

'Back to Normal' In Connecticut

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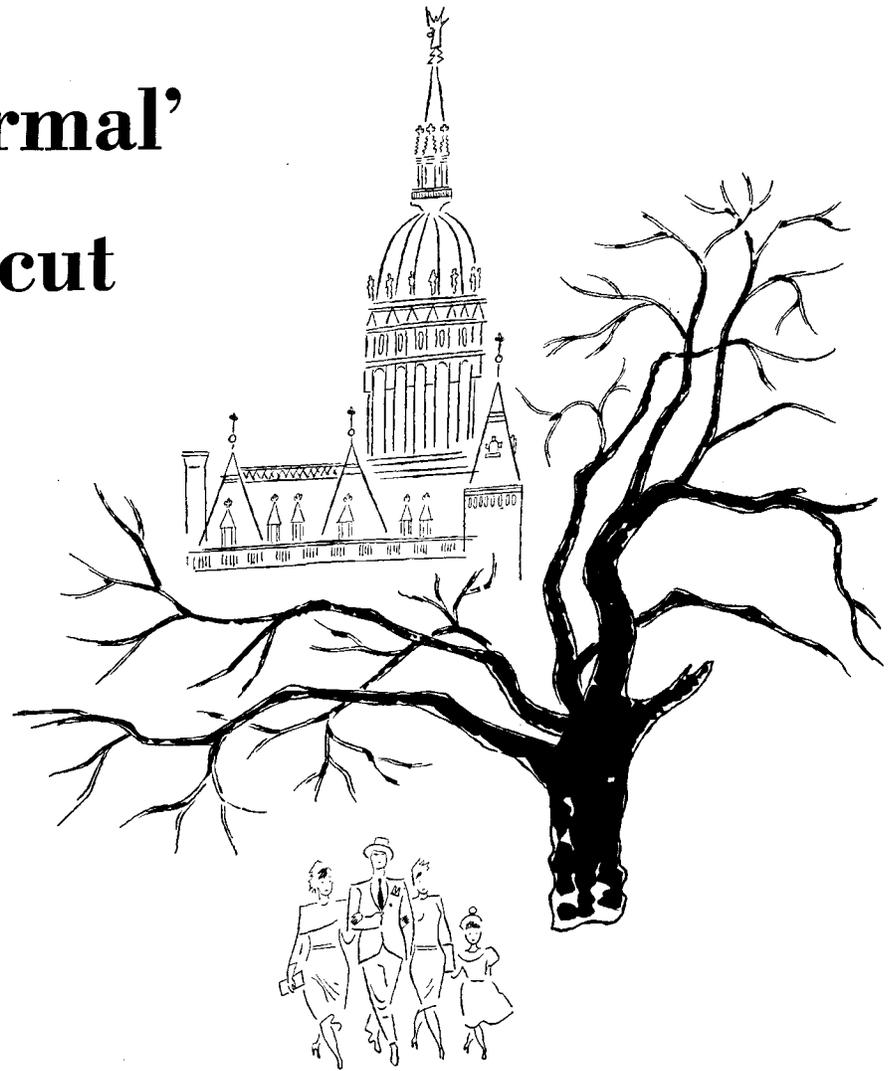
IF HOLLYWOOD ever decides to do a story about a state governor, casting the lead will be no problem. The ideal choice for the part now occupies the governor's chair at Hartford, Connecticut. Not only was he once a member of the film colony, but no name devised by Hollywood promotion men could combine phonetic simplicity with what the public identifies as "class" any better than his own—John Davis Lodge.

Connecticut's State Capitol provides a set as impressive as Lodge's name. Perched on a low hilltop, the building rises like a Loire château over downtown Hartford. There has always been some debate over whether the Capitol's dominant architectural taint is French Provincial or English Victorian, but among students of nineteenth century U.S. building, it is considered a gem of its kind.

A movie treatment of Lodge's career would pose no delicate problems for the Johnston Office. That career contains a full quota of glamour, and nowhere has it descended very deeply into the "controversial" realms of social or economic inequality. As a Hollywood scenarist grew more familiar with Connecticut, he would undoubtedly be pleased to see the resplendent new schools into which a third of the state's 300,000 public-school children will file this fall. In the well-kept, prosperous cities and towns he would see the last of twelve thousand families moving into newly completed low-cost and low-rental homes.

'A Man You Can Believe'

In campaign speeches last fall and in his inaugural last January, Lodge made modest claims. Characterizing himself simply as "a man you can believe," he condemned the reckless spending of the previous Administration, and pledged himself to bringing Connecticut's dis-



tended budget back into balance. As soon as he could, he proposed to replace the irresponsible régime of his predecessor, Democrat Chester Bowles, with a government that thrifty Yankees could rely on.

After eight months in office, Lodge can point to a host of tangible improvements, typified by the new schools and homes. Such works would be a credit to any state, although unfortunately they are results of a program launched by Lodge's predecessor. If he suffers any frustration over the conspicuous absence of his own contributions, Governor Lodge may justly claim a foul. The Democrats, in a gesture unbecoming good sportsmanship, after Lodge's inauguration clung to the center of power in the State Senate and punched holes in every phase of his own program.

The governor's avowed fidelity to businesslike principles had produced a request for the biggest budget in Connecticut history.

The Democrats uncavalierly demon-

strated that proper accounting would prove that Bowles had not left a \$7 million deficit, as the Republicans claimed, but a balanced budget. Thus, Lodge's proposal to raise the state sales tax from two to three per cent they declared superfluous, especially since the governor insisted on eliminating various state social services.

Next the Democrats compelled the governor, against his better judgment, to approve the construction of four thousand additional low-cost and low-rental homes, and tactlessly suggested that he keep his budgetary demands in line with his curtailments in public services.

The Schism

Lodge's tenure in office has so far accomplished one major result. As reported by a political writer for the *Hartford Courant*, one of the governor's staunchest journalistic supporters, his Administration is changing Connecticut "from a traditionally Republican state to a Democratic one." The

G.O.P., says the writer, has made a significant contribution toward pushing the trend along because of the internal rift between the governor's personal coterie, the nucleus of which is formed by friends from the wealthier Connecticut suburbs of New York, and the plain party workers in the rest of the state. Part of the trouble seemed to be that Lodge's dignity, patrician bearing, and aversion to the hard facts of politics have alienated many G.O.P. rank-and-files.

Because of this rift, Connecticut now runs on the initiative of the Democratic cabal in the Senate. Almost every useful measure is of its making. Astute Republicans hold that no one is more responsible for the present state of affairs than the governor himself. His unwillingness to take strong positions has nurtured a take-it-easy, sit-back-and-do-nothing silence.

The Shadow of Shirley Temple

In Lodge, Connecticut has gotten what a writer has described as "Shirley Temple's leading man." The governor, a member of the Massachusetts Lodge family, years ago abandoned an incipient law career for the screen. To him fell the distinction of playing opposite Shirley Temple in "The Little Colonel."

Lodge returned to Connecticut from the Navy in 1946 to replace Clare Boothe Luce as Fourth District Representative in Congress. There he acquitted himself enviably by voting more realistically than most G.O.P. colleagues on foreign affairs and following the party line on domestic issues. He favored the Taft-Hartley bill, opposed broadening of social security, and was against the Brannan Plan and the extension of reciprocal trade, but he plugged hard for aid to Korea and for more U.S. attention to other foreign commitments.

Governor Lodge has been described as "neither a Willkie nor a Dewey but a Landon—a young Landon with a flair for the theatrical." He is exceptionally debonair and aware of it. He is well versed in the arts and literature, partly because of his classical Harvard education. The graceful intonations of his speech reflect both his good upbringing and his sojourn in Hollywood. His public addresses, written largely by a former editorial writer for the Hartford *Courant*, exploit these attributes

well, making ample use of ornate phrases and mixed metaphors, and giving good opportunity for histrionic display.

"We must strive," Lodge said in his inaugural address, "to cut our suit according to our cloth. We must be careful not to impair the seedbed of industrial and commercial enterprise from which our taxes are drawn."

The austerity he prescribed for Connecticut at the start of his term in January, to prepare the state for civil defense—the subject was mentioned fifteen times in a sixteen-page address—he characterized as "an exhilarating challenge to our courage, to our endurance, to our capacity to release the

great, unplumbed moral forces which lie deep within us all. . . .

"By mobilizing our industrial potential," he declared, "...by drawing upon the huge resources of our land, by calling forth all our powers, we can ignite throughout the free world a temper, a purpose, a motive and a faith so contagious that the cause of freedom and justice will flourish enduringly."

When the legislature adjourned this June, the Governor was awakened with a jolt to discover that the solons had entirely neglected to do anything about civil defense. Caught between pressure for economy and the need to prepare Connecticut for its "exhilarating challenge," Lodge summoned the legisla-



Governor and Mrs. Lodge

ture back into special session, at a considerable sacrifice to his economy plans. He was presently handed the legislation to develop what one man with experience in the field has described as "the worst bungled civil defense program of all times."

The Events of November, 1950

The determination of Connecticut voters last November to toss out Chester Bowles and his "Little Brain Trust" was made clear by the 880,000 votes cast—the largest off-year total in the state's record books. Of course, when the totals were certified, Lodge had beaten Bowles by only 17,000 votes. A one per cent switch would have kept Bowles in office. But a majority—albeit a small one—had had its fill. In cities and small towns alike, Bowles tagged behind the Democratic ticket. Incumbent Senator Brien McMahon retained his seat safely. William Benton, his junior colleague, eked out a narrow victory over his Republican competitor. But still Connecticut Republicans were overjoyed. Behind Lodge they had thrown all their heaviest artillery, for Chester Bowles was the symbol of all the evils of government predicated on service to the people.

What really cost Chester Bowles his job last fall was something that the former governor recognizes and readily admits. He had tried to do "too much too fast." Connecticut's tradition-minded majority couldn't take the sudden disturbance of their habits. To them, however useful and beneficial his objectives, Governor Bowles seemed an abrasive with not much respect for the accepted ways of gradual change.

In a sense, Bowles had gotten into office by a fluke. In 1948, many upstate or "swamp" Yankees preferred a Democrat who was a New England Protestant to a Republican candidate who chanced to be an Irish Catholic. This, coupled with heavy Democratic pluralities in the cities and the momentum of the Truman boom, pushed Bowles into office by two thousand votes. Even some normally Democratic Catholic votes which switched reciprocally to Governor James C. Shannon were not quite enough to save the latter's bid for re-election.

Bowles, according to a veteran Hartford political reporter, never expected to win. His close friend Elmo Roper had been just as inaccurate about

Bowles's chances as about Truman's. But when he did find himself in the governor's chair, Bowles had a complete new administrative program in his pocket.

In effect, ultraconservative Hartford was turned into New Deal Washington in capsule, with many of the latter's virtues and more of its failings. At once, Bowles surrounded himself by a team of eager young men and women who became a Hartford brain trust. Most of



them were liberal-intellectual offshoots of New England's better colleges. The most unfortunate shortcomings were that Connecticut wasn't ready for this new, high-powered kind of government operation and that Bowles, for all his dynamism, was no Franklin Roosevelt. On top of this, Bowles's fondness for advertising techniques led to an increasing reliance on press releases in place of careful planning.

Administration by Fanfare

Although there were many tangible benefits for Connecticut citizens, the show began to assume as much importance as the achievements themselves. More than one devoted partisan of the Bowles Administration held the impression that programs were adopted or actions taken with an eye on the morning headlines rather than the consequences of the step which inspired them. It became administration by fanfare.

But just as in Washington during the "Hundred Days" of 1933, so much activity was bound to produce many reforms. The young men and women whom Bowles had gathered round him were doers. If they cut corners or grew impatient with staid routine, it was because of their eagerness to serve the public.

The program of more public services—better educational facilities, low-cost and low-rental housing, elimination of racial and religious discrimination, improved old age pensions, better hospitals, gentler eviction laws—was hard enough to sell in one package even to individuals already believing in the necessity of greater official considera-

tion for the citizen's welfare. To traditionally conservative New Englanders who had elected more than twice as many Republican as Democratic governors since 1850, it was outright social revolution.

"Government," Bowles has said, "must increase opportunity and security for the groups which compose it. Specifically, it should tackle those projects such as slum clearance and low-cost housing which private enterprise cannot afford or is not prepared to undertake."

Bowles believes that private enterprise has its role in today's society. It has provided miraculous living standards. But he takes issue with the conservative who regards private enterprise as more than an economic means to an end, "as something on a par with religion."

The trouble with such people, he said, is that they believe that public problems, if left unattacked, will in the long run solve themselves. They are cutting off their noses, Bowles implied, to spite their faces, for "the more competent the liberalism of state governments, the more positive their approach to these problems, the faster will we be able to slow down the trend toward concentration and centralization in Washington."

For such views as these, Bowles was called "a traitor to his class" and in Connecticut his program prompted a general revival of the epithet "That Man" as well as the inevitable comparisons with his old boss, Franklin Roosevelt.

It is true that Bowles is an idealist, with a genuine concern for the welfare of the public. He brooks no traffic with intolerance or prejudice. He believes in the rights of labor and in principles of liberal government. But it is just as true that he is an ambitious man with his own next step up firmly fixed in his mind.

The Do-Gooders

Whether his program for a progressive Connecticut was fully thought out is debatable. Many feel that the energies devoted to publicity could have been better spent in careful planning. The sudden do-gooder enthusiasms often ignored the lack of necessary foundations. With a legislature split between a Democratic Senate and a Republican House of Representatives,

Bowles's program had two strikes on it from the start. Still, if it had been more effectively planned, it might have run into fewer obstacles.

Bowles's young men and women had plenty of good ideas. Their failing—and this cost their downfall—was a lack of the understanding and patience necessary to win public confidence for what they believed in. Instead, they had a vast contempt for anyone who rejected their ideas. Unable to accept the crude political axiom, "If you can't lick 'em, jine 'em," they doomed their man to defeat.

'Throw the Radicals Out!'

In defeating Bowles, the G.O.P. had accomplished one of its major national objectives. A "dangerous" man had been removed from a spotlighted position. The Republicans hoped that his rejection would help to rally all Americans against the threat of a welfare state.

The campaign to "get" Bowles was a strategic triumph. Persecuted majorities pilloried the former governor for his protection of minorities. An anonymous group warned Connecticut priests that Bowles was a confirmed anti-Catholic. As evidence, they cited the fact that Bowles's name had been used on the back cover of a circulation-raising reprint of several articles by Paul Blanshard in the *Nation* which challenged certain practices of the Catholic church. The *Nation* presently revealed that Bowles's name had been used without his consent, but the propaganda had presumably done its work.

Similarly, doctors throughout the state were warned by mail that Chester Bowles favored socialized medicine. If so, this was a rare instance of Bowles's advertising background letting him down. In none of his pronouncements or programs was there even a hint of interest in the subject.

A letter to citizens of the state from Charles Keats, the G.O.P. publicity director, reminded all voters that Bowles's office was a haven for A.D.A. and OPA cronies, for importees from Washington agencies and other left-wing groups—"a legion of so-called liberal thinkers and economists." These "strangers in Connecticut," Keats charged, formed a miniature advertising agency operating in the State Capitol at public expense to sell socialistic ideas alien to the American way.



Chester Bowles

Some salvos, however, missed their mark. Lodge, for instance, wooed the large Italian vote in the industrial centers with the help of his beautiful Italian wife. Lodge himself speaks fluent Italian, which he used at times in campaign addresses, and his wife is an erstwhile member of the Italian aristocracy. Unfortunately for Lodge, news of her former social status had gone before her, and he failed to estimate the coolness which people of solid *paisan* stock might show to the husband of a *signorina*. On Election Day, the main Italian districts showed a marked leaning toward Bowles.

The Morning After

Many of the Italians may have felt that Lodge's appeal smacked of a social and economic system that they had come to the New World to escape, but

the rest of Connecticut did its duty by the G.O.P. version of the American Way. The citizens may not exactly have risen to a man, but there were enough Lodge votes to give the Bowles interlopers their comeuppance.

For these voters, worn by two years of hyperthyroid political activity, the results heralded a well-earned relief. What does it matter if the Republicans are engaged in internecine warfare to determine which faction shall run the governor? Who cares if the governor asks for the largest budget in Connecticut history? Or if a small-town real-estate-and-mortgage dealer, as Lodge's executive secretary, represents "the businessman's viewpoint" in the governor's office? Whose concern is it that campaign pledges are not redeemed? The people's? After all, didn't they throw the radical rascals out?

Claghorns or Catos?

In a critical study of Southern Senators, a Washington writer concludes that their alliance with the G.O.P. is a myth

W. McNEIL LOWRY

PRESIDENT TRUMAN is convinced that the American people can never get the facts of life from the American press, and particularly from its leading columnists.

This conviction of the President's is not news. What is news is that Mr. Truman has recently had it confirmed by a spate of articles loudly revealing that the Democrats face the "widest and deepest" split suffered by a major party since 1912. The President of the United States begs to differ, and though he is doing so privately he is yet doing it extensively.

The term "widest and deepest" came from New York *Times* Washington Correspondent Arthur Krock, writing about a speech by Senator Harry Byrd of Virginia at the Atlanta Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner. Byrd was very tough on Harry Truman. Byrd was in Georgia. Georgia is in the South. Therefore, Krock inferred that the Southern Democrats were going to make things tough for their own candidate in 1952, particularly if the Republicans nominated General Dwight Eisenhower.

Claghorns All?

To Arthur Krock, Senator Byrd and his Southern colleagues are the repository of whatever wisdom and sanity remain in the party of Jefferson and Jackson. To a vast majority of the people for whom Krock and other Northern newspapermen write, they are duly elected versions of Senator Claghorn, Dixiecrats all, peanut politicians in both the literal and the figurative senses, and the tail of that "Republican-Dixiecrat coalition" which has frustrated the Administration's will since everybody but Krock can remember.

Both conceptions are myths, though

like all good myths they serve as a cloak for palpable historical facts. The twenty-two Democratic Senators from the South are men as various, in ability and in political philosophy, as the twenty-eight other Democrats in the present Senate, and there are at least as many able Senators among them as among the Republicans, who have twice their number. In political bias, they range from Byrd to Senator John Sparkman of Alabama, who was the Northern Democrats' second choice for majority leader last January.

Harry Truman knows this, though in the heat of a campaign against Congress he is perfectly willing to fire broadsides at all the Southerners as one target. Truman believes that Harry Byrd is a Dixie Republican who would turn back the clock and put the South right back where it was twenty

years ago, in the days before TVA, rural electrification, soil conservation, farm price supports, social security, and free school lunches. Truman believes that most other Southerners, including those in the Senate, want from his Administration the same things people in the rest of the country want—peace, freedom, and security.

The Republican-Southern Democratic coalition was born in labor legislation and nourished on the strong stuff of the Truman civil-rights program. Irritation against Mr. Truman and the vested interest of keeping him as a target still give it life. But most of the crucial issues of 1950 and 1951 have found the Southerners in coalition with Northern Democrats and that handful of Republicans who often bolt the Taft-Wherry leadership.

One exception was the June fight over the price-control measure. The Southern Senators were convinced that the President could have controlled prices with the bill he was given almost a year earlier and that he was now asking them to do the impossible after six months of inaction in 1950. Only four—Hill and Sparkman of Alabama, Kefauver of Tennessee and Fulbright of Arkansas—supported the rollback amendment offered by Senator Paul H. Douglas, Democrat of Illinois. G.O.P. AND SOUTHERN DEMOCRATS IN CONTROL, accurately reported Krock's *New York Times*.

But the other major roll-call tests at this session have been different. It was Russell of Georgia who beat off all threats (even minor ones) to the Administration's farm program, and he carried practically every Southerner but Byrd with him. On three other roll-calls (public health assistance to the states, a crucial amendment to the draft bill, and the troops-to-Europe



Richard B. Russell