

Roosevelt Declines Progressive Nomination

On June 26, the Progressive National committee, in session at Chicago, indorsed Charles E. Hughes for president. The vote was 32 to 6, with nine declining to vote on the ground that the committee was exceeding its power in taking such action.

The radical element in the committee vigorously protested against the indorsement of any candidate for president and fought the majority at every step of the proceedings. The committee voted down a motion to substitute the name of Victor Murdock, of Kansas, to fill the vacancy caused by the declination of Theodore Roosevelt to head the progressive ticket. After indorsing Hughes the committee unanimously decided that the action should not be binding upon any individual.

COLONEL ROOSEVELT'S LETTER

Colonel Roosevelt addressed a letter to the committee declining the progressive nomination for president and indorsing the candidacy of Charles E. Hughes. The letter follows:

"To the Progressive National Committee:

"Gentlemen—In accordance with the message I sent to the progressive national convention as soon as I had received the notification that it had nominated me for president, I now communicate to you my reasons for declining the honor which I so deeply appreciate. Since the adjournment of the convention I have received between 2,000 and 3,000 letters and telegrams from men who had supported me for the nomination, the majority expressing the desire that I would refuse to run, while a minority urged that I should accept the nomination. As it is a physical impossibility to answer these letters and telegrams individually, I beg the courtesy of the senders that they will accept this public statement in lieu of such answers.

"Before speaking of anything else, I wish to express my heartiest and most unstinted admiration for the character and services of the men and women who made up the progressive national convention in 1916. I can give them no higher praise than to say that in all respects they stood level with the men and women who in 1912 joined at Chicago to found the progressive party. These two conventions, in character, in disinterestedness, in vision, in insight, in high purpose and in desire to render practical service to the people, typified exactly what such bodies ought to be in a great self-governing democracy. They represented the spirit which moved Abraham Lincoln and his political associates during the decade preceding the close of the Civil war.

"The platform put forth in 1912 was much the most important public document promulgated in this country since the death of Abraham Lincoln. It represented the first effort on a large scale to translate abstract formulas of economic and social justice in concrete American nationalism; the effort to apply the principles of Washington and Lincoln to the need of the United States in the 20th century. No finer effort was ever made to serve the American people in a spirit of high loyalty to all that is loftiest in the American tradition.

"Events have shown that the progressive party in 1912 offered the only alternative to the triumph of the democratic party. Moreover, these events have shown that the application of the principles which we then advocated is even more

necessary to this nation than we at the time supposed.

Lessons Taught By War

"The results of the terrible world war of the last two years have now made it evident to all who are willing to see that in this country there must be spiritual and industrial preparedness along the lines of efficiency, of loyal service to the nation, and of practical application of the precept that each man must be his brother's keeper. Furthermore, it is no less evident that this preparedness for the tasks of peace forms the only sound basis for that indispensable military preparedness which rests on universal military training, and which finds expression in universal obligatory service in time of war. Such universal obligatory training and service are the necessary complements of universal suffrage, and represent the realization of the true American, the democratic, ideal both in peace and war.

"Sooner or later the national principles championed by the progressives of 1912 must in their general effect be embodied in the structure of our national existence. With all my heart I shall continue to work for these great ideals, shoulder to shoulder with the men and women who in 1912 championed them, and I am sure that these men and women will show a like loyalty to the other, the fundamental, ideals which the events of the last two years have proven to be vital to the permanency of our national existence. The method by which we are to show our loyalty to these ideals must be determined in each case by the actual event. Our loyalty is to the fact, to the principle, to the ideal, and not merely to the name, and least of all to the party name.

"The progressive movement has been given an incalculable impetus by what the progressive party has done. Our strongest party antagonists have accepted and enacted into law, or embodied in their party platforms, very many of our most important principles. Much has been accomplished in awakening the public to a better understanding of the problems of social and industrial welfare. Yet it has become entirely evident that the people under existing conditions are not prepared to accept a new party.

Can Not Abandon Convictions

"It is impossible for us progressives to abandon our convictions. But we are faced with the fact that as things actually are, the progressive national organization no longer offers the means by which we can make these convictions effective in our national life. Under such circumstances, our duty is to do the best we can, and not to sulk because our leadership is rejected. That we ourselves continue to believe that the course we advocated was in the highest interest of the American people is aside from the question. It is unpatriotic to refuse to do the best possible, merely because the people have not put us in position to do what we regard as the best. It remains for us, good humoredly and with common sense, to face the situation and endeavor to get out of it the best that it can be made to yield from the standpoint of the interest of the nation as a whole.

"This was the situation at the opening of the present year. It was clearly evident that unless a cataclysm occurred the presidential election would result in the choice of either the republican or the democratic nominee. The present administration, during its three years of

life, had been guilty of shortcomings more signal than those of any administration since the days of Buchanan. From the standpoint of national honor and interests, it stood on an even lower level than the administration of Buchanan. No administration in our history has done more to relax the spring of national will and to deaden the national conscience. Within the republican party conflicting forces were at work. There were men among the organization leaders who advocated a course of action such as offered no improvement upon the democratic position, and advocated the nomination of candidates whose election would have represented no improvement upon the continuance in office of Mr. Wilson. If such a course were followed, it would obviously become our duty to run a third ticket.

"But it was plainly our duty to do everything honorable in order to prevent such a necessity; to do everything short of sacrificing our most sacred convictions in order to secure the alignment under one leadership of the forces opposed to the continuance in power of Mr. Wilson and the democratic party.

"Under these circumstances the progressive national committee, at Chicago, in January outlined our duty to seek common action with the republican party, using the following words: 'Our people are seeking leadership—leadership of the highest order and most courageous character; leadership that will draft to itself for the country's benefit the unselfish and patriotic services of its ablest citizens. The surest way to secure for our country the required leadership will be by having, if possible, both the progressive and republican parties choose the same standard bearer and the same principles.'

"Six weeks later, on March 9, in my Trinidad statement, I asked for a similar combination against the democratic party, on a platform of 'clean-cut, straightout national Americanism,' and for a candidate 'who will not merely stand for such a program before election, but will resolutely and in good faith put it through if elected.'

"This was, in effect, the same statement that I made in my telegram to ex-Senator Jackson, pending the convention, which ran in part as follows: 'Can we not, forgetting past differences, now join, for the safety and honor of our country, to enforce the policies of genuine Americanism and genuine preparedness? Surely we can afford to act in accordance with the words of Abraham Lincoln when he said: "May not all having a common interest reunite in a common effort to save our common country? May we ask those who have not differed with us to join in this same spirit toward those who have?" As far as my own soul is known to me, it is in this same spirit that at this time I make my appeal to the republicans and progressives assembled at Chicago.'

"In addition to these public statements, I had also stated my own attitude verbally, and in letters during the weeks immediately preceding the convention, to scores of leading progressives from all parts of the country, including many of the leaders at the convention. To these men I expressed my earnest hope that the republicans would so act as to make it possible for the progressives to join with them.

"I stated to them, however, that in view of the attitude of some of the republican leaders it was at least conceivable that we should be put in a position where our highest duty, our fealty to the country, our sense of what patriotism demanded in a great crisis would make it imperative upon us to run a separate ticket; and that whether in such event that ticket could not be determined in ad-

vance. I stated in these interviews and in these letters, with the utmost emphasis, that the decision of this point, like the whole matter of running a separate ticket, would have to be determined by what the interests of the country demanded in view of the action finally taken by the conventions at Chicago.

"At the time many of the republican leaders asserted that my statements were not made in good faith; that I really intended to insist upon my own nomination by the republican convention, and that if I was not so nominated I intended to accept the progressive nomination and run on a third ticket.

"My fellow progressives were under no such error. They knew that I spoke in good faith and meant exactly what I said. They knew that my utterances were to be accepted at their exact face value as meaning that if the republicans nominated a man whom we could conscientiously support we would support him. The progressive convention came together knowing my public statements and therefore knowing exactly what my attitude was.

"In my judgment the nomination of Mr. Hughes meets the conditions set forth in the statement of the progressive national committee, issued last January, and in my own statements. Under existing conditions the nomination of a third ticket would, in my judgment, be merely a move in the interest of the election of Mr. Wilson. I regard Mr. Hughes as a man whose public record is a guarantee that 'he will not merely stand for a program of clean-cut, straightout Americanism before election, but will resolutely and in good faith put it through if elected.' He is beyond all comparison better fitted to be President than Mr. Wilson.

"It would be a grave detriment to the country to re-elect Mr. Wilson. I shall, therefore, strongly support Mr. Hughes. Such being the case, it is unnecessary to say that I can not accept the nomination on a third ticket. I do not believe that there should be a third ticket. I believe that when my fellow progressives coolly consider the question, they will for the most part take this position. They and I have but one purpose—the purpose to serve our common country. It is my deep conviction that at this moment we can serve it only by supporting Mr. Hughes.

"It is urged against Mr. Hughes that he was supported by the various so-called German-American Alliances. I believe that the attitude of these professional German-Americans was due not in the least to any liking for Mr. Hughes, but solely to their antagonism to me. They were bound to defeat me for the nomination. The only way by which they could achieve this object was by supporting Mr. Hughes and they supported him accordingly, without any regard to other considerations.

"I need hardly repeat what I have already said in stern reprobation of this professional German-American element—the element typified by the German-American alliances and the similar bodies which have, in the prenomination campaign, played not merely an un-American but a thoroughly anti-American part.

These men have nothing in common with the great body of Americans who are in whole or in part of German blood, and who are precisely as good Americans as those of any other ancestry. There are not, and never have been, in all our land better citizens than the great mass of the men and women of German birth or descent who have been or are being completely merged in our common American nationality; a nationality distinct from any in Europe, for Americans who are good Americans are no more German-Americans than they are English-Americans, or Irish-