

## Gary Dinner to Roosevelt Recalls Blaine's "Belshazzar" Feast

[From The Washington Post, Dec. 23.]

On Friday night of last week Col. Roosevelt, former president of the United States, was the guest of honor at a private dinner given by Elbert H. Gary, chairman of the United States Steel corporation. On account of the wealth represented by the guests, estimated conservatively at \$12,000,000,000, it has been called Roosevelt's billion-dollar dinner. If, as a result of that banquet the candidacy of Col. Roosevelt should be announced, what, politicians are asking, would be the political effect of this hobnobbing with Wall street financiers and multimillionaires?

In the late summer of 1884, when Blaine was a candidate for president on the republican ticket, he was the guest of honor at a dinner tendered him by the most influential financial magnates of New York city. Men in those days did not talk in billions. There were many millionaires, however, and the guests around that festive board counted their wealth in millions. That was Blaine's million-dollar dinner. His political enemies termed it the "Belshazzar feast."

### Dominated Wall Street

The men who supped with him were those who dominated the Wall street of that day, owners of railroads still unchecked by the regulating hands of the Interstate Commerce commission, and bankers unimpeded by modern restrictions upon their manipulation of the funds intrusted to their keeping.

The late Collis P. Huntington, one of the greatest, if not the greatest railroad man of his time, financier and politician, and a dominant figure in his party, was one of the moving spirits in organizing this dinner and bringing Blaine before that wealthy company. The republican candidate hesitated long before accepting. To his partisan colleagues managing the campaign he expressed the fear that his going would result in harm, but he courted the favor of those men of wealth, and accepted the invitation. His fears were realized.

### Blame Million-Dollar Dinner

The fact that Blaine was the guest of honor at this feast was heralded from one end of the country to the other as evidence of his complete obedience to the money power. The illustrated papers were filled with cartoons and the daily press dinned it into the minds of readers day after day that Blaine, if elected, would be subservient to those whose guest he had been. Blaine was defeated, not by a vote so large that he could accept the result with some degree of complacency, but by a paltry 37 votes in the electoral college. Of these, New York state alone cast 36. The "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion" speech of Dr. Burchard, and the Mulligan letters helped some to bring about defeat, but Blaine and his friends always attributed the result to that million-dollar dinner.

If Col. Roosevelt expects to be a candidate, even of a united republican party, he would do well to recall that episode in the life of James G. Blaine, his friends here said yesterday. The people today are pretty much what they were in 1884. If they suspected Blaine of having gone over to the plutocrats of his day, would they not be justified in suspecting that when he went to the famous Gary dinner Col. Roosevelt at least was flirting with that small group of dinner guests who are said to represent one-fifth of the wealth of the

United States. That is, if he is a candidate.

Here are the names of the men who attended the dinner: Chairman Gary, Col. Roosevelt, Jacob H. Schiff, George F. Baker, George W. Perkins, A. Barton Heppburn, Frank A. Vanderlip, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Frederick W. Whitridge, Frank B. Kellogg, Daniel Guggenheim, August Belmont, C. A. Coffin, Henry Walters, of Baltimore; Richard V. Landabury, of Newark; E. C. Converse, Clarence H. Mackay and George B. Cortelyou.

### Roosevelt Not Caught Napping

It is doubtful, however, if the political future of Col. Roosevelt was a subject so much as touched upon at this dinner. Col. Roosevelt, whatever his enemies may say of him, knows quite as well as anybody else that if his candidacy is to be launched, political association with the men at that dinner, even though George W. Perkins was a guest, would not be approved by the progressives with whom he has trained for four years.

Col. Roosevelt is always spectacular, but his friends yesterday said that even if he was hoping to become the candidate of the republican party under the management of the old guard he could not be inveigled into so spectacular a manner of showing his return to the fold.

A list of the guests shows there were men present who are not favorable to Col. Roosevelt as a candidate and never would be. President Wilson had at least one warm personal friend at the table in the person of Richard V. Landabury, of Newark, N. J. The guests at that dinner have declined to state what subject was under discussion. The dinner, it is said, was but a vehicle for a secret conference, and the personnel of the list of those in attendance, friends of Col. Roosevelt said yesterday, made untenable the suggestion that it was his candidacy.

### Preparedness the Theme

A person close to Col. Roosevelt declared last night that if he were required to make a guess he would say that the subject under discussion was the preparedness of this country for the future, the character of legislation necessary, and the commercial and financial relations, under existing conditions, between this country and Europe.

The dinner guests were the men who are the head of the great financial institutions through whom the bills of foreign governments are being paid. Others are the controlling factors, the great captains of industry, whose concerns are going day and night in the manufacture of supplies.

From the start Col. Roosevelt has been the one great, outstanding American who has stood for national preparedness in its biggest and most comprehensive sense. He has pointed out the lessons of the present war and the dangers that will confront this nation when the war is over. He has studied the question, and in attempting to aid in solving the problem has said unpleasant things because only by plain talk could he hope to bring the American people to see the possibilities of the future as he sees it.

### Get His Views on War

What more natural, the friends of Col. Roosevelt say, than that these men who are so vitally interested in having the United States prepared to prevent war in the future should ask Col. Roosevelt to set forth his views,

he being the exponent of prompt, vigorous and effective action that looks to national protection.

Col. Roosevelt, they say, has ample time in which to determine whom he will support for the presidential nomination. In the meantime, however, his friends declare he believes that preparedness is the paramount issue before the American people and in pressing that issue he and every other American needs the assistance of men of wealth and large affairs.

This, they believe, was the secret of the dinner at which the colonel was a guest, and not politics, although the democrats all over the country are endeavoring to so represent it to the people, in the hope that it will be of advantage to the democratic party in the coming campaign.

### GARY DINNER TOPIC OF POLITICAL GOSSIP

[From the Washington Star, Dec 22.]

New York, Dec. 21.—Regarding the dinner given by Chairman Gary to Col. Roosevelt in New York Friday night, the Tribune says:

The Gary dinner, held at the home of the head of the steel corporation in honor of Col. Theodore Roosevelt Friday night, is still the liveliest topic in political circles. It is likely to hold its vitality as a political wonder until some one of the eighteen prominent men present come out in the open and declare more definitely just what happened. They all continued to maintain a strict neutrality yesterday and declined to discuss the "purely private affair."

In the light of reflection and discussion, however, prominent local politicians were inclined yesterday to put the soft pedal on the assumption that it was held essentially to foster the Rooseveltian possibilities as the next republican presidential candidate. It was looked upon rather as a gathering of "practical business men" whose influence is country-wide, and whose anxiety for the future prosperity of the country led them to talk matters over with the colonel with the view of drafting him in the republican cause without unduly arousing his presidential bee.

### Colonel Anxious to Get Back

That Col. Roosevelt is anxious to get back into the republican fold and work on the inside, rather than to lead again what many consider a hopeless independent cause, is known to some of his close friends. These same friends believe also that he does not desire to be an active candidate for the presidency in either camp, although some of the old guard republicans have their doubts as to how far he might go if he was admitted to the republican councils.

It was pointed out that the Gary dinner, from the personnel of the guests, was essentially a "steel dinner," and in that respect the colonel was among "his old friends," and some of his best advisers in the past. While the political activities of some of them have not been pronounced, their business influence is large, and it was suggested that their appeal would most likely have been along such practical lines for the colonel to re-enter the lists in a common cause to re-establish industrial stability in the place of the present theoretical, wabbling policies.

### Would Help Defeat Wilson

With the colonel's declaration that he proposed to work for a reunion of forces to defeat the present unsatisfactory administration of industrial affairs, with the future prosperity of the country as the chief issue, republican success would practically be assured next year, according to some of the republican leaders. That was most likely to have been the drift of the talk at the Gary dinner, it was said.

George B. Cortelyou, who was in

Col. Roosevelt's cabinet and managed his campaign until the colonel split the republican ranks, said yesterday that many of the political inferences drawn so far from the Gary dinner, at which he was a guest, were not based on facts. When it was suggested to him that the inference had been drawn that the affair was a beginning toward healing the republican-progressive breach, he insisted that the proprieties had to be observed and he could not discuss what had taken place at a private dinner.

All overtures to Col. Roosevelt to discuss the gathering of Friday night met with the same polite refusal, and the reply that he would have nothing to "say until after the first of the year," meaning, presumably, until after the meeting of the progressive national committee in Chicago, January 11.

### FOR REVENUE ONLY

The people are rapidly arriving at the conclusion that "preparedness" is not intended for any other purpose but to feed the munition and war supply manufacturers of this country and stuff the coffers of the monied concerns of Wall street. After the end of the European war, there will not be a nation in all Europe that will be in a position to engage in another war for half a century. Death and debt will have made that impossible. Then why all this bluff and bluster about "preparedness" if not for revenue only?—Kearney (Neb.) Democrat.

### The Modern Way

Flubdub—Isn't there some fable about the ass disguising himself with a lion's skin?

Synicus—Yes, but now the colleges do the trick with sheepskin.—Buffalo Courier.

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