

Kansas' New Democratic Governor

Topeka dispatch to the St. Louis Republic: "This will be the winter of our discontent," was the comment of State Republican Chairman J. N. Dolley when the state canvassing board finally declared Senator George H. Hodges elected governor by a plurality of 29 votes over Arthur Capper, the republican contestant.

For twenty-five days the citizens of the state waited for a decision of the canvassing board. The Capper attorneys went into the supreme court and fought determinedly against the issuance of a certificate of election to Senator Hodges.

The state was raked as with a fine-tooth comb for errors that would overturn the democratic majority. But the greater the search for these votes the more assured were the democratic leaders that the Hodges majority, at first fixed at 31, would stand. In all the three weeks of litigation and quibbling the Capper forces were able to cut Hodges' lead down two votes.

Senator Hodges is the second democratic governor the state has elected in its fifty years of history. Thirty years ago George W. Glick was elected over John P. St. John, who was running for a third term.

Johnson county, the home of Governor-elect Hodges, now claims the title of "mothers of governors." Really this title can be given to the town of Olathe, which is the home of former Governor St. John and Governor-elect Hodges, as it also is the birthplace of Governor Herbert Hadley of Missouri and Governor Brady of Idaho.

Governor-elect and Mrs. Hodges will not be strangers to Topeka society when they come to occupy the executive mansion in January. Mr. Hodges has served eight years in the state senate, and his interesting wife has made many visits here during the sessions of the legislature.

Mrs. Hodges will preside over the destinies of the mansion with that charming grace and ease that will make every visitor feel at home. Mrs. Hodges is the type of woman who knows how to help her husband and whose gracious manner with his supporters only strengthens the ties of friendship.

"I wasn't born in Kansas, but I didn't miss it very much," Governor-elect Hodges said. He was talking about his boyhood experiences at Olathe when the little village seemed far out on the edge of the world. He was just three years old when his father and mother and a brother and sister landed at Olathe from Richland county, Wisconsin.

It was an August day that Mother Hodges will never forget. Just as the family were removing their household effects from a covered wagon, in which they had traveled from Wisconsin, a great, black pall crept over the world. It was a total eclipse of the sun.

A few years later the father died and Mother Hodges was left alone with her two little boys as her sole support. "I knew George and Frank would be equal to the emergency," she said, "for even in their childhood they thought only of how they could help me and make my burdens easier. I think there is no other comfort in the world so sweet to a mother as to know that her boys have been good to her and have lived honorable and useful lives. And every mother who loves her boy will agree with me, I know."

Governor-elect Hodges began life as a herder of the town cows. With his brother Frank they herded forty cows belonging to Olathe citizens during several summers. They were

paid \$1 a month for herding each cow. Early in the morning they would round up the herd and drive them out to the big prairies surrounding Olathe and there watch them as faithful shepherds until nightfall. In a little basket they carried their luncheon, which they ate under the welcome shade of a bunch of willows which grew near a spring.

Mother Hodges grew reminiscent and talked about the distinguishing characteristics of the next governor of Kansas. "He was a bundle of energy and ambition," she said. "I think he was the most energetic boy I ever knew, and during his whole life he has been busy and doing things."

"He was always the first one of the family up in the morning and he was on the go until bedtime. Naturally, a boy as full of life and energy as George possesses did many things that called for me at times severe reprimand and punishment. But he learned to know that this was not a pleasant task for me."

"Frequently when I would promise to punish him for some infraction of my rules he would literally laugh me out of the idea, and, like a reindeer, would scamper off and say to me, 'Come on, mother, and catch me.' Of course, I couldn't catch the little rascal and didn't try to."

"Soon, when he knew I was all over my temporary 'mad spell,' he would slip around and climb upon my knee, put his arms around my neck and kiss me and tell me how much he loved me. On every such occasion, as many other mothers will recall, he would promise me that he would always be a good boy."

When George and Frank Hodges were large enough to earn wages they learned the trade of lathing and became experts at this business. They nailed the laths on scores of houses in Johnson county, and hardly a week passes that some farmer who has lived there for a third of a century or more does not come into the lumber yard office and remind them of the time when they nailed the laths on his home.

The Hodges Brothers own nine lumber yards in Johnson county. Their yards and office at Olathe, which are fireproof, are reputed to be the finest in the world.

Governor-elect Hodges established his first lumber yard at Olathe with borrowed capital. He had been manager of a yard there, and one day he decided to go into business for himself. He had no money, and during his life he had steadfastly adhered to his mother's advice not to go into debt for anything. But he decided once to break this rule, which proved to be the beginning of a splendid business career.

He went to the local banker who had known him from childhood and asked him for a loan of \$2,500. The money was forthcoming, and a stock of lumber was purchased and George opened his yard. Things were discouraging on the start, for during the first three weeks the total receipts of the yard were only 25 cents. But the young man stuck to it, and later his brother joined him and today they are the leading lumber merchants of the state. Their business averages more than a quarter of a million dollars annually.

While he was struggling to get a start in the world, Governor-elect Hodges became an expert accountant and bookkeeper. A few weeks after his father died this friendless boy purchased a set of bookkeeping and studied it at night until he could "run up" a column of figures as quickly as any man in Kansas. He also purchased some copy-books, and in the old home at night he practiced writing, and within three months be-

came one of the best penmen in Johnson county.

Governor Hodges is in the truest sense of the word a self-made man. He did not neglect his education, but, as is the case of hundreds of the

strong men of the country, the practical benefits he derived came from the school of hard knocks in carving out a name and a place for himself in the business and political affairs of the state.

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