

HIRAM JOHNSON'S SOMBRERO IS ON EDGE OF RING

Seen as Foe of Coolidge for Office

Will Be Led by Force of His Nature to Seek Presidency on Progressive Issue.

Lasker to Support Him

By MARK SULLIVAN.
Senator Johnson of California has come to a point where his movements and utterances are watched by all republican politicians with a concern which varies from benevolence to alarm. Senator Johnson personally

is in his home state. There he and his friends are making a fight to name the California delegation of 28 members to the coming national republican nominating convention. Johnson says he merely wants a "progressive" delegation and adds the qualifying phrase that "this is without regard to myself."

Practical politicians who survey this action are not necessarily cynical about Johnson's good faith, but they doubt whether the distinction implied in Senator Johnson's words can be maintained. If he is engaged in trying to name the California delegation sooner or later he must say whether or not it is the intention that his delegation shall be for Johnson for president. Senator Johnson may or may not seek this issue, but at some state of the fight the issue will be forced upon him. It is inherent in the situation.

If Johnson names the delegation it will necessarily be a Johnson-for-president delegation. It is inevitable that the opposition faction of the party will crystallize about some other candidate, presumably Coolidge, and Johnson will then be pressed to announce himself as a candidate on the

most familiar of the axioms of practical politics—namely, that you can't fight somebody with nobody.

In short, from the point of view of practical politics, Johnson is at this moment engaged in a course which implies strongly either that he already intends to be a candidate or that events will force him to be a candidate. This is so, even if his present intention should go no further than merely to name the personnel of the California delegation and dominate it in the writing of the platform and throughout the convention generally.

It is entirely possible that the present qualification Johnson puts on his attitude is in good faith and that he has no present purpose further than to name the delegation. But Johnson belongs to that temperamental class of persons who are led unconsciously by the law of their natures and who inevitably do the thing that reflects a purpose tenaciously held, but as yet not avowed even to themselves.

Johnson Wants Presidency.
For that matter these need not be much doubt that Johnson wants to throw his hat into the ring, wants to get the republican nomination and wants to be president of the United States. Johnson himself has said this in an intimate letter to a friend, which letter became public through the machinations of one who is not a friend, much to Johnson's embarrassment and indignation.

Johnson wants, and has long wanted, to be president. He had, however, so long as the late President Harding was alive, definitely, though with clinging regret, put aside that ambition for the present. He had put it aside largely because he believed it would be impossible for him under his particular circumstances to take the nomination away from Harding. Aside from general consideration, such as the difficulty of taking the nomination away from a president already in office and surrounded by a compact organization of personal appointees and persons otherwise loyal to him—aside from this general difficulty, Johnson had, in addition, to face the particular difficulty that some of his closest political friends, some of them men upon whom he must rely most heavily to fight for him, were also intimate friends of President Harding and would never turn a hand to get the nomination for Johnson so long as Harding was alive and wanted it. The most important one of Johnson's friends who comes under this description was and is Albert D. Lasker, who was Johnson's principal backer in 1920, but who subsequently became one of Harding's closest political intimates and the beneficiary of Harding's favor, officially as chairman of the shipping board and unofficially in a thousand ways.

Decision Is Eventful.
With the death of Harding the whole political map changed for Johnson. From having come unfortunately to the inn of contesting with Harding, he was thrown again into the sea of doubts, hopes and speculation. Lasker, who, while Harding lived, would not have helped Johnson, could now be counted on. Coolidge might be easier to beat than Harding (and yet, again, he might not—much depends on Coolidge's future record).

These and a score of other elements in the situation so rearranged the whole political map as to put the matter up again to Johnson for consideration and decision. All this undoubtedly has been pulling and hauling at Johnson's uneasy spirit ever since Harding died. As to the outcome, decidedly the best guess is that the net result of the pull of Johnson's temperament and the other considerations tends to carry him with increasing momentum toward the decision to throw his hat into the ring.

Not all the changes wrought in the situation by Harding's death were favorable to Johnson. While many of the sudden shifts and realignments brought about by the emergence of Coolidge tended to make it easier for Johnson to run, some of them pointed the other way. Conspicuous among the latter was the defection of Senator Moses of New Hampshire.

During the period while Harding was still alive it seemed to us here at Washington that among those who

at that time tried hard to overcome Johnson's disinclination to contest with Harding, the New Hampshire senator was of the foremost.

He was and is the very incarnation of the spirit of isolation. Moses personally had had a good deal of experience with Europe. During the administration of Taft he was our minister to Greece and as such had had a good deal of contact with the diplomacy of Europe as practiced in that remote southeastern corner of the continent. Apparently the experience left Senator Moses with disillusionment and bitterness as the most constant companions of his spirit so far as regards Europe, European statesmen and European diplomacy.

In any event, Senator Moses' implacable hostility to any association of the United States with Europe was such intensity that it failed to find satisfaction, failed to feel sufficient assurance in the rather middle-of-the-road policy that Harding had about Europe. Moses was among those who were most sensationally alarmed by Harding's proposal that America should assert to the world court. He came to feel that Harding was as regards the issue closest to Moses' heart, not wholly "safe." Moses wanted in the White House an "irreconcilable" who should be as dependable in his irreconcilability as Moses himself. And so, as we all felt in Washington, Moses was among the principal ones of those who clung closest to Johnson's reluctant hand and tried hardest to persuade Johnson to raise that hand to the hat of his presidential ambitions and throw it into the ring. In addition to the motive of fellowship in irreconcilability, Moses also felt that Johnson, if he were the republican candidate, could stir up a hotter fight, make more commotion, give more "pep" to the campaign, and ultimately get more votes than Harding could.

Moses for Coolidge.
Then Harding died and there stepped into the White House a man from the state that adjoins Moses' own New Hampshire, a New Englander commanding the strong territorial loyalty of all the New England states, including Moses' own. Within a few days Moses called at the White House and on leaving it announced he was going back to New Hampshire to line the state up for Coolidge in 1924. At the time this happened there was a good deal of gossip in Washington, much of it humorous, about the emotions that arose in Hiram Johnson's breast when he saw this public announcement of Moses' loyalty to a new king. Johnson is a man who has rather simple ideas about this sort of thing.

Subsequently, to make the horror deeper, Senator Moses went to Johnson's own state of California in the course of some work on a senatorial committee and, while in Johnson's own front yard, so to speak, gave out a public interview in which he was quoted as saying some things which to Senator Johnson must have seemed pretty terrible. Senator Moses' remarks included the following:

"Hiram W. Johnson, United States senator from California, regards in Washington as a regular republican, should not in the interest of republican solidarity inject himself into the 1924 national campaign as a contender for support that should be accorded President Coolidge. Principles, not personal ambitions, should take precedence."

"Senator Johnson is playing between his conservative brethren and his radical brethren. It is a desperate game of political tight-rope walking, but there is nothing particularly reprehensible in it and Senator Johnson does not want to be president."

"In these days of party disintegration there should be more agreement on party principles and less heckling from the sidelines by those who inflate the importance of a few issues to gain an audience for political preferment."

And so Senator Johnson was compelled to add to the already comprehensive knowledge of the intricacies of human nature he has acquired in a long and tumultuous political career the fact that apparently the possession of a common love for New England is a closer bond than the possession of a common hate for the world court.

One feels that it would be interesting to be a spectator—at a safe distance—on the next occasion when Moses and Johnson come face to face.

Lasker Now Free Agent.
This defection of Senator Moses, however, was but a minor one of the changes wrought by the emergence of Coolidge into the political map as it affects Johnson. Most of the other changes pointed in the direction of increased encouragement to Johnson and renewed appeals to the spirit of his ambition.

Chief among the changes tending to urge Johnson on is the fact that Albert Lasker is now free to back Hiram Johnson. Most of the other changes pointed in the direction of increased encouragement to Johnson and renewed appeals to the spirit of his ambition.

If Johnson runs Lasker will be behind him, heart, soul, purse and person. And you need only recall the

more votes than Coolidge applies not only to Illinois but also, to a less degree, to some other states and to some of the national republican leader generally. On just how deep this feeling is at the time the convention meets in June will depend the answer whether the leaders will name Coolidge or Johnson. If they think they can win with Coolidge they will give him the nomination most assuredly. But if on the day of the convention they are in doubt whether Coolidge can win, and if they also think at that time that

Johnson might be able to get more votes than Coolidge, they will tend to name Johnson.

Johnson's friends call that throughout the entire electorate of the United States he has a personal following of from 1,000,000 to 2,000,000 votes, which votes are normally independent, normally as likely to go democratic as to go republican, but infallibly to be depended upon to go republican if Johnson is the candidate of that party. This estimate of 1,000,000 to 2,000,000 personal followers comes from Johnson's friends. The more detached republican leaders who look at it in cold blood do not concede that Johnson's personal following is as large as this. But, even so, they might concede to Johnson a personal following of 500,000 voters and might judge that margin to be a sufficient justification for making Johnson the nominee.

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It is the sort of fight that arose between the Taft and Roosevelt followers in 1912 and it threatens to end in the same sort of schism, disastrous to the republican party. The ways in which this Illinois fight affects Johnson are two: In the first place, one or the other of the factions is bound to have a candidate for the presidency other than Coolidge. If one faction gets behind Coolidge the other faction will get behind somebody else, and it appears to be a fact that some of the leaders of both factions are eager to be first in conspiring Johnson on their side. In the second place, this factional fight is so bitter as to make it uncertain whether the republicans can carry the state for the governorship next year and it adds to the chances of the republicans carrying the state that some of the leaders would like to see Johnson as the presidential nominee, on the theory that in this particular state at least, where the anti-league of nations sentiment is especially strong, Johnson as the head of the ticket might win more votes for the party than Coolidge.

Incidentally, it is this same complexity of the Illinois republican situation that creates a strong urge on ex-Governor Lowden of that state to throw his hat also into the ring—but this is a different story.

Popular in Other States.
In the situation in the last few sentences will be found the determining factor as to whether Johnson shall or shall not be the next republican nominee. That allusion about Illinois republican leaders who think Johnson could stir up more interest and get

more votes than Coolidge applies not only to Illinois but also, to a less degree, to some other states and to some of the national republican leader generally. On just how deep this feeling is at the time the convention meets in June will depend the answer whether the leaders will name Coolidge or Johnson. If they think they can win with Coolidge they will give him the nomination most assuredly. But if on the day of the convention they are in doubt whether Coolidge can win, and if they also think at that time that

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B	15.75x7.78x7.75	122	3.28	173,000	1,417 lbs.	2,382 lbs.
C	15.88x7.88x7.88	125.1	2.34	200,000 plus	1,596 plus	2,662 plus
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