

The Big Fight at Chicago

The Roosevelt and Taft forces assembled at Chicago early in preparation for the big fight in the Chicago national convention.

R. B. Howell of Nebraska who at the recent primaries was elected national committeeman in place of Victor Rosewater, demanded that he be seated immediately. The Taft men who comprise the majority of the present national committee announced that they would not recognize Mr. Howell's claim. Later the Roosevelt forces authorized the statement that they were not behind the Howell demand.

Early in the day the two managers, Dixon for Roosevelt, and McKinley for Taft, issued statements.

Senator Dixon's statement in part follows: "Some of the Taft managers in their desperation have thrown out broad intimations that a majority of the republican national committee would by revolutionary methods and strong arm tactics attempt to reverse the plain verdict of the republican voters. I bitterly resent these insinuations. We have no fear in resting our case in the matter of contested delegates to the committee's decision."

The talk of a bolt from the convention by the Roosevelt forces Senator Dixon designated as "junk." The senator pointed to the result of the South Dakota primaries as evidence of the triumph of Roosevelt, and added:

"The Taft machine in Ohio refused to submit to the popular verdict the question of the election of the six delegates-at-large. They boldly and insolently, in defiance of the express wish of the republicans, stole the six delegates-at-large."

Congressman McKinley, in his statement, declared: "The sober second thought not only of the republican party, but of the people, will be further respected at the polls in November by the re-election of President Taft for a second term. The campaign of bluff, bulldozing and bluster which Mr. Roosevelt has conducted for the nomination is drawing to a close. No terrorization or intimidation on the part of Mr. Roosevelt or his managers can change the result. No compromise is possible as between the candidates because the fight is already won by President Taft."

R. B. Howell of Nebraska, later announced at the request of the Roosevelt forces, he would not press his fight against Victor Rosewater.

Fred W. Upham, who will be a delegate from Illinois, announced that he will introduce, at the beginning of the convention, a resolution pledging every delegate to support the nominee and calling upon the credentials committee to deny a seat to any delegate who will not make such a pledge. It is claimed that a similar pledge was adopted in the republican convention of 1880 at the time some republicans were talking of bolting if President Grant were nominated for a third term.

Washington dispatches said that the Taft plan was to have Senator Cummins' name the first to be presented to the convention. It was planned to have Alabama, which is for Taft, yield first to Iowa. Then Arizona, the next on the roll, and also for Taft, would yield to New York, when it would be necessary for some Roosevelt delegate to present the name of his hero. Then Arkansas, another Taft state would yield to Ohio, and Ohio would nominate the president; then Wisconsin would come along with La Follette, whose nominating orator would, it was expected, make a bitter attack upon Roosevelt, leaving the worst possible impression with the convention. Roosevelt representatives smile at this plan.

The first work of the national committee was to elect Victor Rosewater its national chairman. He will serve until the close of the national convention. The committee decided to give 30 minutes to each side for state contests and 15 minutes to each side for district contests. The committee also decided to have open hearings of the committee while the contest is on. By a vote of 39 to 13 the committee is to give representation at the committee hearings only to representatives of the five press associations and not to any individual newspapers. The 39 represented Taft men.

Two hundred and thirty-eight contests are pending before the national committee and every hour will be taken up with this work until the convention meets at noon on Tuesday, June 18th.

Five proxies of absent members of the committee were held as follows:

Senator William E. Borah of Idaho for George

A. Knight of California. (Senator Borah thus held two votes in the committee.)

Thomas H. Devine of Denver for Charles Cavanaugh of Colorado.

Representative Henry Bartholdt for Charles Nagel, Missouri.

Dr. O. M. Landstrom for T. A. Marlow of Montana.

Dennis Flynn for C. M. Sade, Oklahoma.

Senator Sanders, Tennessee, for S. A. Perkins, Washington.

A. M. Stevenson, Colorado, for N. B. Scott, West Virginia.

J. C. O'Loughlin, Chicago, for Sidney Bieber, District of Columbia.

Senator Dixon, Colonel Roosevelt's manager, had the proxy of P. T. Flanagan of Nevada, but declined to use it because of his partisan interest in the committee's activity. He turned this proxy over to ex-Representative Lucas N. Littauer, a Roosevelt delegate from New York, but the committee declined to admit Mr. Littauer without a direct proxy from Mr. Flanagan.

Senator A. J. Gronna of North Dakota may be chosen as the La Follette candidate for temporary chairman of the convention.

State Senator William Flynn, the big republican politician of Pittsburg, visited Oyster Bay for a conference with Mr. Roosevelt and then hastened to Chicago to help in the Roosevelt fight before the national committee. Newspaper dispatches said that Mr. Roosevelt himself might go to Chicago. Referring to the conference at Mr. Roosevelt's home, an Associated Press dispatch said:

The question whether Colonel Roosevelt will go to Chicago was discussed, but no definite decision was reached. The colonel indicated more strongly than before, however, that there was a chance that he would go by fixing approximately the time at which he would depart in case he decided to make his fight at Chicago in person.

"I may go to Chicago at the end of next week," he put it. "I have not decided yet, however."

The colonel was told of the report that Congressman McKinley, President Taft's campaign manager, would invite him to attend the sessions of the national committee.

"I have not heard anything about it," he responded.

"If Mr. McKinley does extend the invitation, will you accept?" was asked.

"I shall not answer any hypothetical questions," he said. "If I do receive an invitation, I will say then what I shall do."

Colonel Roosevelt said he was in favor of the widest publicity of the hearings before the national committee.

"I regret that all the representatives of newspapers were not admitted to the hearing," he said. "I am glad that the press associations were admitted, but that is not enough. In many parts of the country, notably in New York, one of our most serious difficulties has been the constant suppression of the news, so that great masses of the people have been kept in ignorance of what has happened."

"I earnestly hope," he continued, "that the roll call in the national committee on every important point will be made."

Colonel Roosevelt said he had heard that republicans of Colorado had organized a protesting delegation to be sent to Chicago in his behalf.

"The action of the Taft people in accepting the Taft delegates-at-large from Ohio," he said, "after President Taft had been repudiated by 30,000, shows a deliberate desire to nominate him against the will of the people. Such tactics are bound to result in a reaction, whether in Colorado or Ohio."

Following is a special dispatch to the New York World: Washington, June 1.—President Taft continues to maintain a fighting attitude and will not, he says, consider a compromise with Colonel Roosevelt under any circumstances. He and his supporters maintain that it is better to sacrifice the republican party than to elect Theodore Roosevelt president.

An early afternoon news service dispatch was sent out of Washington today stating that President Taft would not go to Chicago, that he would be in Clinton, N. Y., at the time of the convention, and that in case of his defeat he would remain regular and not "bolt."

The White house took cognizance of the dispatch and categorically denied it. Presidential

Secretary Hilles gave out the denial, which was to the effect, as stated exclusively in the World of May 30, that President Taft and his supporters had but one aim in this campaign, and that was "anything to beat Roosevelt." He denied the statement that Mr. Taft would not head a "bolting" faction of the republican party, if he failed to get the regular nomination.

The national committee first took up the Alabama contests deciding all of them in favor of the Taft delegates. Senator Borah of Idaho raised quite a rumpus because the chairman put a Taft motion while Borah was speaking but finally he was given the roll call he demanded and the Roosevelt men all voted with the Taft men in favor of the Taft delegates from Alabama. The Roosevelt men said there was no good grounds for these contests and the Taft men said that the Roosevelt people only voted that way in order to make a pretense at fair play. The Arkansas contest was also settled in favor of Taft.

On June 7th Colonel William F. Stone, sergeant-at-arms of the republican national committee, asked Mayor Harrison to detail a number of police officers for the committee sessions. Colonel Stone said he was prompted to do this by reports that certain Roosevelt leaders had prepared to take steps to intimidate the committee membership.

The Associated Press dispatches of June 7th, said: Congressman William B. McKinley, director of the national Taft bureau, specified William Flinn of Pittsburgh as the Roosevelt leader whom he had been informed was expected to start trouble. Mr. McKinley also said he had received reliable information to the effect that George W. Perkins of New York had been called to Chicago by certain Roosevelt members of the national committee to head off any possible disturbance.

Flinn was expected to reach Chicago late tonight. Senator Dixon said that if he could procure a proxy in the national convention he would give it to Flinn.

Congressman McKinley's statement regarding reported threatened trouble was as follows:

"Reliable information has been received indicating that the sole purpose of the coming of William Flinn of Pittsburgh to Chicago, at the instance of Theodore Roosevelt, is to take steps to intimidate the republican national committee, if possible, on its deliberations on the contests of delegate's seats in the national convention."

"It is understood that the plan which Mr. Flinn is expected to follow is to organize crowds of Roosevelt followers who shall make demonstrations at the Coliseum for the purpose of attempting to overawe the national committee."

"Roosevelt members of that body today deprecated the plan, and it is said appealed to George W. Perkins of New York, one of Mr. Roosevelt's most intimate friends to put an end to it."

Mr. Perkins had made no comment on this report up to tonight.

On June 7th, Senator Dixon, a Roosevelt leader, issued the following statement: "Until the roll was called on the Ninth Alabama district," says the statement, "I was not prepared to believe that a majority of the national committee was prepared deliberately to murder the republican party. The nation might as well know the truth. Three minutes before the roll call was called on this contest Senator Murray Crane of Massachusetts walked over to Mr. Stephenson of Colorado, who holds the proxy of Senator Scott of West Virginia and said to him:

"We simply can not go on record in this case of seating the Roosevelt delegates; the case is so plain the country will not stand for it."

"Mr. Stephenson replied:

"We have to do it. Of course there is no justification in fact, but if once we establish a precedent we will have to yield in other cases."

"The theft was cold blooded, premeditated and deliberate. With the record of the roll call of the Ninth Alabama congressional district, I now deliberately charge that a majority of the national committee, in violation of their sacred trust as trustees of the republican party, because of hatred of Theodore Roosevelt, have entered into an agreement among themselves to unseat all and every Roosevelt delegate regardless of right."

"In his bitterness at being repudiated by the republican voters, Mr. Taft has now determined if possible, to wreck the party rather than permit it to win with Colonel Roosevelt as its candidate. But the national committee is not the national convention, as will be seen."

After deciding the Alabama cases the national committee took up Arkansas, Florida and