

# FAVORITE SONS WILL FIGURE IN REPUBLICAN CONVENTION

## Coolidge Not Only Big Figure

Pershing, Johnson, Lowden and La Follette Among Possibilities for Presidential Nomination.

Next Few Months Test

By MARK SULLIVAN.

Some of the emphasis laid by the present writer in this paper last week on the strength of President Coolidge's chances for renomination were so expressed as not to be clearly understood. It is true that Coolidge is in an immensely preferred position—a position so clearly preferred that even to print the present qualification of it may lead to misunderstanding in a contrary direction. All that is meant here is to modify any impression of Mr. Coolidge's unescapable inevitability, or that he will not have any opposition.

We may divide Coolidge's immediate future into two periods: First, the period between now and January 1; and, second, the period from January 1 until the holding of the republican national convention in early June. January 1 is chosen as the dividing line for two reasons: One is that that is about the last day when candidates for presidential nominations can announce themselves with any reasonable expectation of success. In several important cases it has been demonstrated that a man who announces his candidacy for a presidential nomination as late as February is almost unescapably under a fatal handicap. If Coolidge should reach January 1 or February 1 without any other announcements of candidacy on the part of men of enough substance to be formidable he will be very likely to go on to the nomination.

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ing convention in the same happy position.

**Congressional Hazard.**  
The second reason for choosing January 1 is that by that time members will be in session. All the members of the lower house and all the senators will have arrived in Washington for the opening of the first Monday in December. Out of the reports they bring from their various sections of the country as to the impression Coolidge has made, and out of the meeting of minds in their conversations with each other, will come the determination whether or not Coolidge is to be regarded as the inevitable candidate, with practically no competitors, or whether it is to be an open field.

If Coolidge has made a uniform record of success; if he has done nothing that strikes the country with marked disapproval, and if no unfavorable condition arises, economic or otherwise, beyond his power to control, Coolidge will be in an extremely strong position. The reason is that such a record deprives all other potential candidates of an excuse for announcing themselves. Part of the great strength of Coolidge is that he does not need to announce himself as a candidate, nor give reasons, nor take any other step whatsoever. Coolidge is more or less automatically a candidate by virtue of the position he holds. All other candidates, however, must announce themselves, and in that necessity lies their embarrassment and their handicap.

**Not Sure of Support.**  
A man may be as ambitious for the presidency as he will, but in order to put himself before the country in the various primary elections he must give reasons and have a platform. It is not sufficient for a man merely to say: "I want the presidency and my friends think I ought to have it." He must make some sort of public utterance which justifies his entering the race and which provides a rallying ground for those who he hopes will follow him. Such a statement can only be based on something that Coolidge has done or failed to do. And if Coolidge has the good fortune to arrive at the 1st of January without having provided ambitious rivals with any issue or platform of a sort likely to appeal to considerable numbers of people he will be in a very strong position, indeed.

Nevertheless, even under these conditions the republican leaders are going to be indisposed to foreclose themselves. They are going to be unwilling to go to the extreme length of actually giving, in effect, the nomination to Coolidge on the 1st of January, when the convention does not

come until five months later. They will try to manage things that they will be able to have an anchor to windward in case circumstances arise that make an alternative desirable. They will look forward to the second period of Coolidge's future, the period from January 1 until the convention meets in June. They may, on the 1st of January, be willing to admit that Coolidge has made no mistakes so far and is in an ideal position for an inevitable nomination. But at the same time they are going to reflect that Coolidge may make mistakes or that other conditions may arise during the five months from January 1 until the nomination convention in June. And they will not permit themselves to be in a position such that they must nominate Coolidge, anyhow, and be deprived of the possibility of selecting another alternative.

**Many Favorite Sons.**  
During the five months from January 1 until the convention meets Coolidge will run more risks, have greater opportunities to get "in bad" with the country, than during the coming three months. During the five months congress will be in session, and while congress is in session the public will tend to judge Coolidge not only by his own actions, but also by things he cannot control in his role as head of his party. If congress is unpopular Coolidge to some extent will share that lack of approval. During that five months Coolidge may be compelled, for example, to veto or not veto a soldier's bonus. He may have to express himself on the international court. And here will be many other difficult questions necessarily entailing disapproval from some groups.

The net of which is that, even though Coolidge may be so popular on January 1 that no other substantial candidate will feel like announcing himself, even though on January 1 Coolidge's nomination may seem inevitable, many things adverse to him can arise between January 1 and the June convention. For this reason it will be so managed that the republican party will have other strings to its bow. These strings may not be in the shape of formally avowed candidates, but they will be in the shape of favorite sons of various states and other candidates with groups of delegates, to which candidates the party can turn if it should develop during the five months preceding the convention that Coolidge's candidacy either would be undesirable in the largest sense or will be unacceptable to the party leaders. There are ways short of formal announcement by which candidates can maintain themselves in line to take advantage of an emergency. Aside from this there will be, according to every probability, some avowed candidates against Coolidge. There will at least be La Follette, La Follette will be a candidate for the republican nomination in 1924 in the same way that he has been a candidate in every nominating convention since 1908. However, under any conditions now foreseeable, La Follette's candidacy will not be formidable. It is doubtful if he will have in all as much as a hundred out of the more than a thousand delegates.

More formidable than La Follette are the cases of men like Senator Hiram Johnson of California, ex-Governor Lowden of Illinois and some others. Among all the practical politicians the most dependable surmise is that Hiram Johnson would like to have the nomination, and that he is being urged to go after it by a group of resourceful and energetic friends whose persuasions have much weight with him and whose ability and position are such that they can make a good deal of noise if they can persuade Senator Johnson to let them. In the same way it is a dependable surmise that certain powerful friends of ex-Governor Lowden would like to put him in the running, and also that certain able politicians who are not particularly his friends are, nevertheless, for other reasons, eager advocates that he should let them try to get the next republican nomination for him.

**Pershing Looks Up.**  
And there are others besides these two. There is said to be a group which is eager to put forward General Pershing. Some of these advocates of Pershing, by the way, have a theory which, if it is sound, may have some effect on the future of American politics. They admit that General Pershing was put forward in 1920 under the auspices of so energetic and resourceful a man as General Charles Daves of Chicago and that, even with such favorable backing, the Pershing boom of 1920 made little headway. But the theory of these men is that as time goes on the soldiers who fought in France will tend more and more to have strongly sentimental recollections of their experience; that they will have a greater and greater political solidarity, and that they will tend to express it through putting forward their own men for political preferment.

The experience of the country with its returned soldiers so far has disproved all the calculations of the politicians. When we entered the war every practical politician began to reason in terms of analogy to the civil war. After the civil war practically all the old soldiers came together in the organization of the Grand Army of the Republic. Based on this organization and on the

strength of the common memories, they immediately began to show preferences for their soldier leaders and associates for office. It was the old soldier vote or the disposition of politicians to cater to the old soldier vote that accounted largely for the presidency of General Grant. As to minor offices, for almost an entire generation following the civil war the politicians used to take it for granted that it was practically hopeless in the north to nominate a man for sheriff or for any other local office unless he had a war record.

**Not Like Civil War.**  
Based on this analogy, the politicians during the recent war assumed that at the end of it there would be a great American military hero, and that he would be president. So far events have proved them wrong. Where the analogy to the civil war fell down was in the fact that the soldiers who came home from the recent war did not have the same kind of emotion as the soldiers who came home from the civil war. For one reason, the recent war was not fought to a finish. It was not the time we were approaching the high peak of warlike emotion—just at that time the Germans quit on us and left us without anybody to fight. As a result of this there was a psychological phenomenon which has accounted for much that has happened during the last few years. America and Americans became the victims of an uncompleted emotion. This kind of thing—to have an emotion and to be prevented from taking the action suggested by that emotion—the psychologists assure us, is one of the commonest causes of emotional and nervous turmoil. Having no Germans to fight and no other common enemy to fight, we came home in a mood to quarrel and bicker among ourselves, a mood which expressed itself in the fight over the league of nations and in various other ways, economic, political and social.

However all this may be, the fact is that in our recent war we did not develop any military hero with whom we associated victory, who became to us not merely a man and a general, but a symbol for exalted emotion. Doubtless Pershing would have been the man if we had had one. Doubtless if we had gone on with the fight to a finish and had ended the war with a sense of complete and obvious victory over a pros-

trate foe—doubtless in that event Pershing might have been the equivalent of General Grant.

**Women Vote New.**  
Another fact to be remembered is that our ex-soldiers now are not so large a proportion of the total electorate as after the civil war. Woman suffrage makes a considerable difference.

As regards the feeling of the ex-soldiers, some politicians say that with time things will change. They say that as the years go on the soldiers will tend to forget everything in their experience that was unsatisfying to their emotions. Only the agreeable recollections will remain. And if the theory is correct the American Legion will have a greater and greater self-conscious solidarity, a greater disposition to put forward their leaders for political honors. (Incidentally, among other things the claim is made that the soldiers will tend to think more and more highly of France and to take France's side in international disputes; immediately after the war it is well known that the returned soldiers had no great emotion for France.) Perhaps one ought not to leave this illusion without saying that, whatever may develop in the future, General Pershing is not today in the same class with Senator Johnson and ex-Governor Lowden and some others as a potentiality for the next republican presidential nomination.

**Johnson in Fight at Home.**  
The practical political difficulties ahead of the friends of men like Senator Johnson and ex-Governor Lowden are embarrassing in the extreme. Their problem is to avoid the odium of announcing open opposition to Coolidge at a time when the public mood about Coolidge is such it would resent uncalculated opposition, and yet at the same time to establish and preserve their standing as potential candidates, ready to take advantage of future conditions. One obvious way to qualify is to run merely as a "favorite son," to confine their candidacies to their own states, refraining from making any fight against Coolidge outside. But even this course requires tact and involves risks. Few men are so popular that they have no political enemies in their own states.

California delegation to go to the next national convention instructed to vote for Senator Johnson, and even if they should say that they ask for this merely as a compliment from the state to its senior senator—even in that case opposition would arise. It would come to some extent from those who like Coolidge; to a greater extent it would come from those who don't like Johnson. Very quickly Johnson would have a fight on his hands, and it is far from certain that he would win it. What is true of Johnson in California is true of most of the potential candidates in their respective states.

One thing can be counted on with certainty. Neither Coolidge nor his friends will be likely to make an organized campaign for delegates. It is so clearly the part of wisdom for Coolidge to avoid this that it is hardly worth mentioning. If Coolidge's friends should initiate an aggressive fight for delegates in any state, it would reverse the favorable position he now has and would give to other men in those states precisely the opportunity they are looking for. They

would feel justified in accepting it as a challenge and in announcing themselves in opposition to Coolidge. For one he is apparently following the job as it arrives at his doorstep and disposing of it to the best of his capacity. That is the course by which, if he has the ability and wisdom, he can establish and perpetuate the kind of public attitude toward him which will make his nomination inevitable.

**Madame Fahmy Cleared.**  
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