

ROOSEVELT'S SUCCESSOR: Who Will Be Republican Leader and Candidate ...

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ROOSEVELT'S SUCCESSOR

Who Will Be Republican Leader and Candidate for Presidency in 1920?---Outlook Two Years in Advance



Senator Warren G. Harding.

SOMEWHERE in the Republican Party, either among that small group of men in its front rank or among those who thus far have achieved only a State prominence, is the man who is to take Theodore Roosevelt's place as leader of the party. Whoever he is, a great rôle awaits him, for his full credentials will be won only by obtaining the Republican nomination for President of the United States.

Who, among the present aspirants, is this leader likely to be?

Where is the best field for him to win the necessary preparatory prestige and authority?

Why, so long before the nominating convention, has the question of leadership forced itself forward as an active issue?

In the first place, the contest is already on. Every one of the small group of leaders whose names are most often mentioned would prefer to wait. They know of old that the public is likely to weary of a premature candidacy. But this time there is no waiting. The momentum of events, larger than any man's interests or desires, intervenes. Usually after a mid-term Congressional election politics settles down for a while. But now, owing to the conflict between the two parties that sprang out of the President's pre-election letter to the country, and owing to the tremendous issues growing out of the end of the war, peace terms and reconstruction problems, politics in its broader sense has been stirred to such a depth that it is beyond the power of the leaders of the two sides, even if they desired, to delay decisions of party policy and direction.

From the time of the November election issues between the two parties began to sharpen more rapidly. Two recognized leaders were in command; on the one side Wilson, on the other Roosevelt. Then came, unexpectedly, Roosevelt's death, and since then one fact has continued to impress itself more deeply on the Republican Party: What the party needs most is a leader. But there is none with the authority—no man who reaches compellingly over both wings of the party—to take Roosevelt's place. Out of the group of aspirants some one, forging clearly to the front, must show his ability to lead. At this momentous period it is no time for opportunists or for favorite sons. What is wanted—everybody admits it—is a downright, affirmative man, with a clear grasp of the problems facing the country—one who, as Roosevelt, is able to give blow for blow.

Therefore the challenge to compete for the place of leadership is immediate. What will be the main field of the contest? Unquestionably Congress and chiefly the Senate. When the United States entered the war, the prediction was made, based on past experience, that our next President would be some General whose deeds in the fighting on the other side had thrilled the popular imagination. The civil war made Grant President, the Spanish-American War

elevated Roosevelt. But this war, owing to the suppression by the censorship policy of individual achievement, apparently has left us without a war hero of Presidential popularity among the American Generals who fought in France. The main reason why Congress is to be the greatest theatre of opportunity for aspirants for Roosevelt's place as the leader of the Republican Party is that here the after-the-war problems must be taken up and legislation framed for their solution. In the Senate the debates on the confirmation of the peace terms will soon attract national attention. Both houses of the next Congress will be Republican, and to that party belongs the opportunity for a program of constructive legislation.

Republican politicians express confidence that the party's nominee for President will be elected; they say they have analyzed the returns and found that, taking it by Congressional districts, the Republican Party carried the last election by a majority of 1,100,000, that they carried twenty-nine States out of forty-eight, and figure that these winning States had an electoral vote of 422 against 189; but Republican leaders who look more shrewdly into the future realize that the success of the party at the polls next time depends in a large degree on the accomplishments of the Republicans in the next Congress.

Among the problems facing Congress, besides the question of the peace terms, are the railroads, the tariff, labor legislation, the future military policy of the country, immigration legislation, price regulation, and reconstruction in general.

Most of the names heard today in connection with the Republican leadership are those of members of the Senate, though in the past not many Senators have been nominated for the Presidency. The list is culled from inquiry in several directions at Washington. The writer has talked to many Republicans and Democrats. The men mentioned oftenest

are Senator Warren G. Harding of Ohio, Senator Philander C. Knox of Pennsylvania, Senator William E. Borah of Idaho, Senator Hiram Johnson of California, ex-President William H. Taft, Major Gen. Leonard Wood, and Governor Frank O. Loudon of Illinois.

Of the Senate list Mr. Harding comes nearer to commanding the support of both ends of the party than any of the others. As Chairman of the Republican National Convention in 1916 he delivered the keynote speech, and the impression he made throughout the proceedings was a positive one. He is of distinguished appearance, and a charm of personality is one of his assets. But so far as distinct leadership is concerned he has yet to win it; he appears to be a man who advances steadily to a purpose without haste and with reserve force for the

greater occasion. It has been made apparent that he is to take a more prominent part in the Senate. In a recent speech he sharply criticised the President for not having devoted himself immediately on his arrival in Europe to bringing about a speedy peace, and also for not having given more attention to pressing reconstruction problems in this country. Practical things here at home, the Senator said, were being neglected while the dreams of idealism were being chased abroad. He said, among other things:

"America needs a policy. America must understand that, above everything else, orderly government is the first essential. I do not forget that the Executive and the Legislative during the war have preached the doctrine of revolution in the Central Empires. The doctrine was preached that you must have revolution to bring about tranquillity in the world. You started a fire that it is difficult to put out now.

"If we must have anarchy on the one hand or autocracy on the other, I choose autocracy. We can best stay the march of Bolshevism by appealing to the deliberate American understanding. The man who expects to stop it by the application of charity is chasing a rainbow that has no end."

Harding has been compared to McKinley as a harmonizer in his own party. In the Senate his course has been that of a "regular," though not that of a narrow party man.

Undoubtedly he would have the support of his own State and it would carry the advantage of being classed as a close one. His home is at Marion, Ohio. He has been a newspaper publisher since 1884. Before he was elected to the Senate in 1914 the highest office he had held was that of Lieutenant Governor of Ohio.

Ex-President Taft's name is paired in prominence with Senator Harding's at this time. Two issues have brought him forward. One is the proposed League of Nations. The prospect that it may be worked

out seems to have filled him with even more vitality and energy than he previously possessed. He will tour the country, it is reported, in behalf of the League to Enforce Peace and make League of Nations speeches. If the Paris Peace Conference adopts a League of Nations plan, with the consequence that questions of our country's relation will become of the most pressing concern, Mr. Taft's importance as a Presidential possibility will no doubt be much enhanced. The other issue with which he has been identified appeals to a large element of the country. As Chairman of the War Labor Board he has shown much consideration for the claims of labor and has stood firmly by what he deemed labor was justly entitled to. This, evidently, is his way of escaping the discontent that forms a seed bed for



Ex-President William H. Taft.

Bolshevist ideas. His course has certainly been the opposite to that of a lack of sympathy with labor, as charged against him in some political campaigns in the past.

"One reason Taft has come back," said a Democratic Senator who follows politics closely, "is his wholesomeness. He showed himself a good loser, cheery in utter defeat, and the way he has supported the war is admired by all. Then, too, it was he that made the approach which resulted in his reconciliation with Colonel Roosevelt. And the probability of a League of Nations seems to have made a new man of him—I mean new literally, with a drive he never had before. I say, Look out for Taft!"

Senator Knox is close up on the list of possibilities. Roosevelt's name is used in his favor. It is recalled that shortly before the 1916 convention Colonel Roosevelt suggested as a compromise between himself and Mr. Hughes that Senator Knox would be acceptable to him. Knox was Secretary of State in Roosevelt's Cabinet and is a student of foreign relations. In addition he has given much time to a study of business methods, and, his admirers say, has an unusual grasp of the business problems of the future. He does not speak often in the Senate, but when he does he commands attention. Not a few call him the ablest Republican member. He would be assured of the solid support of the conservative element of his party.

Recently Senator Knox has defined his course on great issues, with vigorous initiative. His first step was to declare that the League of Nations idea should be taken up separately and not until after the Allies had imposed their terms on the Central Powers. Later he urged what he characterized as "a new American doctrine."

"Can we not perceive emerging from these facts a new American doctrine?" he said. "I will state this great doctrine in these words: If a situation should arise in which any power or combination of powers should directly or indirectly menace the freedom and peace of the world, the United States would regard such a situation with grave concern as a menace to its own freedom and peace and would consult with other powers affected, with a view to concerted action to remove such menace. If this had been the avowed and understood policy of the United States before July, 1914, it is, in my judgment, very improbable that the war would have occurred. When at length the United States had perceived and had acted on this policy with mighty effect, the war had entered on its last and victorious phase."

Mr. Knox is opposed to a League of Nations to enforce peace. He said: "I should not vote for any treaty that subjected this nation's judgment and conscience as to its vital interests or its war-making prerogative to the will of a foreign majority."

The military man most spoken of as the Republican candidate for the Presidency is one who took no part in the fighting on the other side—Major Gen.

Leonard Wood. Three things have brought his name forward; first, that as a close friend of Roosevelt he shared his ideas; second, the feeling that jealousy of his ability as an organizer and administrator kept him from an opportunity in France; third, as the father of the Plattsburg idea and foremost advocate of preparedness, the opinion that his country owes him a debt not yet paid. General Wood as a possibility depends more on the turn of events than any other one mentioned. If the course of affairs between now and the convention should point to the need of military preparedness, in the absence of some stabilizing league, then General Wood surely would loom up.

The progressive wing of the Republican Party is represented by Senator Borah. He led the opposition to Senator Penrose in the new Senate committee assignments that came up immediately after the election. In variance to many of his Republican colleagues, he is in favor of the withdrawal of our troops from Russia and absolute non-interference in Russia, leaving that country to work out its problems in its own way. He is against the Taft plan for a League of Nations or any league that would compromise the sovereignty of the United States in any way. In a scheme of an enforced peace he sees "militarism in its most pronounced form."

"Naturally," said Senator Borah, "the first question that a man would ask would be, 'How are you going to raise your armies to sustain this vast military program based on force?' Would the citizens of the United States volunteer to enter the army for the purpose of settling difficulties in the Balkans, for instance? Would the American boys leave their homes on the farms and in the factories for the purpose of taking part in the adjustment of a controversy between Japan and Russia over Manchuria? In other words, we should have conscription in time of peace."

Mr. Borah's chance of leadership depends on what popular appeal the idea he stands for may have. Among his Republican colleagues in the Senate his course is regarded as one of extreme independence.

Senator Johnson would no doubt have the support of his State for the Presidential nomination, but his name is more often heard as that of the nominee



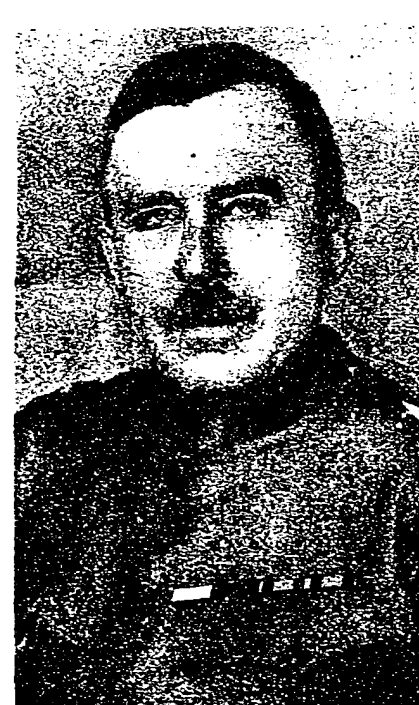
Senator William E. Borah.



Governor Frank O. Loudon.

for Vice President. In the talk of Washington he has recently been coupled with Taft for second place on the ticket. His views have been too radical, it is said, for him to have a very good chance to get the support of the conservative wing of his party for first place on the ticket. He is an advocate of the Government ownership of railroads. Recently he has been most active in urging that our troops be withdrawn from Russia.

Among the Governors mentioned as having a "look in," Governor Loudon of Illinois, for-



Major Gen. Leonard Wood.

mer member of Congress, holds first place. His course during the war as Governor has done much to strengthen him. He called out the troops to prevent the pacifists from meeting in Chicago, forestalling Mayor Thompson, who was in favor of the meeting.

Other Governors mentioned are James P. Goodrich of Indiana, who has the achievement of recent State tax legislation to his credit, and Henry J. Allen of Kansas, who followed Roosevelt into the Progressive Party in 1912, and who, while absent with the

soldiers in France, was elected Governor by a majority of 150,000.

Of the new members of the Senate two will be specially watched as to the part they play—Arthur Capper, who moves up from Governor of Kansas, and Medill McCormick, one of Roosevelt's strongest supporters, who advances to the Senate from a seat in the Lower House.

In the longer list of more remote possibilities are Senator Miles Poindexter of Washington, who has taken the lead in favor of the suppression of Bolshevism; Senator James E. Watson of Indiana, a prominent advocate of a high tariff, which will certainly be one of the chief issues raised by the Republican Party in the coming campaign, and Senator James W. Wadsworth, Jr., of New York, who by his grasp of the problems of war legislation has won his way to a first place among the younger men of the Senate. Two men of recognized leadership ability are regarded as eliminated on account of their age. They are Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, who will be seventy on his next birthday, and Elihu Root, ex-Secretary of State in Roosevelt's Cabinet, who is past seventy. Charles E. Hughes, while his value as a leader is recognized, is little spoken of as a possibility in 1920.

"I think," said a Republican Senator who occupies a middle ground, "that the choice of a man in Roosevelt's place depends a great deal on what issues rise to dominance in 1920. The establishment of a League of Nations, for example, may remove some of the questions that seem most pressing. In my opinion, one issue is going to thrust aside all others—that is the relation between capital and labor. Whoever can come forward with a successful plan to provide a harmonious co-operation will be assured not only of the Republican nomination, but also of election to the Presidency. I think one of the requirements to take up such a problem is the possession of exceptional business ability. Our problems, as they stand out today, are at bottom business problems. A new kind of statesmanship is needed; some one with the mind to grasp such complicated problems as that of our railroads; a man who can give a sympathetic consideration to the sides of both the employes and the employers; who can make clear that dominance by any class is against the spirit of democracy."