

*Party leaders should lead
not dictate*

What Is a Party?

By Chester Rowell

From his column in The San Francisco Chronicle

POLITICAL reaction seems to be unanimous that Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace pulled a "boner" when he told a luncheon meeting of the Women's Democratic Club in Washington that Democratic Congressmen should be denied the support of the party organization and forbidden to run as "Democrats" unless they took that portion of the Truman (and Roosevelt) program which Wallace personally likes.

He also indicated that Republicans should similarly read out of their party those who did take this program. Thus there would be a mutual "purge," of Democratic conservatives and Republican radicals, into two new parties, each of which would mean something definite.

Simultaneously, Senator LaFollette was leading the remnant of his left-wing third-party "Progressives" into the Republican party, with the aim of making it the radical party. Governor Stassen, the most glamorous of the aspirants for the Republican presidential nomination was doing a similar thing, though less radically.

Governor Warren of California, who is not running for President and refused to be a nominee for Vice President, does want to be Governor for another term and will seek both

the Republican and Democratic nominations, as California law and custom permit. He will win the nomination of his own party at the coming primaries, and will either win the Democratic nomination also, or receive so many votes of registered Democrats for it that the sum of the two will be an easy majority of the whole people. He has done this before, both for Attorney General and for Governor and won the election both times, in a state in which an overwhelming majority of the voters are registered as Democrats.

Thus, from these and other movements, the question comes into the foreground, as to what is a party, who are its members, and what, if any, is the difference between the two major parties.

Theorists are mostly agreed that logic is with the advocates of party reshufflings, in members and in platform principles. Realists are largely convinced that it can not be done, and would in any event do more harm than good. And the "practical" politicians, who set up conventions, dominate their nominations, and organize and finance campaigns, are virtually unanimous on the subject.

The function of the mass of the people, the rank-and-file voters of either party or neither, comes only at the final elections. And if the

conventions have presented to the people nominees of the same sort, or of different sorts each trying to get the same votes, and have framed "straddling" platforms, which may not be carried out, the situation is no clearer, to the observer who is trying to make sense of it.

Wallace himself, incidentally, is no illustration of his own theory. He started out as a Republican; then became an ultra New Dealer, with some excursions into supporting American Labor party candidates against the regular Democratic nominee. Right or wrong he is and always has been a chronic insurgent.

For that matter, both recent Democratic Presidents, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, have crossed party lines, even in the formation of their cabinets. Stimson, Ickes and Wallace were Republicans. Wilson did the same thing, in attempting to purge Democrats who would not take his program. Grover Cleveland repudiated or vetoed measures which his party machine had put forward. And even Bryan, three-times Democratic nominee, broke with his party, and finally with his President, on the most vital issues.

Of Republicans, McKinley and

Taft, at least, repudiated the stand-pat tariffs of their parties, while all the Democratic Congresses have passed tariffs for high protection against the "for revenue only" pledges of most of their platforms. All the presidents of both parties have been for a League of Nations, on some terms, and especially for the World Court, but reactionary Congresses have defeated them all on these policies.

Or, going back even to the beginning of the Republican party, Lincoln stood for a reconciliation with the South, and Andrew Johnson barely escaped conviction on impeachment for trying to continue the Lincoln policies. There are many more ancient records of the same sort, going back literally to Washington and Jefferson.

In the majority of these cases, history and the course of events have justified the Presidents. But the right of presidents to dictate, rather than to lead, would have been repudiated by the whole American people, as a far worse evil than the blunders of even the weakest Congresses. In fact, our American democracy has functioned astonishingly well. More urgently than ever, we must cling to it now.

• "I love all heavenly Americans, but I do not believe Almighty God will permit their inordinate ambitions for world domination." Toyohiko Kagawa upon accepting appointment to the House of Peers. (At least, not on earth, Toyohiko.)

• Forain, the noted French painter-engraver, had but two hours to live. As he opened his eyes, he saw his wife standing beside him.

"You look fine, dear," she assured the artist.

Soon his son arrived and said: "You look splendid, father."

Then his doctor entered and pronounced: "Superb."

Forain nodded wearily to all of them and sighed: "I'm going to die cured."

—Mercury

Long-Term Housing Problem

By Merlo Pusey

From his column in The Washington Post

AMID the confusion and disillusionment of the post-war period, the steam which Wilson Wyatt is putting behind the housing program is a refreshing sign. His assault on the housing problem has assumed the characteristics of a David and Goliath affair. And while the David in this story is a long way from triumphant victory over the giant, his courage and activity have brought new hope to a great number of wretchedly housed Americans.

Mr. Wyatt's immediate objective is to provide new housing for veterans at prices or rentals they can afford to pay. The task of producing 2,700,000 new dwelling units in the next two years is critically urgent because of the acute shortage of housing resulting from the war. But this is only the spearhead of the housing movement. Behind it is the larger task of building 12 to 15 million dwelling units in the next decade for families who have never had a decent place to live.

Possibly the most significant factor in the present outlook is that energy, initiative and imagination have been brought to bear upon the whole housing problem. Mr. Wyatt is more than a sound thinker about housing; he is also a driving force toward action. If he succeeds in intermeshing all of the complex factors that are essential to the

creation of a stable mass-production housing industry, it will be one of the great accomplishments of our time.

The unpalatable fact is that a vast number of people in our cities have always been shamefully housed. Living quarters have been produced, with precious little comprehensive planning and largely for families in the upper income brackets. As they have become old and obsolete, they have been passed down to families farther down the economic scale. Only in recent years has there been any concerted effort to build new and appropriate housing for families in the middle and lower income brackets. And this has been provided in relatively small quantities.

We had a building boom in the 1920's. But it was followed by a bust because so little effort was made to provide modern housing for the groups who needed it most. In the 1930's the revival was so halting that we fell critically short of providing enough housing to supply the new families added to our population.

At present, therefore, the United States presents the spectacle of the most wealthy nation in the world steadily slipping backward in this vital matter of housing. Our great motor industry has put the nation on wheels, and other industries have filled our homes and offices with