leader*, Nov. 2, 1916.

enough, had little hope of carrying the German districts.<sup>88</sup> German editors were not of one mind. *Der Volksfreund*, published by St. Mary's Abbey at Richardton, denounced Wilson for his un-neutral favoritism to the Allies and his unprovoked attacks on German-Americans. The election would "reveal how great is the German-American political power." *Der Staats-Anzeiger*, at Bismarck, owned and edited by Frank L. Brandt, a Democratic officeholder, was the only one of more than one hundred German-language papers in the United States to support Wilson. Lemke, himself a German, inserted in western papers a German-language advertisement calling to the voter's attention the sins of the Wilson administration.<sup>89</sup>

The Democratic party, as the campaign got under way, was at a great disadvantage. Few of the state's weekly papers were Democratic in their sympathies. The sole Democratic daily, the Devils Lake *Daily Journal*, was poorly supported by the party members. If success were to be won by the party, it would depend in large measure on the activity of speakers. As President Wilson did not plan an extensive tour, principal reliance would have to be placed on some other figure of national importance. Such a person was William Jennings Bryan. By July, John Burke, candidate for United States Senator, was in communication with Bryan, urging him to campaign in North Dakota, particularly in the western two-thirds of the state. Bryan was a familiar figure in the eastern part of the state, but he had never spoken in the western or German part. Prior to the war, Bryan had always been popular among the Germans, and his break with the administration over the *Lusitania* note had enhanced his reputation among them.<sup>90</sup>

Bryan did come to the state, crossing it from west to east. At Williston on September 27, he defended the Wilson "foreign policy of peace." At Minot he asserted that the President "deserved" credit for keeping the nation out of a war into which Republican leaders were trying to force it. Speaking at Rugby the following day, he received a "warm welcome" and "made a very good impression on most" with his defense of the administration.<sup>91</sup> Later in his ninth speech of the day, he appeared at the Grand Forks City Auditorium, which was packed with three thousand persons, and from which an estimated three thousand more had been turned away. When he rose, following customary introductory remarks, there was a ten-minute demonstration. With a voice "trembling and weak," he went over

<sup>88</sup>Fargo *Nonpartisan Leader*, July 13, 1916. It held nineteen German-language meetings between July 13 and 28. Gifford Pinchot to Lemke, Oct. 21, 1916, Lemke papers; John Burke to Tom Burke, Aug. 23, 1916, Burke Papers; Jamestown *Stutsman County Democrat*, Sept. 7, 1916.

<sup>89</sup>Richardton *Volksfreund*, Nov. 3, 1916; New York *Times*, Oct. 1, 1916; Stanton *Mercer County Republican*, Oct. 26, 1916; Morton *County Zeitung* and the *New Salem Journal*, Oct. 27, Nov. 3, 1916.

<sup>90</sup>John Carmody to John Burke, Aug. 11, 1916, Burke Papers. J. H. Bloom to ——— (late summer, 1916), Lemke Papers. John Burke to George E. Duis, July 24, 1916; Burke to William Jennings Bryan, Aug. 4, 1916, Burke Papers. Burke was not confident of victory for himself; sending Bryan into the west "may not help the State Ticket, but it will help the President." Burke to W. J. Huber, Aug. 4, 1916, Burke Papers.

<sup>91</sup>Williston *Herald*, Sept. 28, 1916; Bowbells *Tribune*, Oct. 13, 1916; Rugby *Pierce County Tribune*, Oct. 5, 1916. This Republican paper remarked that only a "Democrat would agree with everything said."



PORTER J. McCUMBER

— Photo: Copyright by Harris and Ewing

the administration's record in progressive legislation, ending with a eulogy of the President:

The President deserves credit for having kept the country out of the European war. Republican leaders have tried to force the country into war — into a war which has cost the lives of three millions, resulted in the wounding of ten millions and in . . . forty billions of war debts. The country supports the President in his determination to maintain neutrality.

The Republican Grand Forks *Herald* reported that he held the audience "spellbound" and drove home his remarks with a "vim that brought thunderous applause." There was no stir until he sat down and "then pandemonium reigned." "Old-line Republicans" pronounced the speech the strongest he had ever made in his many visits to Grand Forks.<sup>92</sup> The opinion was widespread that Bryan had done great work throughout the state.<sup>93</sup>

Bryan was the only national figure to participate in the Democratic campaign. Reliance had to be put on local personalities and newspaper advertisements to get the issues before the public. John Burke, who was the party's workhorse, dealt with the major topics. He attempted to make capital of the warborn prosperity. Democratic advertisements also pointed to the great prosperity which rising prices in the years since 1912 had brought to farmers.<sup>94</sup>

There was, however, no prospect of victory for the Democratic party if it could do no more than hold registered Democrats while attracting a few Republican voters. Wilson in 1912 was the first Democrat to receive the state's electoral votes. In that three-way contest, he had won 29,555 votes to 25,726 for Roosevelt, and 23,090 for Taft — 29,555 compared to a total Republican poll of 48,816. With the Republican party re-united, the only chance of a Wilson victory lay in a massive defection from the Republican candidates. Signs that many "rank and file" Republican voters looked with favor on the President were detected by Democratic leaders. Democratic strategy had to be a skillful bid for the Republican vote. An opportunity developed when Henry C. Hansbrough, for eighteen years North Dakota's Republican Senator, announced his support of Wilson. Domestic considerations were uppermost in Hansbrough's mind. He declared that he was alienated from the Grand Old Party by the presence of George W. Perkins, Theodore Roosevelt, and Louis W. Hill, son of James J. Hill, the "Empire Builder," among Hughes' supporters.<sup>95</sup> Shortly

<sup>92</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Sept. 29, 1916; Samuel C. Torgerson to Richard Hooker, Oct. 21, 1916, Torgerson Papers. Hooker was editor of the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican*. The speech "impressed a good many of the voters in this section of the State, and there has been a good deal of comment on it. . . ." W. H. Alexander to Knute Nelson, Oct. 11, 1916, Knute Nelson Papers. Alexander was secretary of the Republican Grand Forks County Central Committee.

<sup>93</sup>Torgerson to Vance McCormick, Oct. 7, 1916, Torgerson Papers. Charles W. Bryan to W. J. Bryan, November 22, 1916, Bryan Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. Bryan was reporting opinions contained in letters from North Dakota.

<sup>94</sup>Mohall *Tribune-News*, Oct. 26, 1916. Speaking at the Mohall Opera House on Oct. 23, 1916, during the supper hour, he had attracted a "fair-sized audience." Fargo *Forum*, Oct. 18, 19, 1916; Valley City *Daily Times-Record*, Oct. 28, 1916. Burke tried to win farmers from McCumber by quoting from the *Congressional Record*, remarks by McCumber which he construed to indicate hostility on the Senator's part to "farmer's organizations, cooperatives, etc." Theodore G. Nelson to Lemke, Nov. 1, 1916, Lemke Papers.

<sup>95</sup>*North Dakota Legislative Manual*, 1913, pp. 262-64; Torgerson to A. J. Gronna, Feb. 6, 1916; Torgerson to Woodrow Wilson, Sept. 12, 1916, Torgerson Papers; Grand Forks *Herald*, Sept. 16, 1916.



Louis Benjamin Hanna at his desk.

— Photo: Melvin R. Gilmore Collection  
State Historical Society of North Dakota

thereafter, Democrats George E. Duis and George A. Bangs of Grand Forks planned a league of persons “irrespective of party affiliation” who were “interested in the election” of President Wilson. Its headquarters at Fargo soon had five clerks and stenographers busy distributing campaign literature to local units in 470 towns throughout the state. The Woodrow Wilson Independent League was not a money-raising scheme. The only request made of a prospective member was that he state his party affiliation. In mid-October ex-Senator Hansbrough accepted the Presidency of the organization.<sup>96</sup> He took to the stump on behalf of Wilson in a vigorous fashion, and paid for full-page advertisements attacking Hughes.<sup>97</sup>

Not pinning all their hopes on Senator Hansbrough, whose reputation was that of the blackest of all reactionaries,<sup>98</sup> Democrats utilized a prominent

<sup>96</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Sept. 28, 1916; Wahpeton *Times*, Sept. 28, 1916. Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 5, 15, 1916.

<sup>97</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 18, 1916; Calvin *Times*, Nov. 2, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 22, 1916; Hebron *Herald*, Oct. 20, 1916. Hansbrough late in the campaign sponsored another advertisement announcing his intention to vote for the League candidate as well as Wilson. He urged his “fellow nonpartisans” to vote for Wilson. Fargo *Nonpartisan Leader*, Nov. 2, 1916.

<sup>98</sup>Hansbrough’s support of Wilson on any grounds is unexplainable. However, in the early 1920’s he moved even further to the left politically. Hansbrough as United States Senator had been an ally of Alexander McKenzie when the latter as United States marshal was involved in the “looting of Alaska.” McKenzie’s exploits in Alaska provided hero and plot for Rex Beach’s *The Spoilers*, wherein he was identified as “the boss of North Dakota.” Late in the campaign, the Republican Congressman James Manahan attempted to revive memories of the episode to nullify Hansbrough’s support of Wilson. Fargo *Nonpartisan Leader*, Nov. 2, 1916.

“Bull Mooser . . . one of the foremost Norwegian orators of America.” Ole Hanson, one-time North Dakotan and in 1916 a businessman at Seattle, who had been the Progressive candidate for the United States Senate in Washington in 1914, and known as the “Billy Sunday of the West,” made a series of effective speeches.<sup>99</sup>

One Republican editor openly espoused the Wilson cause. Gerald P. Nye, later to become nationally famous as an advocate of “isolationism” but at that time the new owner, publisher and editor of the Fryburg *Pioneer*, spoke glowingly of the President’s merits. Support of Wilson by more famous Republicans, it was believed, could be profitably brought to the attention of the voters. Andrew Carnegie’s approval of the President was noted, and Henry Ford was urged to purchase newspaper and magazine space to state his reasons, and those of Edison and other Republicans, for support of Wilson. This Ford did, and his half-page advertisement, “Humanity and your vote,” appeared in papers in various parts of the state.<sup>100</sup>

Spokesmen for Wilson, whether Democrats or Republicans, employed arguments calculated to appeal to the North Dakota voter’s economic interpretation of politics. It was declared that Hughes was a Tory, and “reaction” was the common enemy which “liberal Republicans, Democrats, Independents and Progressives” must fight by voting for Wilson. Roosevelt and G. W. Perkins, who backed Hughes, had their “feet in Wall Street” and their heads in the Hughes campaign. Their Republican party was “labelled all over with stickers signifying its ownership to monopoly and special privilege.” John Burke declared that the war issue of which the Republicans were making so much was a red herring. The Republican politicians who had nominated Hughes did not “care a rap” about foreign policy; what troubled them was Wilson’s stand on the merchant marine, government munitions plants, and rural credits which had antagonized “big business.”<sup>101</sup> Hughes looked like the “candidate . . . of big business,”<sup>102</sup> and as such had support of “Wall Street . . . monopolists . . . and political reactionaries.” As one who favored the “special interests and privileged classes, as distinguished from the true democracy of the country,” Hughes was favored “by the Wall Street forces.”<sup>103</sup> For Hughes to succeed Wilson

<sup>99</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 25, 27, 1916; Samuel Torgerson to Ole Hanson, Nov. 16, 1916, Torgerson Papers.

<sup>100</sup>Fryburg *Pioneer*, Aug. 24, 1916; Steele *Ozone*, Nov. 2, 1916; Torgerson to Henry Ford, Oct. 11, 1916, Torgerson Papers; Grand Forks *Herald*, Nov. 5, 1916; Fargo *Forum*, Nov. 5, 1916; Rugby *Pierce County Tribune*, Nov. 2, 1916.

<sup>101</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 5, 22, 1916; Hebron *Herald*, Oct. 20, 1916, advertisement by Senator Hansbrough; Grand Forks *Herald*, June 24, 1916. Burke declared: “Hughes puts property rights above everything else.” Burke to Homer S. Cummings, July 20, 1916, Burke Papers.

<sup>102</sup>Grand Forks *Normanden*, June 13, 1916, editorial by Peer Strommē. *Normanden* was critical of the vagueness of Hughes’ utterances. It was troubled by his use of the phrases “Americanism”, “Preparedness”, and “Protection for American Labor.”

<sup>103</sup>Jamestown *Stutsman County Democrat*, Aug. 10, 1916, “Only the common people are for Wilson.” Wahpeton *Times*, Oct. 19, 1916; Steele *Ozone*, Sept. 28, 1916; Fargo *Forum*, Nov. 1, 1916, Democratic advertisement. The Hughes Women’s Train carrying “wives of millionaires and Newport society swells including Mrs. Whitney and Mrs. Guggenheim . . . somewhat reinforced” the charges that Hughes was favored by Wall Street. Steele *Ozone*, Sept. 28, 1916. “The junket of Eastern society women also contributed to the general dissatisfaction with the Republicans.” H. C. Peterson, *Propaganda for War, the Campaign against American Neutrality, 1914-1917* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1939), p. 276.



WILLIAM LEMKE

Photo: Harris  
and Ewing

at the White House would be a victory for “the agents of privilege and prerogative.” The voter was reminded by Henry Ford to “guard against Wall Street influences again securing the control of our Government. They have been rooted out during the last four years, and they are working hard to get back.”<sup>163</sup>

Another ace in the Democratic hand was Wilson’s foreign policy even though, “lambasted and cat-hauled” in unceasing Republican onslaughts, it was beginning to look “like thirty cents.” Democratic speakers replied to “bitter criticism and ridicule” with a general defense of the administration’s

<sup>163</sup>Fryburg Pioneer, Sept. 7, 1916; Grand Forks Herald, Nov. 5, 1916. Hebron Herald, Oct. 20, 1916.

European policy. Very special emphasis was placed on the fact that the President had kept the country out of war.<sup>164</sup> The national platform had “in particular” commended to the people of the United States the President’s record in scoring “splendid diplomatic victories” while at the same time preserving for the nation its “vital interests” at no sacrifice of the citizens’ peace. The President had kept the nation away “from the horrors and disasters of war,” despite a “tremendous propaganda . . . underway . . . to involve the United States in the European” conflict. The public should not allow “the claptrap . . . being dispensed in the name of patriotism to delude them”; the “disloyalty, chicanery and dishonesty in thought” in which the Republicans traded should not blind them to the “fearless defense of the sacred cause of Peace on the part of our President.” Avarice motivated those in the Republican party who attacked the President’s policy which had preserved peace and neutrality.<sup>165</sup>

In its advertising matter, the party hammered home its slogan: “If you want peace you want Wilson,” with references to the “unbroken family circle” with which America alone of the great nations was blessed. “He Has Kept Us Out of War. . . . No greater service was ever rendered to any country by any man in any time,” ran a full-page advertisement by the Democratic National Committee. In his half-page advertisement “Humanity and your Vote,” Henry Ford announced that because Wilson had “kept us out of war,” he was going to vote for the Democratic candidate:

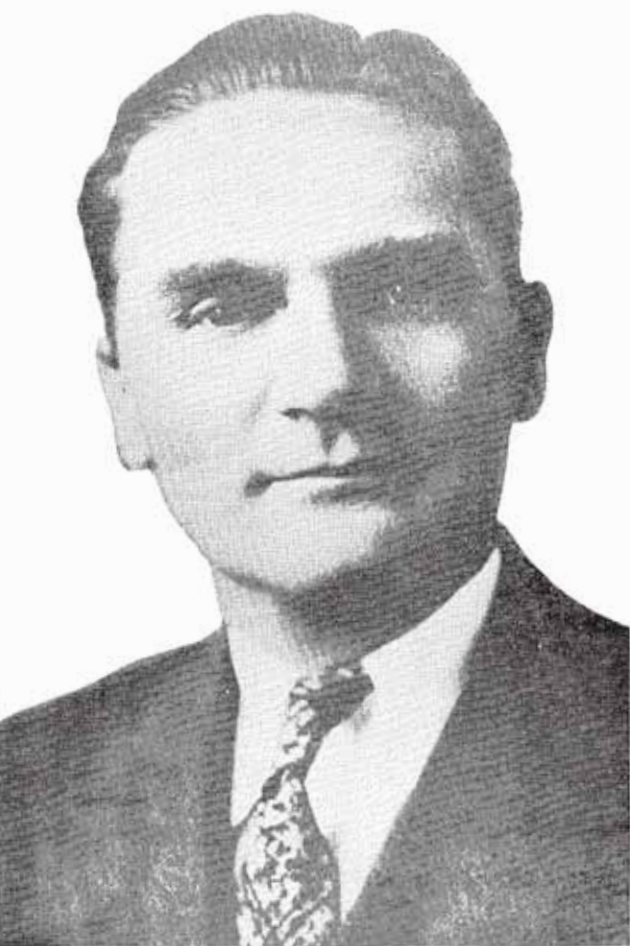
Special interests are demanding war and the President is being criticized with many worlds [sic] but stripped of all unnecessary words their real complaint is that he has not plunged the country into war for their profit. . . . [He] is opposing that invisible government, that unseen hand which caused this war. I believe those same selfish forces that caused the war are opposing the President’s re-election.<sup>167</sup>

Given North Dakota’s ideological climate, Ford’s remarks served well the purposes of the Democratic leaders. They contained praise for the President’s achievement of keeping the nation at peace in a world at war, but they also attributed to the Republican party a desire for war. By the end of September, the Democratic candidate himself was saying in his infrequent comments and appearances that a Republican victory would mean a reversal of the peaceful policy of the administration. The “certain prospect of the success of the Republican party is that we shall be drawn in,” he declared on September 30. Democratic advertisements had hinted

<sup>164</sup>Calvin Times, Nov. 9, 1916; Grand Forks Herald, Oct. 24, 1916; Linton Emmons County Record, Oct. 5, 1916; Langdon Cavalier County Republican, Oct. 19, 1916; Grand Forks Herald, Oct. 27, 1916. The Grand Forks Herald had early minimized the damage that a Democratic appeal to the Republican “peace element” could do to the party, May 16, 1916.

<sup>165</sup>Wahpeton Times, Sept. 28, 1916; Grand Forks Herald, Sept. 22, 1916, Burke at Fargo; also Charles Towne at Fargo, Fargo Forum, Oct. 11, 1916; Sveinbjorn Johnson at Grand Forks, Grand Forks Herald, Oct. 27, 1916; S. C. Torgerson to Howard W. Bridgman, Oct. 7, 1916, Torgerson Papers. Bridgman was editor of the Boston Congregationalist. Steele Ozone, Oct. 12, 1916; New Leipzig Sentinel, July 27, 1916 Fryburg Pioneer, June 1, Sept. 7, 15, 1916; Wahpeton Times, Sept. 14, 1916.

<sup>167</sup>Fargo Forum, Oct. 10, 1916. In another advertisement, it was phrased: “If you want Peace you want Wilson: Put North Dakota in the Honor Column,” Fargo Nonpartisan Leader, Oct. 12, 1916; Grand Forks Herald, Oct. 5, 25, Nov. 5, 1916; New Salem Journal, Nov. 3, 1916.



**GERALD PRENTICE NYE**

— From pamphlet pub. National Non-Partisan Committee for Re-election of Senator Nye

that war might arise from the “tough” policy toward Germany which Hughes said he would have adopted had he been president.<sup>108</sup> It was stated editorially that the Republican leaders were trying to force the country into war. The most frequently resorted-to device for “proving” that charge was to link Hughes to Theodore Roosevelt. The latter at Battle Creek on October 7 spoke of putting righteousness before peace. His speech, Democratic editors contended, bore out Wilson’s allegation, made the same day, that it was the intention of the Republicans to reverse the administration’s peaceful policy. It was noted that Hughes had not repudiated the Roosevelt statement. Also, William Howard Taft was quoted as saying that Roosevelt, if he were president, would put the country into war with Germany. Hughes’ statement that he was in complete accord with Roosevelt indicated that he favored war. The reply of Hughes and Roosevelt to questions concerning the sinking of the *Lusi-*

<sup>108</sup>Harley Nottter, *The Origins of the Foreign Policy of Woodrow Wilson* (Baltimore, 1937), pp. 558-559. Samuel C. Torgerson, Grand Forks banker, assumed that Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot hoped for Hughes’ election to put the United States in the war. Torgerson to L. C. Townsend, Nov. 7, 1916, Torgerson Papers; Grand Forks *Herald*, Aug. 10, 1916; Bismarck *Tribune*, Aug. 11, 1916.

*tania* and subsequent diplomatic maneuvering made it abundantly clear to Democrats that had Hughes held office, the United States would have been at war.<sup>100</sup>

One editor sought to drive home the unreasonableness of the Republican argument by suggesting that they who so well knew how to deal with the submarine problem could help Norway to head off German submarine war by “some criticism of the way in which Haakon fails to stop it.” In appealing to both Norwegians and Germans, Democrats were wise to point to the role that the “avarice” of the business interests played in criticism of Wilson and to the fact that the “champions of conscription” were “for Hughes.” In a large two-page advertisement in the *Nonpartisan Leader*, the Democrats played on all the farmer’s fears:

*Is Wall Street and Big Biz putting up the money for the Hughes campaign because Hughes will be a good President FOR YOU? NO . . .*

*If you want war, vote for Hughes.*

*If you want peace, elect Wilson.*

*Roosevelt as agent for Wall Street and the munitions makers will run Hughes if he is elected and Roosevelt has declared in advance for War on Germany. . . .*<sup>110</sup>

Difficulties for the Democratic party developed. For want of an effective press, they had to rely, as noted above, on speakers. Their sole “home grown” speaker, “Honest John” Burke, a sort of Great Plains Abe Lincoln, was an effective orator, but the size of even his crowds was at time “disappointing.” A further handicap was that the party was “a sort of Irish association, . . . a closed corporation between the Irish alone . . . .” The impression was created that there was “not room in it for Norwegians” whose support was critically needed. Chances of victory for the Democratic ticket were further reduced by an internal rift. When the State Central Committee met, control was seized by radicals who proceeded to prepare a platform containing “no bait for conservatives.”<sup>111</sup> Soon rumor had it that John Burke, candidate for the Senate, hoped for a “deal” with the Nonpartisan League whereby the Democrats would “ditch” their gubernatorial candidate in favor of the Republican, Lynn Frazier; in return the Republicans would sacrifice McCumber for Democratic support of Frazier. Others had it that Burke had made the Democratic platform “a socialistic banquet” to win the inflamed farmers away from the very conservative McCumber.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>100</sup>Steele *Ozone*, Oct. 19, 26, 1916; Jamestown *Stutsman County Democrat*, Nov. 2, 1916. To establish the link between Theodore Roosevelt and Hughes, the *Ozone* used two full columns. The *Stutsman County Democrat* believed that criticism of Wilson for not having plunged the country into the European war was a “hypocritical, loathsome piece of political trickery”; *ibid.*, June 22, 1916. Walter Millis in *Road to War, America, 1914-1917* (New York, 1935), p. 343, wrote that the Democrats “cheerfully . . . spread . . . broadcast” Roosevelt’s Battle Creek speech over the “radical pacifist Northwest.”

<sup>110</sup>Steele *Ozone*, Oct. 26, 1916; New Leipzig *Sentinel*, July 27, 1916; Fargo *Forum*, Nov. 1, 1916; advertisement; Fargo *Nonpartisan Leader*, Oct. 26, 1916.

<sup>111</sup>Valley City *Daily Times-Record*, Sept. 26, 1916; John Burke to John Carmody, July 25, 1916, Burke Papers. At a Minot meeting the speakers had been W. E. Purcell, Joseph Doyle, J. Nelson Kelly, John Burke, J. F. T. O’Conner — all Irish — and a lone Norwegian, E. H. Stenvick. Valley City *Daily Times Record*, Sept. 8, 1916.

<sup>112</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Nov. 3, 1916, *Ibid.*, Nov. 3, 1916, letter from “Consistent Democrat,” Charles E. Russell, a participant in the events of these years, hints in *The Story of the Nonpartisan League*, (New York, 1920), p. 219, that the radical planks were incorporated in the Democratic platform to make Frazier appear a “moderate.” If such were the case, it would be certain proof of a Burke “deal” with the Nonpartisan League.



USHER LLOYD BURDICK  
— McCracken Photo

Serious as a split in the party might be, there was still another difficulty. Norwegians constituted twenty-four per cent of the population, and they and other Scandinavians were estimated to provide forty per cent of the voters. The Democrats briefly employed the Norwegian orator, Ole Hanson, but were deprived of the services of the one man with the greatest reputation among Norwegians. Peer Stromme, chairman of the Scandinavian Division of the Naturalized Citizens Bureau of the Democratic National Committee, should logically have been the Democrats' principal reliance in the Norwegian eastern third of the state. But though active in the work of the Committee at Chicago, he refused to come into the Red River Valley. He stood "too close to Helgesen," whose views of the Wilson foreign policy were the same as his own.<sup>113</sup>

Undaunted by difficulties which were principally tactical, Democrats expressed both publicly and privately a high degree of confidence. Signs were not wanting the Republicans were swinging into the Democratic column, and some of the Democratic leaders were "so enthusiastic" that they expected to carry the state for Wilson. The veteran campaigner, Hansbrough, sought to cinch the victory by setting a bandwagon in motion:

In all my experience in North Dakota politics, I have never seen such a change of sentiment from one candidate to another. . . . Republicans by hundreds and by thousands will cast their ballots for the man who has managed to keep the country out of trouble with other countries. . . . The claim that the state is safe for Mr. Hughes is absurd. Were the election to take place tomorrow, Mr. Wilson would win. He will win by a largely increased vote on election day.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>113</sup>Andrew A. Bruce, *The Nonpartisan League*, (New York, 1921), p. 31, Peer Stromme to S. C. Torgerson, Oct. 18, 1916, Torgerson Papers.

<sup>114</sup>S. C. Torgerson to Vance McCormick, Oct. 7, 1916; Torgerson to Woodrow Wilson, Sept. 12, 1916, Torgerson Papers. Fargo Forum, Oct. 20, 1916.

A week later Democrats claimed to be, as predicted, gaining strength.<sup>115</sup>

The other party was equally confident. During the campaign, Republican editors and leaders had many times expressed their confidence of victory. The Republicans would win the state without trouble because many farmers were saying, "Anybody but the guy now in the White House," and many Democrats were dissatisfied. Lynn Frazier repeated his belief in a Republican victory. Lemke, however, privately expressed concern over Wilson's strong hold on the farmers and members of the Nonpartisan League. While "satisfied" that Hughes would be elected, he could not forget that there were "so many unintelligent people in the United States."<sup>117</sup> Publicly there were only unqualified predictions of victory — by 25,000 — for "the state is naturally Republican and the sentiment in favor of the . . . ticket is unusually strong. . . ." However, Democratic predictions of victory prompted him to issue a statement reaffirming his confidence in Republican success:

Only in Ward, and possibly one or two other counties in that section will the democratic candidates make much of a showing.

It is so unanimously republican that several of our speakers have been asked to be relieved of work in this state, preferring to give their time to some other state where the issues may be in doubt. . . . The democratic claims to a gaining of strength are purely mythical.<sup>118</sup>

Lemke's belief that there was no "Democratic swing" was supported by a Bismarck "straw vote" giving 57 per cent of the ballots to Hughes. The New York *Herald* poll of North Dakota gave Hughes 62 per cent at mid-October. On the eve of election it showed Hughes with 55 per cent, and Lemke predicted that Hughes would "roll up a tremendous majority."<sup>119</sup>

Although the Democratic campaign efforts were slight in comparison with the Republican and some Democratic leaders felt "that little work . . . was done in the state," the labor of both parties in getting speakers into the field was the "most elaborate" in the state's history. The national

<sup>115</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 28, 1916; Valley City *Daily Times-Herald*, Oct. 30, 1916; Steele *Ozone*, Oct. 26, 1916.

<sup>116</sup>Jamestown *Daily Alert*, Oct. 19, 1916; Forman *Independent-News*, Sept. 29, 1916; Bismarck *Tribune*, Sept. 27, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 1, Aug. 10, 1916; Dickinson *Press*, Oct. 28, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 22, 1916; Lemke to Frederick Davenport, Aug. 29, 1916; Lemke to A. T. Hert, Sept. 18, 1916; Lemke to J. C. McIntyre, Aug. 31, 1916, Lemke Papers. While Lemke feared that the public was too dull to see through Wilson, some Republicans feared that they were seeing through Hughes. "Hughes is not making much of an impression . . . on account of his persistent knocking and criticism of the present administration." R. Percy Abbey to Lemke, Aug. 27, 1916, Lemke Papers. Abbey was a banker. Hughes engaged in too much "scolding of the other fellow, . . . something the people are not as well pleased with as heretofore." He dealt only in "glittering generalities"; Devils Lake *Daily Journal*, Aug. 26, 1916. Wilson could not be defeated by Republicans circulating "petty charges." Criticism would not win for Hughes. Hettlinger *Adams County Record*, Oct. 10, 1916. Hughes was "unhappy in his criticism" of Wilson, Lisbon *North Dakota Standard*, Oct. 16, 1916. A large part of the Republican voters at Fargo — at least thirty per cent — was lost to Hughes. The Hughes visit there was a "frost" — because "his hammer was out too much." *Literary Digest*, v. 53 (Oct. 28, 1916), p. 1114.

<sup>117</sup>Mandan *Daily Pioneer*, Sept. 26, 1916. See also Dickinson *Press*, Oct. 7, 1916; Fargo *Forum*, Oct. 17, 1916; Gunder Olson, national committeeman, declared that a "very close study" revealed "little Wilson sentiment among the Republicans." The Democratic vote would not total 25,000. Fargo *Forum*, Oct. 17, 1916.

<sup>118</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Oct. 28, 1916.

<sup>119</sup>Bismarck *Tribune*, Oct. 22, 18, 1916; Fargo *Forum*, Nov. 4, 1916. In 1912 Wilson had received 50 per cent of the "straw" ballots. Bismarck *Tribune*, Nov. 5, 1916.





LYNN J. FRAZIER

— Photo: State Historical Society of North Dakota

committee of each party had allotted \$5000 to state committees for newspaper advertising, and in consequence there was more advertising than in any previous North Dakota campaign. The heat of battle became intense; North Dakota had “seldom if ever witnessed a more strenuous political fight.” Excitement was in the air and extreme acts were being committed — the Grand Forks *Herald* rebuked those Republicans who were taking anti-Wilson banners to Democratic rallies.<sup>121</sup>

Although disturbed over the exuberance of some Republicans, the *Herald* had no doubts as to the effectiveness of the campaign waged on behalf of the national Republican ticket. On the morning of the general election, it jauntily proclaimed: “Today is Hughesday, November 7.”<sup>122</sup>

Voters at the polling places were confronted with a ballot three and one-half feet long, containing the names of three hundred candidates in addition to constitutional amendments, referendum legislation, and a chapter of the 1915 session laws defining and penalizing “bootlegging.”<sup>123</sup>

The enthusiasm of the voters varied from place to place. In McHenry County, seventy-five per cent of the Lebanon township voters turned out;

<sup>120</sup>Samuel C. Torgerson to Peer Stromme, Oct. 21, 1916; Torgerson to Ole Hanson, Nov. 16, 1916, Torgerson Papers. Rugby *Pierce County Tribune*, Oct. 5, 1916. The *Djickinson Press*, Oct. 7, 1916, reported that the Republicans were organizing a “whirlwind campaign.”

<sup>121</sup>*Hillsboro Banner*, Nov. 17, 1916; *Carrington Independent*, Nov. 9, 1916. Of course some editors did not secure advertisements from the state committees. The *Hebron Herald*, *Armegard Call*, the *Stanley Sun*, and the *Lakota American* had none until the November 2 issue. *Fargo Forum*, Nov. 2, 1916; *Grand Forks Herald*, Oct. 22, 1916.

<sup>122</sup>*Grand Forks Herald*, Nov. 7, 1916.

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, Oct. 13, 1916. Although a hardy breed, the North Dakota voter could not cope with such a ballot. In Pierce County the vote for president was 789. Far down the ballot voting dropped off to 111 for county commissioner. Rugby *Pierce County Tribune*, Nov. 9, 1916.

there was a heavy vote at Bergen; the turnout in Falsen township indicated intense interest. In Hendrickson and North Prairie townships, the largest vote in history was cast. At Fargo a “gigantic vote” was recorded, and at Grafton in Walsh County the largest vote in its history was cast. At Mohall election day “passed off quietly considering the fact that it was presidential year, . . . a full vote not polled.” There was little excitement at Havelock where “only a few enthusiastic voters were encouraging support for their choice for President.”<sup>124</sup>

The task of counting the vote was long and arduous. Early returns were favorable to Hughes. The cities of Fargo and Grand Forks went to Wilson, but their respective counties, Cass and Grand Forks, favored Hughes. With indications of victory everywhere, Lemke announced early in the evening: “There is no question that Hughes carried the state. His majority will be about 15,000 and McCumber’s . . . 30,000.” By 11:30 P.M., with confidence somewhat reduced, Lemke claimed the state by 4,000. Fred McLean, chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee, asserted that North Dakota was in the Wilson column. Lemke, “wilted by the tireless vigil of counting the . . . results for president,” conceded the state to Wilson by 500 on the morning of November 8. When 1740 of 1930 precincts had reported, Wilson led, 50,345 to 49,057, or by 1288 votes. There was “no doubt” that he had carried the state, though Republican expectations were that the lead should be “materially reduced.” In fact, however, the lead given Wilson at the “last moment” by the “north-western counties” grew instead to 1735. The “sure victory for Hughes” was a defeat instead, as Wilson had 55,206 to Hughes’ 53,471.<sup>125</sup>

Wilson received 51 per cent of the vote as compared with the previous Democratic high of 45 per cent in 1896 when Bryan ran against McKinley, and the low of 21 per cent when in 1904 the conservative, Parker, opposed the popular Theodore Roosevelt. His majority was composed of gains made in almost every county. He carried thirty of the state’s fifty-two counties. In the twenty-two counties carried by the Republicans, he gained in all but five. In three of these five — Cavalier, Pembina and Richland — he equaled the showing of the popular Bryan in 1908 in the last straight Democratic - Republican contest. In Emmons and Stark counties, the Democratic vote had dropped four per cent. Many of the counties in the Republican column were heavily populated with Germans. It is impossible to know with certainty precisely who it was in these counties that contributed to the improved Democratic showing. In the heavily German towns of Ashley and Strasburg, however, Wilson received but two and nine per cent, respectively, of the total vote.<sup>126</sup> It would seem that the German element in North Dakota voted against Wilson.

<sup>124</sup>*Velva Journal*, Nov. 9, 1916; *Fargo Forum*, Nov. 7, 1916; *Grafton Walsh County Herald*, Nov. 8, 1916; *Finley Beacon*, Nov. 16, 1916; *Mohall Tribune-News*, Nov. 9, 1916; *Havelock American-German*, Nov. 10, 1916.

<sup>125</sup>*Minot Daily Optic-Reporter*, Nov. 8, 1916; *Grand Forks Herald*, Nov. 8, 1916; *Langdon Cavalier County Republican*, Nov. 9, 1916; *Hillsboro Banner*, Nov. 10, 1916; *Grand Forks Herald*, Nov. 9, 1916; *North Dakota Legislative Manual, 1919*, (Bismarck, n. d.) pp. 264-265. Porter J. McCumber to Lemke, Nov. 10, 1916, Lemke Papers. See also *Napoleon Homestead*, Nov. 10, 1916, p. 4, for the importance of the northwestern counties in the outcome of the election.

<sup>126</sup>*Ashley Tribune*, Dec. 1, 1916; *Linton Emmons County Record*, Nov. 16, 1916.



**RAGNWALD A. NESTOS**

— Photo: Slorby Studio, Bismarck

The Republican national candidates were not so strong in the German areas as was their gubernatorial candidate, Frazier. Likewise in most communities, McCumber, the Republican Senatorial candidate, polled a larger vote than did Hughes. This was decidedly unusual, as a survey of all North Dakota Presidential elections — from 1896 onward — shows that presidential candidates polled more votes than candidates for Congressional posts. It might be concluded that more voters had confidence in McCumber than had in Hughes. Further, in most instances, McCumber carried the counties which Wilson won. It may well be that on international issues the voters preferred McCumber's calm reasonableness to Burke's partisan support of the President.<sup>127</sup>

What were the reasons for the Democratic victory? Hughes' official biographer, Pusey, places some blame on Hughes: "With war inflaming the minds of the people, he talked about waste, extravagance, inefficiency, a scientific tariff and the spoils system." Furthermore, the effectiveness of his policy of "facing up to the German menace and of preparing to meet the consequences" was reduced by the slogan, "He kept us out of war," with which the Democratic leaders hoodwinked the public. The "people of the West, feeling remote from the war, swarmed into the polls and voted their illusions," said Pusey.<sup>128</sup>

Editors, in commenting on the unexpected Democratic victory, advanced a number of explanations. The "big mistake of Charles E. Hughes"

<sup>127</sup>North Dakota Legislative Manual, 1913, (Devils Lake, 1913) pp. 206-268, *passim*. McCumber received 57,714 votes to 55,206 for Wilson, 53,471 for Hughes, and 40,988 for Burke. *Ibid.*, 1916, pp. 256, 265.

<sup>128</sup>Pusey, *Charles Evans Hughes*, v. 1, pp. 339, 359.

was his criticism of administration policies. Voters realized that the foreign situation was "as satisfactory as could reasonably be hoped for," said the Republican Fargo *Forum* which supported him throughout the campaign. Hughes' talk of protesting the invasion of Belgium, preventing the *Lusitania* sinking and imposing American conditions or terms on Europe — all without the United States doing any fighting — simply bored the public. The unrestrained attacks on Wilson had backfired: "The anti-Wilson advertisements circulated in this state referring to the President's record as one of 'crime and murder' because of the . . . foreign troubles was enough to work the wrong way."<sup>129</sup>

Another explanation of the landslide for Wilson in North Dakota and in many states beyond the Mississippi was an assertion of the voice of the West in the party. Wilson's re-election was a "victory of the agricultural West and South over the manufacturing East with its great financial interests and beneficiaries of special privilege."<sup>130</sup> The people of North Dakota in voting for Wilson were seeking "emancipation from the East, economically and politically." The Republican party had become the political instrument of the "moneyed interests." By departing from the equalitarian principles of Lincoln it had sealed its fate, declared ex-Senator Hansbrough. North Dakota's people had "cast away the old doctrine of 'stick to the party'." The East must recognize the West as part of the union.<sup>131</sup> The fact that Wilson had been returned to office without the support of New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana or Michigan was a "rebuke . . . handed to the East," from whose influence the President should "feel an absolute independence. . . ."<sup>132</sup>

In some measure the Democratic victory reflected the disappointment of the North Dakota Progressives in Hughes. During his two days in the state, he had slighted Progressive leaders. Furthermore, they were alienated by the approval given Hughes by the conservative element in the state Republican party. At least 30 per cent of the Republicans at Fargo were expected to vote for Wilson as a result of this old-line Republican support. Wilson had carried seventeen counties in 1912; of these he now lost eight to the Republicans. This loss he more than recouped by winning seventeen counties which had gone Progressive in the 1912 contest.

More widely discussed was the part that the issue of war and peace had played in the defeat of Hughes. The effect that the peace slogan might have on the outcome had been considered by one Republican

<sup>129</sup>Fargo *Forum*, Nov. 10, 1916; Rugby *Pierce County Tribune*, Nov. 16, 1916; Center *Republican*, Nov. 16, 1916.

<sup>130</sup>Bismarck *Tribune*, Nov. 12, 1916; Mandan *Daily Pioneer*, Nov. 17, 1916; Carrington *Independent*, Nov. 16, 1916. The election of Hughes, noted the *Independent*, had been announced when Eastern returns were fairly complete because heretofore he who carried the East always won the election. Jamestown *Stutsman County Democrat*, Nov. 16, 1916.

<sup>131</sup>Fargo *Forum*, Dec. 8, 1916. This point was made by Herbert E. Gaston, President of the Export-Import Bank, interview at Washington, D. C., Aug. 21, 1952. Leaguers believed that Wilson was more "liberal, progressive and tolerant of their ideas than was Hughes." Grand Forks *Norman* viewed the election as a triumph of liberalism, Dec. 12, 1916. New Rockford *Eddy County Provost*, Nov. 9, 1916; Fargo *Forum*, Nov. 9, 1916.

<sup>132</sup>During the campaign as the "North Dakota reactionaries tooted Hughes, the other crowd said 'to hell with Hughes.'" Usher L. Burdick, interview at Washington, D. C., Aug. 22, 1952. *Literary Digest*, V. 53 (Oct. 28, 1916), p. 1114.

editor on the eve of the election. Before the results were known, another predicted that if Hughes were defeated, the slogan, "He kept us out of war," would be "just what did it." Much attention was given to what one Republican editor called "the false slogan about 'He kept us out of war'." The state had been "carried off its feet by the Democratic slogan." Its magic effect "on the mind of the North Dakota voter" was acknowledged by the veteran Grand Forks editor, George B. Winship.<sup>133</sup>

There were some in the state who attributed the defeat of Hughes to the Norwegians. "Peace-loving Scandinavians of the plains returned Mr. Wilson victorious in North Dakota," announced William Lemke from the depressed Republican headquarters at Fargo. "We found among the Scandinavians a deep-seated conviction that Wilson had 'kept us out of war', and it was the greatest argument the Democrats employed. An inspection of the returns reveals that, with two or three exceptions, every county heavily populated by Scandinavians went for Wilson." Editors challenged Lemke's analysis of the election result<sup>134</sup> and he felt obligated to retract it:

It was the peace issue that made votes for President Wilson in North Dakota. It wasn't confined to any particular class or nationality, either, as it is quite evident on a thorough study of the returns.

The theory that the Scandinavians were responsible for the Democratic victory is not borne out. Traill, Nelson and Steele Counties which are heavily populated by Scandinavians, were all for Mr. Hughes.

In a previous statement on the cause of the Democratic victory I was incorrectly quoted as saying the Scandinavians alone had swung the victory for Wilson.<sup>135</sup>

Indeed the preference for Wilson was not a matter of nationality. In some Norwegian townships of Cavalier County, the Republican vote had fallen off but had increased correspondingly in precincts where Germans predominated. The fact was that the "peace slogan" had caught a few votes in every precinct and "turned the trick." Voters had "reviewed the present safety of their country," wrote Gerald P. Nye; the victory of Wilson was the result of clear thinking by a sane people. Perhaps, reasoned

<sup>133</sup>Linton *Emmons County Record*, Nov. 9, 1916; Bowman *Bowman County Pioneer*, Nov. 9, 1916; Mohall *Tribune-News*, Nov. 16, 1916. See also Grand Forks *Herald*, Nov. 11, 1916; Dickinson *Press*, Nov. 11, 1916; Grafton *Walsh County Record*, Nov. 15, 1916; Pembina *Pioneer Express*, Nov. 17, 1916; Garrison *McLean County Independent*, Nov. 9, 1916; Bottineau *Courant*, Nov. 16, 1916; Valley City *Daily Times-Record*, Nov. 9, 1916; LaMoure *LaMoure County Chronicle*, Nov. 10, 1916; Mandan *Daily Pioneer*, Nov. 11, 1916; Minot *Daily Optic-Reporter*, Nov. 13, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Dec. 5, 1916. "Safety first; let nice questions of humanity and national honor be deferred for future consideration, was the principle that actuated the majority," Winship wrote.

<sup>134</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Nov. 10, 1916. Lemke was supported by editor A. W. Canterbury who wrote: "It pears as though those Scandahoovians believed that Democratic bunk," Napoleon *Homestead*, Nov. 10, 1916. Samuel C. Torgerson believed that the Norwegians had "to a large extent" come to Wilson's rescue when he was deserted by the Germans. It was Norwegian opposition to the universal military training scheme advocated by Roosevelt and others that turned them to Wilson. Torgerson to Woodrow Wilson, Nov. 13, 1916. Torgerson Papers. Minot *Daily Optic-Reporter*, Nov. 13, 1916; Bottineau *Courant*, Nov. 16, 1916; Lakota *Nelson County Observer*, Nov. 17, 1916; Grand Forks *Herald*, Nov. 11, 1916.

<sup>135</sup>Grand Forks *Herald*, Nov. 12, 1916. In later years Lemke wrote of the war slogan in the campaign that it "caught the fancy and imagination of North Dakotans generally." Lemke to E. F. Ladd, Dec. 26, 1923, Lemke Papers. The Minot *Daily Optic-Record* accepted Lemke's suggestion that he had been "incorrectly quoted," saying that the *Herald* had misrepresented his statement, making it "a vile thrust at the Scandinavian people," Nov. 13, 1916.

another western editor, the people were in doubt for what or for whom to vote; had they not rejected Hughes while returning the Congressional delegation which stood for the same principles?<sup>136</sup> Clearly there was at least one editor who did not see through the false unity of the Republican party during the campaign. But if the editor of the *Bowman County Pioneer* did not observe the difference between the foreign policy ideas of the Eastern leaders of the party and those of McCumber, Gronna, Helgesen, Norton and Young, the voters did. The Senators and Representatives supported "Wilson's foreign peace policy" as did the people. Disliking the Democratic policies and record in domestic affairs, the voters desired to vote for the Republicans "but the specter of the European war flitted continuously over this land and had more effect upon the voting population than any sentiment that Roosevelt could conjure up about peace with honor and warlike Americanism." The Eastern leaders of the Republican party had grossly mismanaged the campaign, supplying shrewd and skillful Democratic managers "abundant" materials for "ghosting voters of the country with the war scare." Roosevelt's

Kaiser-like sentiments and bellicose attitude, . . . appeals to a patriotism of the Abraham Lincoln type, and to lofty sentiments about Americanism and the spirit of '76 fell on deaf ears . . . because such ideals . . . are too remote, are not understood and cannot be understood. Voters in these western states have come . . . largely to escape military service; they know what it means, if the native American does not; and they take alarm at the first note of war in this land. With Roosevelt traveling up and down the country, breathing the spirit of war and hurling defiance to the world when there was no occasion for it, supporting Mr. Hughes in the same breath, and Mr. Hughes himself speaking to the people in terms that indicated a warlike administration, although declaring himself to be a friend of peace, the timid and the conservative voters naturally became alarmed.

Republican voters in North Dakota, driven from their own party, were aware that Wilson favored preparedness, but "having no one else to vote for but Mr. Wilson," they forgot his advocacy of rearmament and his strong policy and believed that he had kept the nation out of war. It was the action "characteristic of mobs in a stampede caused by fear."<sup>137</sup>

But irrational though it was, by its vote North Dakota

. . . registered its protest against any possibility of this country becoming drawn into the European war, and . . . [for] a policy of keeping our hands off, minding our own business and notifying American adventures and profit seekers that if they risked lives and property by . . . entering the theatre of war, they did so at their own peril, and this government would not sacrifice the lives and interests of citizens to protect the meddling American in his private venture.

<sup>136</sup>Langdon *Cavalier County Republican*, Nov. 16, 1916; Fryburg *Pioneer*, Nov. 17, 1916; Dickinson *Press*, Nov. 11, 1916; Bowman *Bowman County Pioneer*, Nov. 9, 1916. To a German editor the election was "so close because of the unhappiness on the part of the people over the policies of the Administration. The people have made their bed - now let them sleep in it." Richardton *Volksfreund*, Nov. 10, 1916.

<sup>137</sup>Jamestown *Daily Alert*, Nov. 10, 1916. Eastern Republicans should have heeded "signs of disapproval of preparedness for war, made in Congress."

The common people . . . who defeated Hughes well knew that in the case of war they would be called upon to face the enemy, to bear the burden by themselves and their families.<sup>138</sup>

Commenting on the election of 1916 in 1940, T. A. Bailey wrote:

It seemed evident that although the President may have not received a clear mandate to keep the country out of war, his reelection was made possible by those people who believed that he would do so. Wilson, of course, had promised nothing. "He Kept Us Out of War" referred only to the past, and was historically true. But there were those who felt that the slogan was a tacit pledge which Wilson was morally bound to observe.<sup>139</sup>

Senator LaFollette wrote in November, 1916, that "the President must accept the outcome of this election as a clear mandate from the American people to hold steadfastly to his course against war. . . . The Rooseveltian jingoes shouted for Hughes — and lost." To one in the thick of politics in North Dakota, and active in the campaign, it seemed certain that Wilson was "elected . . . on the anti-militaristic issue and by anti-war vote. . . . If there had been a clear-cut issue in North Dakota between one candidate favoring immediate war with Germany and another favoring the avoidance of war there is no room for doubt that the vote would have been overwhelmingly in favor of peace."<sup>140</sup>

What percentage of the North Dakota voters favored keeping the United States out of war, even at the sacrifice of some of the rights of a neutral state? As noted above, the Jamestown *Daily Alert*, a Republican journal backing the Hughes candidacy, but advocating that rights rather than American lives be sacrificed, assumed that the voters who gave the state to Wilson were so inclined. Another Republican paper remarked that any endorsement the Wilson policy might have received from the North Dakota voters was "so slight you can scarcely perceive it." But a contemporary observer contended that the anti-war sentiment was stronger than the results of the election indicated:

<sup>138</sup>Jamestown *Daily Alert*, Nov. 14, 1916, Jan. 25, 1917. In view of Bryan's part in swinging the Middle West into the Democratic column and the fear of war which contributed to the Democratic victory, the following comment is of interest:

We have all known for many years that the rich and populous and organized states in which the big cities are do not constitute the political United States. But, I confess, I hardly expected so soon to see this fact proclaimed at the ballot-box. To me that's the surprise of the election. . . . And you have remade the ancient and demoralized Democratic party. Four years ago it consisted of a protest and of the wreck wrought by Mr. Bryan's long captivity. This rebirth, with a popular majority, is a historical achievement — of your own.

You have relaid the foundation and reset the pillars of a party that may enjoy a long supremacy for domestic reasons. The big party task is to build up a clearer and more positive foreign policy. We are in the world and we've got to choose what active part we shall play in it — I fear rather quickly.

But we are interested in . . . [the spread of democracy] because under no other system can the world be made an even reasonably safe place to live in. For only autocracies wage aggressive wars. Aggressive autocracies, especially military autocracies, must be softened down by peace (and they have never been so softened) or destroyed by war. Walter H. Page to Woodrow Wilson, Nov. 24, 1916, Wilson Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

<sup>139</sup>Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, (New York, 1941), p. 640. This view was expressed in 1918 by Austin P. Haines, "The Nonpartisan League and the Loyalty Issue," *New Republic*, v. XVI (Sept. 14, 1918), p. 188.

<sup>140</sup>*LaFollette's Magazine*, Nov. 1916, p. 1; Herbert E. Gaston, *The Nonpartisan League* (New York, 1920), pp. 173-174. Gaston was editor of the *Nonpartisan Leader* at this time.

The vote for Wilson was undoubtedly heavily reduced by the fact that the League's nominees were in the Republican column; also the Republican state committee, headed by William Lemke, one of the League's campaign committee, had coupled, in its advertising, publicity favorable to Hughes and McCumber with arguments for the support of the League Republican nominees.

In spite of many corrections and warnings against this association of candidates in the editorial columns of the *Nonpartisan Leader*, a large proportion of the League's members apparently accepted the pages of paid advertising of the Republican State Committee appearing in the *Leader* (and marked as "paid advertising") as a true statement of the League's position. This probably explains why Wilson did not poll a heavier vote in North Dakota.<sup>141</sup>

In the light of the evidence, it seems safe to say that the election of Woodrow Wilson can be considered, so far as North Dakota is concerned, as a vote against intervention in the European war.

<sup>141</sup>Lisbon *Free Press*, Nov. 16, 1916; Gaston *Nonpartisan League*, P. 173. Examples of this association of the state and national tickets are to be found in the *Leader*, Sept. 28, Oct. 5, 12, 19, 1916.