

# 1908 IN HISTORY

### A Brief but Comprehensive Review of the Important Events and Tendencies of the Year Past For Busy Readers Who Want to Be Well Informed.

By EDWIN S. POTTER, Editor Universal News Analysts.

Despite the Depression, Republicans Retain Control.

Looking now calmly and dispassionately back across the field of conflicting interests and balancing forces which shaped the American presidential campaign of 1908, one incontestable conclusion forces itself on the open mind. It is that a majority of the people became convinced in one way or another that it is "better to fly to others that they know not of" and to give the trust regulating policies of President Roosevelt a longer and fairer trial in the hands of his favorite adviser, William Howard Taft.

On Jan. 31 was issued the challenge of the dominant personality and official of the party in power which was to determine in many ways the plans of battle of the different parties for the capture of the American electorate—namely, the message of President Roosevelt to congress advocating his program of radical legislation.

On June 16 at Chicago the Republicans got together. They cheered forty minutes when Chairman Lodge eulogized the president and seated all the Taft contestants. The thoroughness of this operation caused it to be described as the administration "steam roller," of which Frank H. Hitchcock was the engineer. The only fight was on the court injunction plank. Samuel Gompers, head of the A. F. of L., and other leaders of organized labor, confronted with numerous court decisions unfavorable to their methods and facing lower wages or lack of work for many workers, had decided to fight in the open for the party whose labor plank suited them best.

On July 7 at Denver the national convention of the Democratic party assembled with the knowledge that an overwhelming majority of its delegates were pledged to the nomination of William J. Bryan of Nebraska. The big gathering broke all records for continuous cheering when the blind Oklahoma senator, Gore, eulogized the Nebraskan, the demonstration lasting eighty-seven minutes. Bryan was nominated on the first ballot, although the names of Johnson and Gray were presented. John W. Kern of Indiana, with the approval of Bryan, was named for vice president.

As in the Republican convention, the main contest had to do with the wording of the injunction or labor plank of the platform. Gompers was present and gave his assent to the plank finally agreed upon. While asserting that the "courts of justice are the bulwark of our liberty," it demanded a modification of the injunction law so as to provide for a trial by jury in cases of indirect contempt. It declared against treating labor organizations as illegal combinations in restraint of trade, favored the eight hour day and promised a general employers' liability law.

Bryan at once induced his executive committee to say that it would reject all corporate gifts, would limit individual donations to \$10,000 and would publish on Oct. 15 and daily thereafter the names of givers of \$100 and upward. The final total published after election was \$629,644 from 75,000 contributors. Although the Republican convention had rejected a publicity plank, Taft and his managers decided to work under the New York law and publish names and amounts of contributors after the election.

was filled by Herman Bidder, editor of the New York Staats-Zeitung.

July 28, at Cincinnati, Taft delivered his speech of acceptance. He frankly accepted the role of "me too" by defending the Roosevelt policies in their entirety and explaining that his work, if elected, would be to carry on those reforms in detail.

Aug. 12, at Lincoln, Neb., Bryan was notified of his nomination and sounded the keynote of his campaign in the question, "Shall the people rule?" In subsequent speeches he gave great prominence to the bank guaranty plan, to the popular election of senators and to campaign publicity before election. He made a special bid for the labor vote on the injunction plank. He would destroy all trusts controlling over 50 per cent of an industry.

Regarding the depression as the beginning of the breakdown of the capitalist system and claiming the army of idle workers as their asset, the Socialists of America went into the campaign with better weapons than ever before. On May 10 the Socialist convention met at Chicago. For the first time the Socialists of America affirmed their position on specific questions of policy. The convention nominated on the first ballot unanimously Eugene V. Debs for president and Benjamin Hanford for vice president, the same ticket put up by the Socialists in 1904.

The Prohibitionists, conscious of the great strides their cause had made on the local option issue in many states, nominated Eugene W. Chafin of Illinois and Aaron S. Watkins of Ohio July 15 at Columbus, O., on a platform containing many radical proposals besides that against the sale or manufacture of intoxicants.

On July 28 at Chicago the first national convention of the Independence party, outgrowth of the league organized by Editor Hearst, named Thomas L. Hisgen of Massachusetts and John Temple Graves of Georgia on a platform containing most of the radical ideas of the Democrats and some more radical. Opposition to Bryan was its keynote.

The People's party April 3 at St. Louis again named Thomas E. Watson of Georgia as its standard bearer along with S. W. Williams of Indiana, although it did not put a ticket up in all of the states.

On Sept. 15, at Columbus, O., Hearst stirred up the hitherto calm current of the campaign by reading into his speech the first batch of a series of letters which had been stolen from the files of the Standard Oil company and which threw a sinister light on the activities of various public men, notably Foraker, Bailey, MacLaurin, Sibley, certain Pennsylvania judges and ex-Governor Stone, who was urged to appoint them. Most of the letters were written by Vice President Archbold of the trust and contained divers certificates of deposit for large sums of money. At the same time Hearst repeated the story of the alleged attempt to bribe former Attorney General Monest of Ohio wherein Haskell, the Democratic treasurer, was made to figure. As governor of Oklahoma Haskell also was accused of protecting a legal branch of the Standard. Foraker at once withdrew from the campaign, and the president issued a hot statement condemning the Ohioan and gave out an old letter showing how Taft had refused to deal with Foraker; then compared this course to that of Bryan and Haskell. Bryan replied, demanding a hearing for Haskell, and then ensued a bitter verbal duel on personal and party issues. Haskell resigned, but protesting innocence, as did also Du Pont, the powder trust head, from the chairmanship of the Republican speakers' bureau. Both the president and Taft took the ground that publishing names of contributors before election would be to invite unfair and partisan criticisms of candidates.

Gompers appealed to all unions in the A. F. of L. to give moral and financial support to Bryan. Speaker Cannon was the special target of the Gompers battery, and "Cannotsm" became a national issue, many candidates for congress being pledged against Cannon as the next speaker.

On Nov. 3 the voters of the nation had their say. The extent of the Republican victory can be best remembered by the statement that Taft carried every state that Roosevelt did in 1904 except Nebraska, Colorado and Nevada. Furthermore, Taft invaded the solid south with small pluralities in Maryland and Missouri and large gains in other southern states. The popular vote stood: Taft, 7,637,676; Bryan, 6,393,182; Debs, 447,051; Chafin, 241,252; Hisgen, 83,188; Watson, 33,871; Gilhaus (Socialist-Labor), 15,421; total, 14,852,239. The total vote in 1904 was 13,510,708. Several states in the Taft column elected Democratic governors—Harmon in Ohio, Marshall in Indiana and Johnson in Minnesota. Taft captured the Democratic stronghold of New York city. The Republican majority in congress was reduced to 47, the total being 219 and the Democratic 172. The senate's Republican complexion was unchanged.

The early months of the long session of congress were devoted chiefly to the Republican wrangle over the terms of a currency bill. The Aldrich relief measure finally went through the senate March 28 despite the all night filibuster of La Follette, to profligate whom the railroad bond feature had been cut out. La Follette named an oligarchy of fourteen wealthy men who, he said, actually ruled the nation. The Vreeland bill, in which clearing house associations were made the channel of the new currency issue, was passed by the house, and then a compromise between the bill and the Aldrich bill, with provision for a joint commission to report on permanent reforms, was adopted by both branches and signed by the president.

Under the president's prodding the

## Grand Theatre, Friday, Jan. 8



EDWARD MARTINDEL as TOTEM POLE PETE in "The Alaskan"

Sterling liability bill was advanced by the majority and passed unanimously in both houses. This holds interstate carriers liable for injuries to employees and abolishes the rule barring compensation when the negligence of a fellow employee can be proved.

The Democratic filibuster was met by a gag rule and daily recess until the majority had accomplished its purpose. This included provision for two new battleships instead of the four urged by the president, higher pay for army officers and privates and a liability law to protect employees in the service of the government. The house failed to pass the anti-injunction and anti-trust amendment to the Sherman law desired by the president in the interest of labor. "In God We Trust" was restored to the gold coins.

Congress reassembled Dec. 7 and received the final Roosevelt message, in which executive control of legalized trusts was advocated and judges were urged to heed the will of legislators according to present day standards. A bitter controversy arose over one passage which intimated that congress had confined the secret service to the treasury department because members did not want to be investigated. The senate moved an investigation of the secret service, and the house demanded proof of the president's assertions.

### Uncle Sam Insists Upon Carrying a Big Stick.

The administration's foreign policy has exemplified well this year a favorite saying of the president, "Speak softly, but carry a big stick." This nation has preserved good feeling toward other nations, but at the same time has sent its battleship fleet to the antipodes and devoted much thought and money to navy and army betterments.

March 11 at Magdalena bay the fleet ended its voyage around the Horn, in command of Evans, and was wildly welcomed all along the coast to San Francisco. Evans then gave up the command to Sperry, and on July 7 the fleet sailed from San Francisco on its record breaking naval practice cruise, visiting Hawaii, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, China and the Philippines before the year's end.

The war department changed heads July 1, Luke E. Wright succeeding Taft.

On May 5 the state department concluded a five year arbitration treaty with Japan. On Nov. 30 notes were signed containing an agreement with Japan for concert of action in maintaining the status quo in the orient, a virtual alliance.

The treasury in January had a deficit of \$10,000,000, which grew to \$60,000,000 by the end of the fiscal year.

The postoffice department, by order of the president, ruled that papers in foreign languages must submit translations and authorized postmasters to exclude papers containing incitement to murder, arson and treason. In May the parcel limit to England was raised to eleven pounds, and Oct. 1 the postal rate to that country was lowered to 2 cents, later the same to Germany.

On Aug. 14 the president appointed a commission, headed by Professor L. H. Bailey of Cornell, to gather data looking to betterment of farm life.

May 13 to 15 at the White House the first conference of state governors and best men met the president to discuss the conservation of national resources, the conference making a new

element of national unity. This body reassembled Dec. 8 and approved a great scheme of waterways by a bond issue.

### Old World Rulers Had a Nerve Racking Year.

GREAT BRITAIN.—The government of King Edward began the year with a program of radical legislation, including old age pensions, frankly intended as a sop to socialism, which showed signs of rapid growth along with the increase of the vast army of the unemployed. Asquith took the reins April 5, when Premier Bannerman retired on account of continued illness. Asquith carried through the age pension bill July 29, the plan of which is \$1.25 a week to all over seventy years of age whose income is under \$150 a year, to take effect Jan. 1, 1909. The Asquith government encountered a boisterous campaign for woman suffrage, the suffragettes organizing huge parades and rushes on the parliament to attract attention, many women choosing prison terms rather than give bonds to keep the peace. Alarm over the signs of coming revolt throughout India has increased, with numerous acts of violence against the ruling Britons. CANADA felt the effects of the American depression in decreased exports and in a halt in her industrial development. The general elections Oct. 26 sustained the Laurier government. A great historical pageant marked the tercentenary of Quebec, the Prince of Wales attending.

GERMANY.—The German people will remember the year 1908 as marking the end of their Kaiser's absolute, personal rule and the beginning of ministerial responsibility to the reichstag. This revolution through the power of public opinion voiced in the radical press and in parliamentary action of nearly all parties came to a head in October, the occasion of the outburst being an authorized interview in the London Telegraph in which the Kaiser told of his refusal to join a secret coalition against England during the Boer war and of sending war plans to the queen. It was like the last straw. The reichstag called Von Bulow to account, and William made concessions.

TURKEY.—The heaven of democracy showed signs of working even in the European stronghold of autocratic Islam. The sultan of Turkey saw his army turning from him under the influence of the Young Turk party and thus powerless, he put into effect the hitherto dead letter constitution of 1876 and called into being a national parliament at Constantinople. This body met amid rejoicing Dec. 17.

THE BALKANS.—On Oct. 5 the whole status of southeastern Europe as fixed by the treaty of Berlin (1878) was suddenly altered. Bulgaria proclaimed its independence, with Prince Ferdinand as its czar and at the same time by concerted arrangement Austria announced to the powers that she proposed to annex completely the former Turkish provinces of Herzegovina and Bosnia, while the Turkish island of Crete moved toward a union with Greece. War seemed unavoidable then, and the clouds still lower in the diplomatic sky as a gloomy omen of what the new year may have in store. The prompt action of the powers on motion of Russia in agreeing to hold a conference to readjust the balance in the Balkans, the opening of negotiations between Bulgaria and Turkey and the military impos-

(Continued on page six)

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