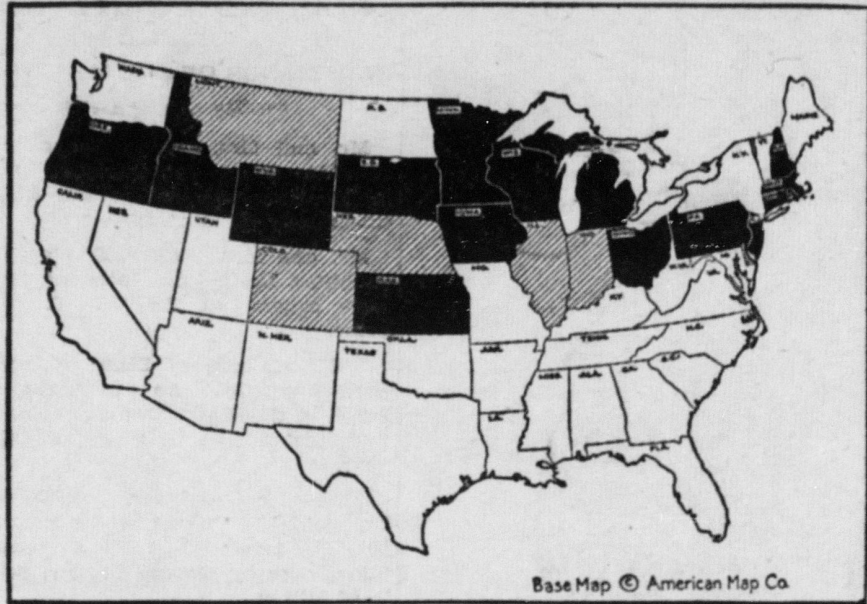


Weekly News Review
American Political Tradition
Decreed Republican Upsurge
 By Joseph W. LaBine



REPUBLICAN GAINS IN NOVEMBER ELECTION

States shown in black showed definite swing away from Democratic party by giving victory to Republicans in two out of possible three divisions (governor, senate, house); states shaded gave Republicans minor victory in house or gubernatorial election; states shown in white failed to record substantial change in political status or (Maryland, California, North Dakota) showed Democratic gains.

Politics

Like all natural phenomena and many not so natural, U. S. political fortunes run in cycles of liberalism and conservatism. Thus every lengthy Republican administration has been succeeded by a shorter Democratic one, attesting to the American people's inherent conservatism. Since the Republican party reached its latest low ebb under Candidate Alfred Landon in 1936, none but the most optimistic expected anything but a minor gain so early as 1938. But it has proved otherwise, thanks to (1) a growing belief that the Roosevelt administration's expensive recovery efforts have been unsuccessful, and (2) a fear that New Deal policies were encouraging the growth of radicalism. Moreover, it has been apparent that the public must eventually protest against the political corruption which unavoidably gathers around so large a financial project as WPA. Though the Roosevelt administration may be blameless in this respect, such political machines as that of Pennsylvania's Gov. George H. Earle have unsavory reputations.

Another consideration, one that received less attention than eventually proved justified, was dissatisfaction among America's numerically important farmers. Since the agricultural vote can control congress, it looked bad for the administration when this year's highly touted farm program failed. Despite Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace's sincere efforts, New Deal farm legislation has left producers in northern states without permanent relief. Almost without exception the November general election has therefore made the U. S. return to its most normal political alignment in 15 years. (See Map.) Always Democratic, the "solid South" has clung tenaciously to tradition. But this tradition does not mean the South will line up 100 per cent behind President Roosevelt, for South Carolina, Georgia and Maryland elected senators partially unsympathetic with the New Deal. Several other southern senators and congressmen, not up for re-election this year, are also unsympathetic.

Though in many cases the Republican trend is not so great as the above map might indicate, practically all northern states have shown a surge back to conservatism. This was especially marked in Minnesota and Wisconsin, where Farmer-Labor and Progressive partisans were ousted after long incumbencies. Michigan swung away from Democratic Gov. Frank Murphy largely because he sympathized with the radically tinged Committee for Industrial Organization. In all northwestern states the swing to Republicanism was due partly to agricultural dissatisfaction. New England's industrial population rebelled against allegedly oppressive taxation and the C. I. O., while this territory's traditional conservatism also played an important role. Substantially the same explanation can be made for votes in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

The only important New Deal gains have come in California, where a rock-ribbed Republican governor was ousted; in North Dakota, whose notoriously unsettled political situation has freakishly placed a Democrat in the governor's chair, and in Maryland.

But such a resume does not tell the entire story, for even those states which remained Democratic have shown an amazingly strong Republican upsurge. New York's Gov. Herbert H. Lehman won by only 70,000 votes over his Republican opponent, youthful Thomas E. Dewey, whereas two years ago Mr. Lehman had a 500,000 margin. Illinois, which remains predominantly New Deal, increased its Republican house representation and returned a much larger conservative vote than in 1936.

Having gained at least 8 senators, 75 house members and 11 governors, the Republican party once more has a vocal minority in congress. Moreover its 1940 presidential hopes are better, despite the defeat in New York of Tom Dewey, once consid-

ered a likely candidate. If the 1938 election has created any new presidential possibilities, they are Ohio's Republican Sen. Robert Taft and Missouri's Democratic Sen. Bennett Champ Clark.

What the Republican upsurge will do for the U. S. remains conjectural, but post-election stock market activity has been encouraging. To aid industry, the American Federation of Labor is already banking on G. O. P. congressional aid in amending the Wagner labor relations act. The outstanding fact is that 1938's Republican party has emerged a liberal entity, well-spoken for its former ultra-conservatism.

Foreign

That a state visit can hold much international importance is sometimes hard to believe, since state visitors make a studied effort to avoid shop talk with their hosts. But diplomatic Great Britain refuses to minimize the significance of King George's visit to the U. S. next summer, and every sign indicates the English reasoning is correct. Coupled with the U. S. visit is an invitation for French President Albert Lebrun to drink tea in Buckingham palace next spring, thereby returning the honor accorded by George's visit to Paris this past summer. While all this sounds like social pother, it really means that France and England are desperately trying to give the world a spectacle of democratic solidarity, offsetting the trumpeting of Premier Benito Mussolini and Chancellor Adolf Hitler. Though King George's visit will not result in a U. S.-British pact, it will certainly tighten the bonds between England and America.

This means that next spring and summer Italy and Germany will go into eclipse, while world democracy stages its show. There is every



KING GEORGE VI
 How important is his visit?

reason to believe the Fascist-Nazis appreciate this and realize they must gain their concessions from France and Britain within the next six months. That is why Hitler is pressing his demands for a return of British-mandated colonies, and why Mussolini is urging internationalization of the Suez canal.

People

The death of Turkey's dictator, President Kemal Ataturk, removes the most colorful totalitarianist of our era. A man whose passion was violation of every accepted rule of human behavior, he customarily stayed up all night, ate every food that disagreed with him, had an amazingly large capacity for raki liquor and champagne, was Turkey's champion cigarette smoker and drank gallons of coffee every day. He detested exercise. More benevolent and less anxious for self-aggrandizement than most dictators, Mustapha Kemal established a model nation out of the post-war debris of Turkey. At his death, the nation he founded looks in bewilderment for a successor, while Europe fears southeastern-bound Adolf Hitler may seize the opportunity to establish his economic strength in the Dardanelles.

Business

Government prosecution of combinations in alleged restraint of trade was known as "trust-busting" in the days of President Benjamin Harrison. In 1890 the Sherman anti-trust law began hacking at financial octopi in what was shown to be a legitimate campaign to keep American industry from killing itself by mushroomed growth.

Modern trust-busting is an outgrowth of the New Deal. Its intended victim is not the monopolistic trust of bygone days, but usually a group of powerful corporations which dominate an industry. But though the 1938 model trust buster can be credited with success (17 victories, 12 cases still pending, out of 42 filed since March 4, 1933) he might also be charged with making political capital of his job.

Thus it has been hinted that Solicitor General Robert H. Jackson, once an assistant attorney general, joined the anti-trust crusade last year largely in the hope of winning New York's Democratic gubernatorial nomination. If politics was the inspiration for some anti-trust suits, these same suits have now become such hot potatoes that a vanished political purpose does not justify the justice department's dropping them. One possible example may be the trust case against the Aluminum Company of America.

To date this year-old investigation has failed to uncover much except a re-hash of testimony and evidence from the 1935 federal trade commission's probe, and a private litigation of a decade ago from which the company emerged with a clean bill of health.

Today's anti-trust division of the justice department has 90 lawyers compared with 15 in 1933, handling



THURMAN ARNOLD
 New technique: Price policing.

monopoly cases and proceedings connected with 31 other major acts of congress. Trust-busting boss is Thurman Arnold, whose fetish is investigating the price policies of industry. Says Mr. Arnold: "We are being forced to take control of inflexible price structures and coercions in restraint of trade today just as in 1933 we were forced to take control of the financing and marketing of securities."

Much interest now centers in the justice department's newly inaugurated suit against Delaware's Columbia Gas & Electric corporation for allegedly "conspiring to monopolize" the natural gas industry of Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia and Michigan. But in accordance with his probe of price policies, Thurman Arnold is probably more interested in oil. Since crude oil prices recently plummeted in the wake of alleged over-production by refiners, both the President and Mr. Arnold favor a program for state control over oil production and refining.

Harking back to the trust-busting days when Standard Oil's case first made the U. S. monopoly-conscious, the new probe will examine every phase of the oil industry from production to marketing. Though oil men will welcome an intelligent government program to stabilize crude oil prices, observers fail to see great consistency between this program to raise prices, and other monopoly quizzes which prosecute men for allegedly raising prices.

Religion

After 31 months of strife, four months of which cost 1,317 lives and left 1,150 wounded, Palestine's "holy war" is still not ended. The British-mandated territory has been Arabic for centuries but was set aside as a homeland for Jews following the World War, only to arouse Moslem fears that Hebrews would soon dominate the land. Using terrorism as their weapon, Arabs have attempted to force an immediate settlement on slow-moving Great Britain, but London has just announced its refusal to make an immediate decision. Great Britain proposes to call a conference of Jewish and Arab leaders whose compromise agreement would wash Great Britain's hands of all responsibility for the Holy Land. This would be fine except that Arabs refuse to arbitrate in this fashion, which leaves Palestine's problem still a hopeless muddle.

Miscellany

An Evanston, Ill., woman has been granted a patent for a pair of pockets to be hung over her cocker spaniel's head, carrying his ears for him.

In 12 months just past, the Methodist Episcopal church of America increased its membership by 181,297, approximately 1 per cent.

Bruckart's Washington Digest

President Promises Legislation To Relieve Railroad Situation

Thoroughgoing Re-Examination of Rail Problems Essential to Finding Reasonable Solution; Competition Cuts Earnings; Public Has Responsibility to Bear.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART
 WNU Service, National Press Bldg., Washington, D. C.

WASHINGTON.—I believe it can be said that most readers of newspapers "digest" their news rather slowly. It is not their fault entirely that the full significance of a news story escapes them even though it may be spread under black headlines on the front page. Nor do I mean to say that all readers are lax. It seems to be true, nevertheless, that days or weeks or even months and years may pass some time before the intangible personality that we call "the public" has considered fully the significance of reported events.

Existence of this condition, however, is warrant for an attempt at analysis of what has happened, what is happening, and what is likely to happen in the railroad industry. Perhaps that statement should have added to it the suggestion also that there will be something affecting the public, too, in connection with the recent series of incidents and events directly concerning the rail industry. Indeed, prospective developments portend even more.

There were, of course, the many dangers of a financial character with which the railroads were beset. There followed the attempt of railroad management to reduce expenses by a program cutting wages of the workers by 15 per cent, and there came almost immediately thereafter the dread specter of a strike threat by the million or more rail workers who are highly unionized. After that, in the sequence of events was President Roosevelt's utilization of the law providing for consideration of the differences by a fact finding commission for the first time.

It is necessary only as a further review to recall that the fact finding commission heard days of testimony and reported to the President that a wage cut was unjustified. But the commission made no constructive suggestions. As a matter of fact, it added nothing to the total of human knowledge, but it got a lot of publicity for its findings.

Legislation to Relieve Railroads Up to Congress

The problem was, therefore, left in Mr. Roosevelt's lap. He called in the representatives of the rail managements and the leaders of the unions. The rail executives were willing to call off the proposed wage cut, if there were any way to be found to keep the railroads from going bankrupt—more than half of the mileage being already in the hands of receivers. Union leaders reiterated they did not want to strike and they did want the railroads to get on their feet, because it meant jobs. J. J. Pelley, spokesman for the rail lines, asked then what the government could or would do, and Mr. Roosevelt promised legislation.

So there we are today. There will be no strike. There will be consideration of rail legislation in the next session of congress that will be designed to help the railroads so they will have at least as much income as expense. And it will be supported by Mr. Roosevelt's administration, by the railroads and by the railroad unions.

But I am wondering whether the country as a whole is fully aware of what is behind the troubles that formed the immediate basis of the news developments recorded above. And I am wondering further whether the shock of the strike threat has awakened the country as a whole to the need for a thoroughgoing re-examination of the situation in which the railroads find themselves? Because it is in the underlying conditions that we are going to find a solution. None can deny that we need rail transportation; none can deny that they either must operate without losses or else they are going to be left in the lap of the government, and what a terrible mess that would be, for government seldom runs anything without making a mess of it. The rail problem, its relation to other forms of transportation, the public interest, national policy, all must be threshed out very soon. It can not be longer avoided without increasing the dangers of genuine national suffering.

Public Has Tremendous Responsibility to Bear

When consideration of the various phases of the condition gets under way, if it is done thoroughly, congress must give attention to a revision of some of its long-established policies. They are basic. When I am talking about the plight of the railroads, I am, at the same time, condemning to the very core some of the high-handed brigandage, thievery, corruption, that went on among so-called captains of industry a few generations ago. That stealing, that corruption (in which politics figured amazingly) put the railroads in disrepute as an industry. But most of that has ended. The highly respected interstate commerce commission saw to that job. Yet, the stigma and lack of public good will remains

to curse the carriers that operate over steel rails.

So, there is first the need for a national acceptance of the good faith which most of the railroad managements now display. The public must give credit where credit is due, and the public has a tremendous responsibility to bear in connection with this phase.

Next, and without doubt one of the really important phases, is the question of continued subsidy, both direct and indirect, that has been given by the government to competition of the rail lines, competitors like the bus and the truck and the automotive industry generally. There can be no dodging the fact that this subsidy exists under various guises, and the great motor industry which bred busses and trucks and private automobiles by the millions stands as a monument, a marker, showing where that subsidy was distributed. The thousands of miles of hard roads, all-year roads, are a part of the subsidy that went to competitors of the carriers, and who can say that such an expenditure by government was not one of the greatest steps for progress?

Monster of Competition Cuts Railroad Earnings

Of course, road construction was necessary. It was vital. The national policy for good highways can only be praised. Yet, their very existence is one of the reasons why the railroads' income has fallen off, or, more properly, the normal increase in receipts was not realized. We see, therefore, a great monster of competition set up with money from taxpayers' pockets. The railroads long have been the most heavily taxed of any industry, which is to say they helped pay for creation of competition.

There was the creation of the interstate commerce commission some years ago as a unit of government for supervision of the rail lines. It was, and is still, needed. But its existence, too, has held down rail earnings. This has resulted from the control of rates. No railroad is permitted to charge more than a rate approved by the I. C. C. While the competitors were creeping forward, under governmental blessing, the I. C. C. was saying to the rail lines: "You fellows obey our orders, or else."

Subsidies out of taxpayers' pockets have gone to build up another competitor, also. I refer to inland waterways and to coastwise shipping. This means of transportation has a value that hardly can be measured. It is as much a part of our national economic life as the highways and the attendant motor transport. But it exists, and it is able to operate as a competitor of the railroads, because of a paternal government that made things easy and gave a helping hand wherever it could do so.

Air Transportation Now Steps Into the Picture

Lately, air transportation has been expanding with remarkable rapidity. No nation in the world has such efficient air service, nor as safe air service, as is to be found in the United States. It is carrying increasing amounts of freight and express; it is transporting thousands upon thousands of passengers. These passengers are of the type, generally speaking, willing and able to pay for the luxury train service which is profitable when the trains are filled. These air lines are benefiting from government subsidy in several ways. The air mail doesn't begin to pay its way; the government makes up the difference by contracts that call for stated payments. And consider the scores of great air fields throughout the country! The bulk of them are built at public expense. True, the air lines pay for the privileges of the field, but does anyone think that the air lines could afford to spend \$40,000,000 to build such a field as that which serves metropolitan New York? Funds for it came largely from a federal government grant. The same beneficent Uncle Sam is putting out several millions at the doorstep of the national capital here to build a proper airport.

There are other things that could be taken up and set apart to show how the government has helped competitors of the rail lines in most practical fashion. Questions of taxation, grade crossing construction of an expensive character forced upon the carriers, requirements for terminals of luxury-type construction and so on. I believe it unnecessary to recount them. Those that have been enumerated serve to show where the trouble is. It does not show the answer, but I believe it points the way to an answer. The answer, as I have mentioned above, certainly can not be found, however, unless there is genuine study of an unselfish sort undertaken by congress.

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