

A SUMMER CANDIDATE AND HIS WINNING WAY

BY ARTHUR H. LABAREE

Cartoon by ALBERT LEVERING

WITH warm weather comes the summer political candidate. Political booms, carefully nurtured these many months, are beginning to blossom forth into full-blown readiness to be plucked when the fall campaign commences, unless they wither and die for lack of sufficient cultivation. The seeds of ambition have been carefully sown by many a prospective servant of the people. But the extent of the harvest depends upon many things. A dry soil is not conducive to the rapid growth of anything, and political booms are no exception to the rule. These arid prohibition days are not helpful to the political candidate.

Time was, in the good old days, when the ambitious man could form his friends into a political club, name it the John Doe Association, spend \$10 for printing and hold an outing at some suburban picnic park. Then, provided he did not retain too large a percentage of the proceeds to finance his campaign, but was free and generous in tapping kegs of amber fluid, he would, long before the festival day was over, be voted a jolly good fellow and announced as his party's candidate for almost anything from Alderman to Governor of the state.

But now it requires real political finesse to weather our dry summers, and the seeker after public office must be reinforced by considerably more than a few kegs of beer and an ability to shout: "Fill 'em up again, boys; it's all on me!"

Prohibition is not the only factor that has eliminated the "good old days." Equal suffrage had its part in dimming the glory of the old-fashioned political outing, when the Hon. John Smith, "our standard bearer," was kept busy seeing that "the boys" didn't go home thirsty. Women are not beer guzzlers, particularly in public, and when they acquired the vote in New York State something had to be provided at political outings to keep them interested. Games and dancing were fairly successful, but it also helped to have a few real celebrities on hand to make a speech or two. The ladies didn't take kindly to the old rough and ready political outings, when the prime requisite was a prospective candidate's ability to keep at least as sober as his friends. In the old sea-faring days, when schooners cruised the bar at the rate of one per second per bartender, the newspaper reporters used to write that "all factional differences were laid aside and politics were forgotten." They were. For after the fifteenth or sixteenth "schooner" the Hon. John Jones can't recall whether the Hon. Michael Murphy had run against him in the primary or not, and didn't care a hang if he had. And the only political speech that was required ran something like this:

"On this here, now as—er, as—ahem! a-ugh—oh, you know what I mean, fellers, I propose three cheers for our honorable standard bearer, Mr. John Jones, our next Assemblyman. Fill 'em up again, boys!"

The three cheers would be given with a vim, and every one would go home with the idea firmly implanted that Mr. Jones was our next Assemblyman and nothing could stop him. This feeling was heightened if, toward the end of a perfect day, a few of "the boys" forgot themselves sufficiently to throw beer glasses at each other—in a perfectly friendly way, of course—and, after the reserves from the local precinct and the ambulance surgeons from the suburban hospital had done their work, the Hon. John Jones went to the station house and bailed 'em all out.

But near beer, served in bottles, will never convince the sturdy and throat-parched voter that the Hon. Mr. Jones is going to be our next anything. Equal suffrage and prohibition compel more subtle methods of gaining and holding political friends, even though the personal qualifications of the candidates are no higher.

Under consideration now are the candidates for the smaller offices, such as Assemblymen, Aldermen, Sheriff, County Clerk and the like. But they are the candidates who are closest to the great army of voters. Few of those who go to the polls on Election Day ever see a candidate for Governor, and almost none lays eyes upon a Presidential aspirant, but every one knows his Assemblyman and Alderman, and only they who spend Election Day playing golf fail to have a personal acquaintance with the holders of the county offices. The smaller the office the nearer its holder is to the voters of his district, and there is no denying the fact that the local magistrate has far more influence with these voters than has the justice of the Supreme Court, whom they seldom see.

So the relatively unimportant office seeker is in reality the man who, because of his close association with the average voter, wields the greatest direct influence upon the shaping of political policies. If the state leader, for instance, offends a Supreme Court justice he loses few friends, unless the justice, by reaching down through the ramifications of the political organization, gains the ear of the lesser lights. But let the state leader lose the friendship of a county boss or of a popular Assemblyman, and immediately several hundred votes are turned, and there is talk that the party in the state needs reorganizing. The little fellow, therefore, is by no means so unimportant as he seems.

How is John Doe, anxious for political preferment, to obtain, first, the indorsement of his party, and, secondly, the indorsement of the voters, as revealed by their ballots on Election Day? The first is as important as the second. Although few persons, outside of the actual workers in a political organization, know it, the district leader, who is usually the county chairman, must personally approve

each prospective office holder, no matter how unimportant, before he becomes a full-fledged candidate. In most cases, of course, the leader does not tell John Doe that he has his approval. John Doe would find it difficult, if not quite impossible, even to see the leader upon an indorsement-seeking errand. But, nevertheless, the leader knows all about Mr. Doe, what he has done for the party and who his friends are, and, if these friends are told that there is no objection to Doe, his way is easy. But if it becomes known in certain quarters that the nomination to which Mr. Doe aspires has been promised to some one else—which is usually the reason ascribed for shelving John—the candidate's friends break the news to him, as gently as possible, that he had better wait a year or two before running for office.

But, the politically knowing reader may object, the direct primaries did away with all bossism and the hand-picking of candidates, did they not?

Yes, they did not!

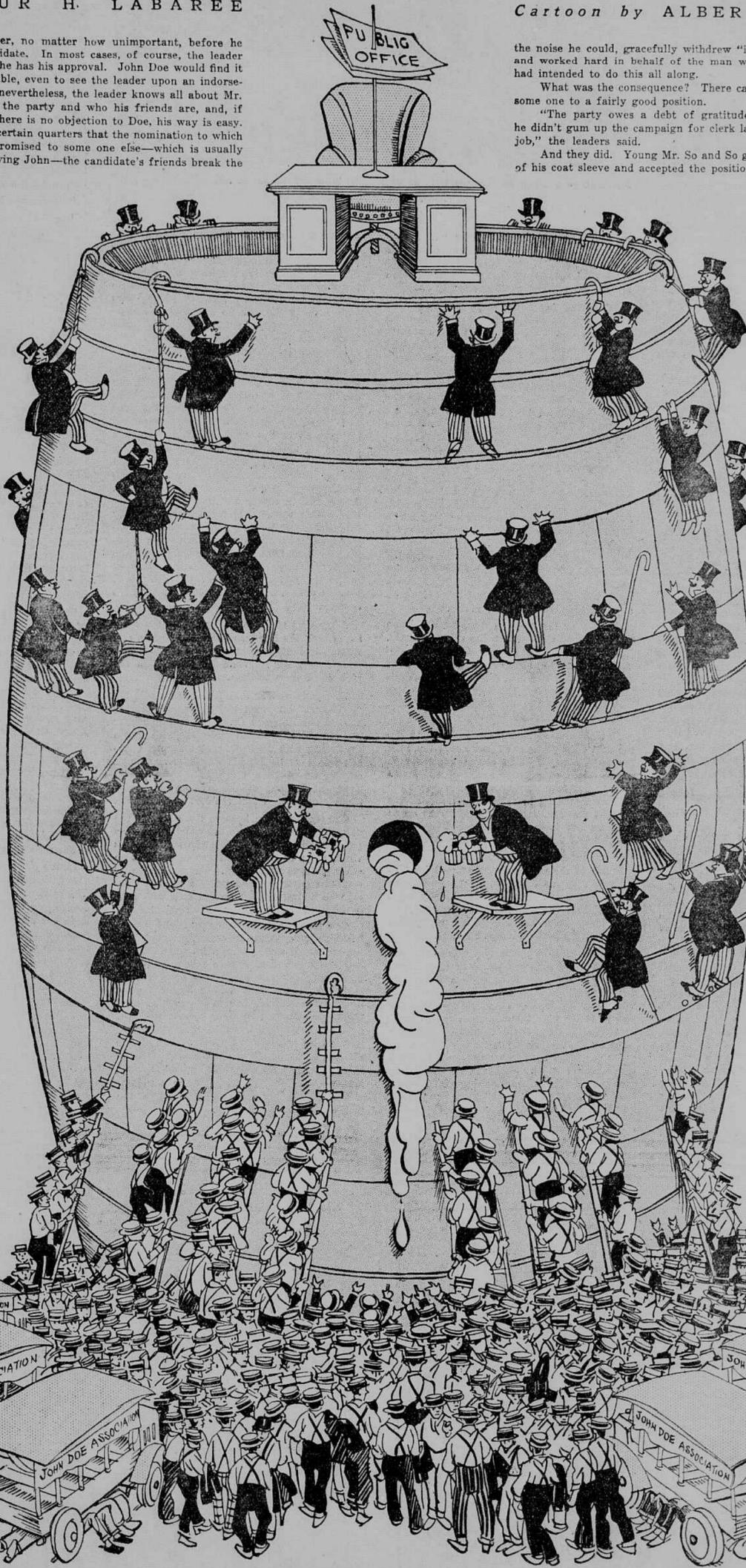
Let John Doe, turned down by the district leader, conclude to run independently in the primaries, against the organization's choice for the same nomination, and see what happens to him. In nine cases out of ten Mr. Doe's friends, heeding their master's voice, will tell John right up to Election Day, that he can't be beaten. Then they will go to the polls and vote against him. Or if, by the one chance in ten, Mr. Doe should capture the coveted nomination by defeating the opposing primary candidate his troubles have just commenced. There will be several nice, long, thin blades, of exceeding sharpness, prepared, metaphorically speaking, to be thrust into Mr. Doe's back, right where it hurts most. And, although he can prove mathematically beforehand that he cannot be defeated, he will discover, in the cold gray dawn of the morning after election, that figures do lie; that is, when they are concocted by a self-deluded nominee.

There are, of course, exceptions to every rule. A certain man was elected to office last fall in one of the New York City counties who by all tokens was in for a knifing at the hands of his party. For this man committed the usually unpardonable sin of refusing to withdraw when he was told. He announced himself as a primary candidate for his party's nomination for a certain office. He had two opponents. One of them was favored by the party leaders. They arranged that, on the eve of the last day for filing declarations, two of the candidates should

withdraw and their committees on vacancies should unite upon the leaders' favorite. But Mr. Candidate had some friends who vowed he would run in that primary, the leaders to the contrary notwithstanding. So as the day approached for the filing of declarations they took him to Atlantic City and kept him in an obscure hotel there where he couldn't be found until it was too late for him to decline. Then he made a whirlwind campaign and won the primaries, owing largely to his personal popularity and the fact that he had enough real friends to defy the wishes of the leaders.

And he was not knifed upon Election Day. His opponent was a weak candidate. According to popular report he had been put up to be knocked down. And he was. The successful aspirant decided that he had been elected by a lucky fluke and wasn't big enough to continue his political career by defying the party's leaders, so he quickly restored himself to their good graces by letting them dictate all his appointments and everything was serene once more.

But political leaders are not all as astute as they are supposed to be. There was a young man who last summer announced that he in-



Prohibition has closed the beer-keg route to public office, and thus far the John Doe Association has found no substitute

the noise he could, gracefully withdrew "in the interests of the party" and worked hard in behalf of the man who won the nomination. He had intended to do this all along.

What was the consequence? There came an opportunity to appoint some one to a fairly good position.

"The party owes a debt of gratitude to Mr. So and So because he didn't gum up the campaign for clerk last fall, so we'll give him this job," the leaders said.

And they did. Young Mr. So and So grinned widely in the direction of his coat sleeve and accepted the position with thanks. It was as big an office as he ever had expected to get.

A more certain method of obtaining results is that of nailing a promise before the declination. The Hon. Peter Jones let it be known that he intended to be the next Sheriff, provided the opposing party or an act of Providence didn't beat him to it. There was a fusion movement under way at the time, but Pete was popular and he had numerous friends.

"I shall enter this race without thought of withdrawing," he promised, "unless, of course, my friends agree that my withdrawal will be to the best interests of my party."

There was wild applause and cries of "Go to it, Pete!"

Pete did, but so did the man who hoped to be the fusion candidate. As the day drew near for the filing of declarations the Hon. Pete took a vacation.

"Will he withdraw and let us have fusion or will he stick and make it a three-cornered fight?"

The question trembled upon every tongue, more or less. Meanwhile, the fusion aspirant decided that he needed a short rest. By a happy coincidence, carefully arranged in advance, he found himself stopping at the same hotel as that selected by the Hon. Peter for his siesta. Three hours before the last moment when candidates could file their declarations to run for office Peter appeared at a crowded political meeting in his home county.

"My friends," he said, "I have given this matter careful consideration, and I have decided that, no matter what my personal ambitions may be, they must be cast aside for the good of my party, and that means fusion. Therefore, I intend to decline the opportunity to seek the nomination for Sheriff. I thank you for your kind attention."

As he descended from the platform, amid the plaudits of the audience,

who regretted that so upright and sterling a citizen as the Hon. Peter had to sacrifice his ambition, Pete patted one pocket, with a little, self-satisfied smile.

He did not take the trouble to explain, and it could never afterward be proved, that in that pocket was the written promise of the fusion candidate to appoint him his first deputy. The fusion candidate won, as he could not have done had there been a three-cornered fight, and it was never necessary for Peter to produce his scrap of paper as a reminder. He probably wouldn't have, anyway, for the making of a promise of appoint-

ment to office for political gain is a misdemeanor, as against both promisor and promisee, but, in any event, the new sheriff made good to Peter.

Mayor John F. Hylan of New York has joined the ranks of the summer candidates, and Hylan leagues are springing up in all parts of the city. Consideration of Mayor Hylan brings to mind two other classes of candidates, the civic spellbinder and the all-year-round campaigner. They cannot be listed specifically as summer candidates, because their activities extend through every season of the year.

Originally Mayor Hylan was a good example of the office-seeker who made his appeal largely to the civic organizations. Brooklyn is the home of the local civic association. Before he was Mayor—before he was even a city magistrate—the name of John F. Hylan was known in every civic organization in Brooklyn, and almost as well known among those of Queens, where civic organizations likewise flourish.

A civic organization, if there are some who do not know, is a group of residents of any given community whose ostensible purpose is to obtain public improvements at as small a cost as possible to the property owners, but whose real object—although most of the members feel it only sub-consciously—is to elect somebody to office.

Many office-seekers, however, confine their efforts to the civic organization in which they happen to hold office. That, it has been shown, is a short-sighted policy, and it is likely to result in no greater honor and financial reward than the aldermanship of the district. Talk to 'em all, was Mayor Hylan's motto, and, pursuing his old rule, he is already bending the energies of his summer campaign for reelection to arousing the civic interests.

The campaigner who never rests, winter or summer, is the office-seeker most prodigal in time and effort, but there are instances on record which show it pays. There is a judicial officeholder in one of New York City's boroughs who campaigns 365 days in the year, and nights, too. He is just as likely to make an address on the night after Election Day as he is on the evening before. He never rests. Almost nightly he is speaking at a banquet or some other sort of gathering, and as a consequence he has held his present position for almost twenty years and has established the reputation that he cannot be dislodged from it.

Naturally, this man does not make political speeches wherever he goes. He almost never makes a political speech. He is a fluent talker, is mildly humorous, and can discuss practically any topic in an interesting manner. He suits his topics to the occasion, and, while he is never at a loss for words, neither is he ever at a loss for votes when he runs for reelection.

Legislating himself into a higher office is another of the winning ways of some feeders at the public crib. This method requires that the candidate be already an Assemblyman or a State Senator. Legislative positions in New York State pay salaries of only \$1,500 a year, and the legislator naturally needs a little recompense for the sacrifice he tells his constituents he is making by remaining in the legislative halls in Albany, when he might far more profitably be conducting his law, grocery or bootblacking business at home. Legislating themselves into higher office is one of the favorite indoor sports of our New York Assemblymen and Senators.

One of them during the last session fathered a bill increasing salaries and creating several new positions in a certain city office. As soon as Governor Miller signed the bill he was appointed to the best of the new jobs he had created. He thereby procured for himself a position paying \$5,000 a year for three years. Many measures of this sort are introduced every year by Assemblymen or Senators, who, while they never admit having any idea that they might benefit thereby, are quick to heed the call of public duty that comes after the bill is passed, bringing a higher salary and a longer term.

Another time-worn legislative method is for an Assemblyman or Senator to introduce a measure dividing his home district into two districts for a higher office—Municipal Court Justice, for instance. If he can make two districts out of what was one he does not disturb the justice already in office, but his bill requires a justice in the new district, and, provided he has the necessary legal qualifications, he permits the leaders to decide that he is the man best fitted for the position. The latter process is not difficult, because if they had not decided that important question well in advance the bill would never have been introduced. In creating a new court district—still using the municipal court as an example—several jobs are assured besides that of the presiding jurist, so the leaders are satisfied to let Assemblyman Richard Roe get himself elected to the ermine so long as they name the clerks and other attaches of his court. Assemblyman—later Justice-elect—Roe has no objection to that at all, for he has legislated

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