

# The Twenty-Three Bolting "Democrats"

Inquiry into the Motives of Those Who Helped Cannon Out, and a Suggestion as to Their Affiliations

(By Mark Sullivan in Collier's Weekly)

From a resident of Georgia, who calls himself a "Cleveland democrat," comes a letter which describes a state of strenuous confusion among those with whom he talks politics in the evenings. The point of the letter is in the last sentence:

"Now we have received or read letters, both private and published, from the interested parties on both sides of this matter, and have read considerable in the papers here. Now will Collier's kindly settle for us the moral and political status of the twenty-three democrats (?)—I use the word provisionally until you confirm it or give us another—who came to the rescue of Joe Cannon and saved him from a thorough licking in the fight on the rules the other day?"

It would be simple to lump the entire twenty-three in one broad malediction of undesirability, as the rest of the democrats in congress have done, but that is too inexact to be wholly just. There is no essential turpitude in their act of itself; breaking away from party lines is not necessarily a thing to be condemned—it is often a public virtue. The thing is to be judged by its intended results, and even more by its motive; and in motive these twenty-three differed widely. They have said, in their own behalf, that as democratic insurgents their status is the same as the republican insurgents, who have been praised. That point of view involves lack of discrimination. The insurgent republicans broke away from their party to vote for a progressive measure, at certain cost to themselves of every favor that Cannon has to bestow and under penalty of his resentment; these twenty-three democrats seceded in order to vote against a progressive measure—and there was no spirit of self-sacrifice in their defection; they steered their course in the direction where profit lies, and some of them have already had their rewards. Consider the twenty-three by groups. Take, first, these four:

### Four Democrats in a Class Apart

Robert F. Broussard of New Iberia, representative from the Third district of Louisiana, composed of the parishes of Assumption, Iberia, Lafayette, Lafourche, St. Martin, St. Marys, Terrebonne, and Vermilion.

Albert Estopinal of St. Bernard, representative from the First district of Louisiana, composed of the parishes of St. Bernard and Plaquemines.

Joseph Francis O'Connell of Boston, representative from the Tenth district of Massachusetts, composed of the city of Quincy, the town of Milton, and seven wards in the city of Boston.

Daniel J. Riordan of New York City, representative from the Eighth district of New York, made up of Richmond county and the heart of that section of New York City known as "the Lower East Side."

These four belong in a class apart, wholly distinct from the rest of the twenty-three. These four not only voted with the republicans for the compromise resolution which finally settled the fight—they voted with the republicans on every ballot taken throughout the fight. They voted for the old rules, and they are the only democrats who did vote for the old rules. This one vote alone distinguishes them from the other nineteen, and is in itself a livid question mark.

### In the Matter of Motives

Broussard and Estopinal presumably will not need to make any excuses to their constituents. They come from the sugar growing districts of Louisiana. They are interested in maintaining as high a duty as possible on sugar. They may have assumed, and their constituents may support them in that assumption, that they were serving the best interests of their districts by doing what would be most likely to result in favorable consideration for the duty on sugar. Broussard, within forty-eight hours after he cast his vote, was appointed by Speaker Cannon to a place on the ways and means committee, which committee determines, for the house, just what the duty on sugar shall be.

O'Connell of Boston has a contest on his hands. He was elected over his republican opponent by an apparent majority of four votes. The final judge of the contest will be the house

committee on elections. That committee will be appointed by Speaker Cannon. It is almost the universal practice among legislative bodies, when contests are as close as this, to seat the contestant who belongs to the majority party—in this case Mr. O'Connell's republican opponent. A man in Mr. O'Connell's shoes might reason that he had everything to gain and nothing to lose by lending a helping hand to Uncle Joe and the republican machine in their hour of great need. On the other hand, Mr. O'Connell's motive may be as far from this as the stars. It is for his constituents to find out and judge. They are a pretty intelligent constituency, in South Boston, and strong in their democracy.

Riordan's case is easily summed up. He represents the Bowery district of New York City, the most vicious, politically, of Tammany's districts, and therefore the most vicious in the United States. He is the particular protege of Big Tim Sullivan. Riordan would probably take it as reproach if it were said that he ever cast a vote without first seeing advantage in it, of one kind or another. Riordan hasn't been in congress long enough to make a conspicuous record in Washington, but he was a member of the New York legislature for a sufficient period to display his stripe. Although he was a member of the Armstrong investigating committee and signed its report—a position which made his subsequent action peculiarly shameful—he voted against the new insurance bills that grew out of Governor Hughes' famous inquisition. He voted against the eighty-cent gas bill in the long fight which New York City has just won against the Consolidated Gas company. The Citizens' Union, in its formal report, describes him as "Tammany Senator. Good or bad, as the whip cracks." The whole machinery of the present situation at Washington would be clear if we could know just what, in this instance, preceded the cracking of the whip.

### The Six Tammany Democrats

So much for those four. Consider now another group of six—six Tammany congressmen. They are Daniel J. Riordan already mentioned, and in addition, these: Michael F. Conroy, Charles Vincent Fornes, Henry M. Goldfogle, Joseph A. Goulden, Francis Burton Harrison, all from New York City.

Here are six Tammany democrats voting as a unit with the republicans. Here, again, the very fact is in itself a flaming question mark—six Tammany congressmen breaking away from the democrats and voting as a unit from motives of conscience and conviction is pretty strong medicine to swallow. Not only does the situation create a strong inference as to their own motive—it is in itself an indictment of the other seventeen democrats who are so unfortunate as to be found in their company. Unhappily the position of these Tammany congressmen is such that there is no constituency to cross-examine them. They have but one constituent, and he is Charles F. Murphy, head of Tammany. None of these men need suffer fear or shame of anything except what Murphy disapproves. So far as the fact may have weight in determining motive, the record is that within forty-eight hours after Harrison cast his vote with the republicans he was presented with the most desirable appointment within Cannon's power—membership on the ways and means committee. The spectacle of Cannon receiving aid from Tammany must be a pleasant source of contemplation to the good old-fashioned republicans of Danville, Illinois.

### The Others

The others of the twenty-three democrats had varying motives. Those who are best informed believe that Fitzgerald, although it was he who made the conspiracy possible, and although he accepted a desirable committee appointment from Cannon the next day, had the least sordid motive of the twenty-three. It would be easy to say he comes from Pat McCarren's district, and stop at that; it would be easy also to say he is the best parliamentarian in congress, and that the resolution he introduced represented his honest conviction as to what the rules ought to be. He is an able man and very useful as a critic of extravagant expenditures.

### What Are Their "Business and Political Affiliations?"

The "Outlook" has said: "It would be interesting to take a list of the democratic congressmen voting against real reform, and make

a little study of their business and political affiliations." Here is the list. Their constituents and the newspapers of their districts are in the best position to examine their "business and political affiliations."

Charles Gordon Edwar's of Savannah, James Mathews Griggs of Dawson, Leonidas Felix Livingston of Covington, Gordon Lee of Chickamauga, William Marcellus Howard of Lexington, and William Gordon Brantley of Brunswick, representatives from the First, Second, Fifth, Seventh, Eighth, and Eleventh districts of Georgia.

Stephen M. Sparkman of Tampa, representative from the First district of Florida, composed of the counties of Citrus, De Soto, Hernando, Hillsboro, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Monroe, Pasco, Polk, Sumter and Taylor.

John A. Keliher of Boston and Andrew James Peters of Jamaica Plain, representatives from the Ninth and Eleventh Districts of Massachusetts, composed of various wards in the city of Boston.

John Austin Moon of Chattanooga, representative from the Third district of Tennessee, composed of the counties of Bledsoe, Bradley, Franklin, Grundy, Hamilton, James, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Polk, Sequatchie, Van Buren, Warren and White.

James Thomas McDermott, representative from the Fourth district of Illinois, composed of the Seventh district in the city of Chicago.

John Joseph Fitzgerald of Brooklyn, representative from the Seventh district of New York, composed of nine wards of the city of Brooklyn.

George Henry Lindsay of Brooklyn, representative from the Second district of New York, composed of six wards of the city of Brooklyn.

George A. Bartlett of Tonopah, representative from Nevada.

As to all the twenty-three, one generalization is safe. However good or bad their motives, no democrat can forgive them who looks upon his party as a great national organization. They threw away the greatest opportunity for a striking victory that the party has had for sixteen years. For just five minutes the democratic party was master of the lower house of congress. Then the twenty-three deserted.

### MR. MACK'S "NATIONAL MONTHLY"

Norman E. Mack's National Monthly will make its appearance May 1. The cover design shows that it will be a handsome publication from the mechanical standpoint, and Mr. Mack's high standing as an editor and democrat will insure to the readers of the National Monthly a fine grade of reading matter. The National Monthly will be issued from Buffalo, N. Y., and the subscription price will be \$1.00 per year. The Commoner welcomes the National Monthly to the field of democratic endeavor. It may not be doubted that it will prove of real service to the party and to the American people generally and democrats everywhere ought to give to the National Monthly generous support and encouragement. In a letter to democrats Mr. Mack says:

"This magazine will be published as a national democratic monthly in the interest of the democratic party. It will treat upon subjects and methods of national, state and county organization and the general upbuilding of the party. It will contain communications from the best known and most prominent writers in the country, and in addition to this it will contain a review of reviews from the democratic press. About one-half of the magazine will be of high-class family literature devoted to the best interests of women and children, and the home. It is my purpose to publish a magazine that will appeal to the democrats as a necessity and one that they can rely on to do all possible to promote the welfare of the democratic party. There should be an earnest effort to keep the young men in our party. I would suggest we formulate plans for permanent and hearty co-operation along these lines."

AN APPRECIATIVE READER  
J. H. Woodworth, Culver, Kansas.—  
Enclosed find money order for \$16.20 to pay for twenty-seven annual subscriptions to The Commoner. I am glad to help this much and will try to do more further on. I could not renew the list of subscribers sent by me last year as I have changed my place of residence.