

# The Democratic Presidential Candidates

To every political observer two things are apparent: first, that the contest for the Democratic presidential nomination is proceeding without acrimony. The Republicans are fighting and hairpulling in an arena that is vocal with accusation and cries of distress. If the public can believe what the Republican candidates are saying about each other—and they are all honorable men—none of them are fit for the office to which they aspire.

How different the situation in the Democratic party! Everything is as peaceful as a pink tea; the candidates are most ladylike in their treatment of each other—it is "After you, Alphonso," "You first, Gaston." Is it the lull before the storm, or is it because the prospects of success are not so exciting.

That brings us to the second obvious characteristic of the campaign, viz., the shortage in Democratic votes, as shown by the primaries and by the various straw votes recently taken. Take Nebraska, for instance. In 1916, President Wilson carried the state by 41,000 majority; this year, in spite of the spirited fight over the liquor question, the democrats polled only about 76,000 votes at the primaries, while the Republicans polled about 130,000. In Michigan, the Republicans polled more than twice as many votes as the Democrats. In Ohio, the Republicans polled considerably more than twice as many votes as the Democrats, although the Democrats carried Ohio in 1916. The same rule holds good—or should I say bad?—in Indiana, California, Massachusetts and other states where a vote has been taken.

The Literary Digest poll, the largest ever taken, reveals a lamentable scarcity of Democratic votes. But more astounding than the scarcity of Democratic votes is the apparent landslide of Democratic voters to Republican candidates. The voters are asked to state their party affiliations and, up to the publication which appeared on the fifteenth of May, 148,000 Democrats expressed a preference for Republican candidates while the number of Democrats expressing a choice for Democratic candidates was only a little greater, viz., 197,000. (The proportion is as great in the issue of May 22). It is quite unusual for more than two-fifths of the members of a party to indicate a leaning toward the candidates of the opposite party at the beginning of a campaign. Of course, the Digest's poll cannot include all the voters—they are counting upon only eleven millions out of the total number of voters, and the votes already in represent only about one-tenth of the total expected. It would not be fair, therefore, to regard the Republican trend as conclusive, but it is enough to excite alarm among the Democrats—enough to compel earnest consideration of the problems which must be met in the campaign.

The question which will be asked with increasing emphasis as the convention approaches is, How can the Democratic party rally to its standards a sufficient number of votes to win? To win, is the thought uppermost in the minds of delegates at a national convention, however much they may differ as to the methods to be employed. Some will insist on doing anything that promises victory, while others will insist that the best way to win is to DESERVE to win, but these two groups are united in purpose.

Having in view this primary object of winning, let us consider the relative availability of the candidates, and it must be remembered that availability is not necessarily proportionate to merit.

To begin with, the President need not be considered. While vague hints and suggestions have been thrown out occasionally, no one claiming to speak for the President, or near enough to him to be assumed to express his wishes, has announced his candidacy.

Mr. Hoover need not be considered among the available. For a time he seemed to hesitate about declaring his allegiance to any party. He was inclined to wait until the platforms were written, with a view to choosing the one which came nearest to his idea. But this hesitation did not last long. For some reason—whether he acted voluntarily or was pushed by his backers, I cannot say—he plunged into the Repub-

lican pool and became a rival of Senator Johnson for California's instructions. Before he took the fatal plunge, many Democrats joined his colors and some of these would doubtless follow him into the Republican party if he were the nominee. But he appears to have but little chance in the Republican convention and none at all at San Francisco.

The most active of the avowed candidates for the Democratic nomination is Governor Edwards of New Jersey. The primary vote shows that he has a strong following among the Knights of Thirst. Democrats of his variety thrive luxuriantly in the wet cities. His propaganda, however, does not take root to any great extent in the agricultural sections and his following in the convention will not be sufficient to make him a serious competitor for the nomination. Before the convention the Supreme Court is likely to demolish his platform by affirming the right of the people of the United States to so amend their constitution as to prohibit the manufacture and sale of beverage liquors, and, second, by denying the right of his and other states to nullify the national enforcement law by state statute. His opposition to prohibition is so violent that he would not be available except on a wet platform and a wet platform is an impossibility.

Governor Cox, of Ohio, is likely to be the residuary legatee of all the other wet candidates and may be regarded as the final rallying point for all Democrats who, either because of financial interest in the liquor traffic or because of their own fondness for intoxicants, regard love for liquor as the only legitimate affection and the right to buy it as the only inalienable right guaranteed by the constitution.

Governor Cox's friends will urge him as a compromise between wets of the Edwards type and the bone-drys. His supporters will make their fight under the false flag of party harmony—a harmony in which they would feel no interest whatever if they could muster one majority for a wet plank. But Governor Cox's record is as malodorous as Governor Edwards, and extends over a longer period. The New Jersey Governor began work in the vineyard, if I may be pardoned the illustration, at the eleventh hour while Governor Cox entered in the morning and perspired under the rays of the rising sun of prohibition. He can secure letters of recommendation from all the brewers, distillers, wholesalers, retailers and toppers in his state. He refused to aid in securing an enforcement law in Ohio AFTER THE VOTERS HAD WRITTEN PROHIBITION INTO THE CONSTITUTION BY 25,000 MAJORITY and then he sat silent in the governor's office while the representatives of the liquor traffic, with his knowledge if not with his aid, waged a bitter fight against every law that the temperance element had secured during the past fifty years. He was willing to allow these reactionaries to repeal constitutional prohibition, nullify the enforcement law, and withdraw Ohio's name from the list of ratifying states—erase it from the nation's roll of honor! He was even willing that the brewers should write into Ohio's constitution a falsehood, declaring that 2.75 per cent beer is not intoxicating, thus violating the national enforcement act. No wonder he has the enthusiastic support of those who manufacture criminals for pay and make a business of the corruption of politics. It is the height of audacity that a man with such a record and such a support should aspire to a Democratic nomination in face of the fact that every Democratic state ratified the prohibition amendment, and in face of the further fact that thirty-four of the states are dry by their own individual acts. The absurdity of his candidacy becomes the more apparent when it is remembered that at least fifteen million women will be able to vote at the coming presidential election by virtue of the coming presidential election is ratified laws. If the suffrage amendment is ratified before November some twenty-five million women will be entitled to vote.

Vice-President Marshall is making a feeble bid for the wet vote, but he is hampered by his church connections. His religious speeches excite suspicion among those who might otherwise be attracted by his denunciation of national

prohibition while Christians are disgusted by his wetness. In like manner the vice-president is inviting Wall street support by his praise of "old fashioned democracy" and by his veiled opposition to the initiative and referendum, but the enthusiasm of the reactionaries is likely to be dampened by the rude remarks which he occasionally makes against the exploiting class.

Attorney General Palmer entered the campaign with considerable advantage. He was in a position to deal sternly with the profiteer and an expectant public stood ready to applaud. But the profiteer seems to have things all his own way and the attorney general is now suffering from the reaction, which philosophers tell us is equal to the action and in the opposite direction. He has also roused the antagonism of labor and has their opposition to a greater extent than any other Democratic aspirant.

He is unfortunate, too, in having to espouse the ratification of the treaty without reservations. His candidacy is, in this respect, a rebuke to twenty-seven of the Democratic Senators, twenty-three of whom voted for ratification with reservations and four of whom opposed the treaty entirely.

The primaries reveal Mr. Palmer's weakness as a candidate. In Michigan, he polled a little over eleven thousand votes out of about eighty thousand votes cast by Democrats. In Georgia, he polled about one-third of the votes cast at the Democratic primary. In the Literary Digest poll up to May 22d, he has secured only seventeen thousand out of some three hundred thousand votes cast for Democratic candidates.

Ex-Secretary McAdoo has, up to this time, led all the other candidates as far as the sentiment of the party can be gauged by primaries and polls, although his name has been on the ballot in so few places that the proof is only prima facie. He came next to Hoover in Michigan and has a considerable lead in the Digest poll. His vote of eighty-six thousand out of some three hundred thousand Democratic votes counted is quite complimentary to him, coming as they do from the whole country, but it is not a very encouraging vote of confidence when it is measured against more than nine hundred thousand votes cast for candidates in the Republican party.

As Mr. McAdoo has announced no platform, it is impossible to know what following he will have when his position on public questions is known. It is evident that he has considerable strength among the wage earners, especially in railroad centers; but he is handicapped by silence on the treaty question. If he agrees with the President in the latter's desire to make it a campaign issue, he is at variance with the sentiment of the voters; if he favors ratification with reservations, he is not in position, for family reasons, to lead the opposition to the President.

He is even more seriously handicapped by his close relationship to the President. Without being able to call to his support those to whom the President's candidacy appealed with special force, he furnishes an easy mark for all the President's enemies. The virulence of the hostility which he invites is very accurately described in the twenty-first chapter of Matthew, verse thirty-three to thirty-nine.

The Republicans have indicated the advantage which they would seek to take of his nomination by frequent reference to the marriage tie which binds him to the White House.

Speaker Clark has his own state behind him and has reason to feel complimented by the number of votes he has received in the Literary Digest poll.

Judge Gerard's candidacy has South Dakota's support and he has many personal friends among the other delegates.

Senator Owen of Oklahoma, and Secretary Meredith of Iowa, will be presented by their respective states. They deserve to be named among the few available men thus far mentioned. To be available this year a candidate must be known to be for woman suffrage, for prohibition and against Wall street. By this standard, Senator Owen and Secretary Meredith are one hundred per cent available. W. J. BRYAN.

## "ALABAMA 24—NO"

Alabama comes first on the roll call at San Francisco. It will give the drys "a grand and glorious feeling," as Cartoonist Briggs would say, to hear her shout, "Alabama votes 24 No," on any wine and beer plank.