

The G. O. P.'s Lost Compass

THERE came to the Senate some time ago a Republican who had made a very swift and distinct success in business and later in politics by the use of the semi-scientific method of searching analysis and intensive organization. As might be suspected, he is what is called a practical man. He is one of the kind of thinking Republicans who grieved, in a way, over Woodrow Wilson, that such will and resource should have been devoted to fruitless "idealism" and "crusading."

When Warren G. Harding was elected in November, 1920, this new Republican Senator gave grateful thanks for his country and exultant thanks for himself. There was to be another and long McKinley period, with the government—in the control of purposeful, courageous, practical men—keeping step with business, and business spreading prosperity everywhere in the land. For himself, he exulted because he was to have a sizable place in that governmental machine. He would have joy in participating in a workmanlike job, and he would really serve his country. About eight months ago, just when there was a clamorous demand that Mr. Harding assume the leadership of the Republicans in Congress, an old friend of that Senator called on him, and found him in a very emotional state of mind. The following is a cross section of what he had to say, leaving out a liberal seasoning of "cuss" words:

"We are creating an office to handle an enormous enterprise. (He named it.) If I were not in the Senate I could get it by lifting my finger. I could take it, and in four or six or eight years make myself appreciated throughout the country as one who had contributed to the public welfare. You know me, and you know I could do that work. And I could get a lot of satisfaction in the job itself. But I can't leave the Senate. And what am I doing here? Running errands for my constituents. That's all. Our party in Congress has no organization and no purpose. When we go to bed, we don't know whether in the morning we shall be running on track three or track seven, or whether the switch down the road will be set to send us into a siding, a clear run or a collision. And I've got to stick at it and let a chance to do constructive work slide by."

The case of this Republican Senator, whose name obviously cannot be given, illumines the mental state, I believe, of virtually every Republican member of Congress who has been in Washington with some worthier motive than to hold

office or play partisan politics. They are the most disappointed and thwarted lot of men, consciously so, in the country. And in nearly every case it is due to a single, fundamental fact that none foresaw on March 4, 1921, and for which none was prepared—namely, that for the first time in its history the Republican party has no party philosophy, does not know its own mind. In Taft's administration it knew its own mind, and what it wanted to do. There was a difference between the party proper and its dominant men in Washington, but there was no lack of conscious purpose. It knew what it wanted to do in Roosevelt's time, although it was not unanimous. It knew what it wanted to do in McKinley's time, and before McKinley.

Broadly stated, the object of the parties is to serve the prosperity and security of the country, and broadly stated there is a sincere will to do that—if not because the party leaders are men of good intent, then because they are men who have learned that such is the way of good party business, good party management. It was the asset and the pride of the Republican party for more than half a century that with that object before it, it knew how to take the road, it could make up its mind and it could execute the decision. It was purposeful, self-reliant, confident, sure-footed. It gloried in the fact that, damn it as the country might on occasion, the country looked upon it as the party of deeds, of accomplishment.

Those Republicans in Congress now who possess the least capacity for objective reflection know that the old asset and the old pride have departed. And to the fact that they do not know certainly that the asset and pride ever will return is due their demoralization—much more than the immediate effects of the blundering of the last eighteen months. If they were sure that the Republican party had pulled itself together, as it were, and had assembled and given definite direction to its energies, they would not fear greatly the consequences of the last eighteen months. They would reason that with the handicap they still would be able easily to outstrip the Democratic party in the long race. For they are not afraid of the Democratic party as such today. They know there has been no affirmative power of dangerous proportions in the Democratic party in years other than Wilson, and whatever his influence in the future, he can never be again the force at once coordinative and dynamic that he was between 1912 and the day in 1919 when he was stricken. And they sense, if

they do not fully understand, the truth that the Democratic party is never affirmatively dangerous except when it has a towering, overmastering leader. Its epic periods have been the periods of Jefferson, Jackson and Wilson, whereas the Republican party created the tradition of deeds and accomplishment between Lincoln and Roosevelt, when it developed many powerful men, but no towering, wholly dominant figure.

The cause of this difference in the parties lies not far beneath the surface, and need not be gone into now. It is sufficient now to say that the Republicans know the effect of the difference, and they do not fear the Democratic party today as a positive rival. With Wilson thrust into the background by fate, and with no other such leader for Democracy in sight, they are not disturbed by that party's resting on its own merits, when it is a sort of average of the sheer partisanship of Pat Harrison, the obstructiveness and the destructiveness, however brilliant, of Reed, the unimaginative political drudgery of Simmons—all linked with a titular leadership vested in the honestly conservative Underwood, and constantly kicked all over the Democratic lot.

There is a story current in Washington which may or may not be true, and it does not matter whether it is or not, for the mere circulation of it faithfully reveals the attitude of the intelligent Republicans at the Capitol toward their own party with respect to the rivalry of the Democratic party. The acute, rather brilliant, rather cynical, wholly sophisticated Senator Moses, of New Hampshire, is supposed to have gone to Senator Borah, urging him to take the stump for the Republicans in the Maine election. "Well, George," the straight-thinking Borah is said to have asked, "what shall I talk about in praise of our party?" "Oh, the devil, Bill!" replied Moses. "Don't you know there is but one issue in this campaign, and that is that the Democrats are worse than we are?"

Of course it is no slight thing to these gentlemen that the Democratic party, whatever its insignificance on its merits as a rival, may be swept into control of the House and into a more formidable position in the Senate. But what they really dread most is the possibility that they will be forced to the realization that their present befuddlement and bafflement, as they confront their responsibilities, is not merely temporary. What those capable of genuine party introspection most fear is that their work in the Wilson administration, devoted increasingly year by year to fierce criticism and negation, coupled with the chaos of the times, has unloosed forces within the party that

lower its capacity for painful discipline and the concentration of energy and resource that must precede constructive achievement.

They look in amazement at their unparalleled vacillation in dealing with the tariff, and their final "God help us!" slump into a bill setting up such an impregnable wall against imports that nearly all of those to whom they had been accustomed to turn for advice and defence threw up their hands aghast. They consider in equal amazement their own statements that the long heralded revision of the internal revenue laws, completed after many tentative approaches and withdrawals as though it were a hot poker and they were schoolboys, was merely a temporary job, and they ruminate blinkingly upon what the permanent revision will be. They wonder at the irresolution of many months in dealing with the soldiers' bonus, and they ponder wearily and feebly the merchant marine problem, and incline to toss a coin to decide the question on the Harding-Lasker pet, the Ship Subsidy Bill. They behold with a sickening sensation the power of the blocs, power which they think ought to be exercised by their leaders and organization. And, remembering that their political progenitors had a different way, they go off—the thinking ones—and ask themselves what it all means.

When they turn their eyes on their own ranks, their doubts and forebodings increase. Their gaze lingers sadly on old Mr. Fordney, whom they love and laugh at. They recall the amusing stories that filled Washington when he was floundering with the tariff and revenue bills, particularly the story of the White House session on the revenue bill, when their political will to reduce the total of taxes prevailed over the warnings of Secretary Mellon that a deficit inevitably would result. In that session, when certain reductions in expenses were arbitrarily declared, and when certain payments were deferred, thereby adding heavily to the deficit that keeps the administration awake at nights, Mr. Fordney began reeling off figures. The President, himself no wizard at figures, stopped him and, in the patient voice sometimes heard late at night on the road when a party of amateurs are trying to make an engine run, said: "Wait a minute, Joe. Let's get it straight as we go along."

They see Mr. Fordney leaving them, and a new Republican chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, if they carry the fall elections, and they remember that next in line is Green, of Iowa. They see the formal, futile Mondell surrendering the floor leadership to run for the Senate, and, turning to "Nick" Longworth as a possible successor, they ask how "Nick" qualifies with other than a bank cashier kind of ability for orderly work, and how

he compares with leaders like, say, Cannon, of the days when the Republican party knew its own mind, knew what it wanted to do and knew that it could do it. When they turn to the Senate they see the super-accountant Smoot moving to the chair of Penrose, and Lodge asking little more than that he may end his career in dignity. And when they think of new leadership and of the possible formulation of a new party purpose, of the making of the party mind in a new way, they see Borah with the brains, but temperamentally unfit, while the best bet, Johnson, of California—because he not only has brains and courage, but gift and liking for the practicalities of party organizations—wastes himself in disappointment and anger.

There is the immediate future, and the possibility that the fall elections will contribute to the party at large in an impressive way men of definite political philosophy like Beveridge, of Indiana, Miller, of New York, and Pinchot, of Pennsylvania; but they also see La Follette coming back

with his 200,000 primary majority and his probably larger general election majority; and perhaps Brookhart and perhaps Frazier, and others of that school, and they ask themselves can a party philosophy, a party purpose and a party organization be created by these far apart men.

They do not know. The stupidest of them and the brightest of them do not know. All they know is that they must do with the Republican party, whether it finds its own mind and its own way or not. They do not expect their condition to develop a new party, even should it become worse instead of better. When men go to Borah, probably the most intelligently and sincerely concerned about his party of all Republicans, and talk to him about a new party and about him as the new party's leader, the result is one of the very few hearty laughs in Borah's system. No new party; they must await the verdict of the gods and the will of the gods on them as they are.

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The Fascisti and the Class Struggle

THE development of the Fascista movement in Italy offers new surprises every day. It is hard to find, in the whole history of political parties, a party which shows so many new aspects in such a brief space of time. This may be due to the fact that Fascismo is still in its period of growth. Growing children are always delighting their parents with one revelation after another. Later on they are not always so fascinating! In recent months, Fascismo has taken on a distinctly syndicalistic character. It has become a "popular," a "proletarian" movement between January and September of this year, coming forward as the third and most important of the proletarian parties.

At the present writing (October 1st) 800,000 wage earners are members of Fascista unions. This makes the National Fascista party almost equal, in numerical strength, to the Catholic group, and much more powerful than the Socialists and Communists combined. In the proletarian field last year, the Fascisti were an aggressive minority. Today they are a majority party.

The membership of the Fascista syndicates comprises peasants, industrial workers and office employees of all grades. Its rapid expansion has been brought about by the "expeditious tactics" for which the Fascisti are famous. The first Fascista

unions were doubtless the result of persuasion and political campaigning of the ordinary kind. But a great majority of the newer converts have joined the Fascista colors either through direct pressure and violence, or through the appeal that success always exerts on the masses. Today many workmen are joining the Fasci and the Fascista unions simply because these seem to be the strongest in sight and to promise greater immediate advantages.

A sample of the methods by which Socialist or Communist Leagues have been moved to go over en bloc to the Fascisti has been described to me by a friend living in Ferrara. The president of a League, who is a farm worker of course, is singled out. When he makes his regular trip to market on Thursday or Friday, he is unfaillingly beaten up by a crowd of Fascisti. In addition to the bodily harm done him and to the loss of his produce, he is prevented from transacting any business whatever in town. After this has been going on for a month, the man is in desperate straits and does not know which way to turn.

Then suddenly he receives a visit from a deputation of Fascisti: "See here, Tony, we're not trying to prevent a poor man from making a living. If you want to sell your stuff on the market, all