

Perspective

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Post-Election Questions

by RAYMOND MOLEY

Now that the election results are in, people are asking each other various questions. What are these questions, and what are the probable answers?

Where does the election leave President Roosevelt? The sobering effect of the election, after he recovers from his initial shock and surprise, will be all to the good. Indirectly, it will increase the Administration's efficiency and vigor. The President will have less confidence in his more radical followers, whom he may blame for some of the protest revealed in the election. He will not forget his "social objectives," but he will be more cautious in his approach. He will keep his mind open on a fourth term for many months.

What about Willkie? A dozen rival Republican leaders have suddenly appeared, backed by the solid and authentic strength of approval by voters. Each will be aware of his strength, and most of them will not favor a Willkie-controlled party. Joseph Martin will be vastly more important, as leader of a House group now capable of exercising real force in government. The rank and file of the Republican organization will be opposed to Willkie. Probably Mr. Willkie will continue free-lancing with a big public following. He will be a public figure, not a political leader.

Who will be the most talked about Republican Presidential possibilities? For a while, Dewey and Bricker. Then Dewey may make irrevocable his promise to stick to his job as governor. After a few months other names like Stassen and Saltonstall may be heard about. By 1944 names now unknown nationally may appear. Meanwhile, look for Bricker to gather delegate support nationally, much as McKinley did in the years before 1896. Warren of California will be increasingly important. He is not a showy man, but he is good for the long pull.

What about the Republican party as an organization? Mr. Martin is chairman now but has made it clear since the election that he wants to step out. For the time being, perhaps until 1944, a man like Governor Landon might well be drafted to cement the unity of the party. He has grown with the years and has keen political insight. He has made important constructive

criticism of the war effort and is liked and trusted by most Republican leaders.

Will the country be more conservative? Yes, well on into the postwar period. The men thrown into the limelight are, in the main, middle-of-the-road, steady people. A lot of extremists and coattail riders went down. This change is not a flash in the pan. It marks a change in the national temper for some time to come.

What about Jim Farley's future? An analysis of the vote in the various states shows that the defeat of his ticket in New York can be ascribed to a national upturn against the Administration. Throughout the nation, Farley will continue to be respected and supported by conservative Democrats, and 1944 may possibly see them seriously contesting for the control of the party.

Will the war effort be more vigorously prosecuted? Yes. The tonic effect of this election will put zest into the minority in Congress, into industrial leaders generally, and into the small towns and agricultural areas. Labor leaders will be less confident of their power. The desire to win the war will grow. Public morale will be better because the people have taken over the job of morale-building themselves.

Is this all due to protest against the war effort of the Administration? No. Only in part. It is the continuation of an undercurrent that began in some rural sections of the Middle West as early as 1936. It has grown in every election since, until, as a result of this election, Republican governors will hold office in states with approximately three-fifths of the population of the nation and have greatly increased representation in Congress. This tide is not likely to recede for a considerable time and it may well go much farther.

What about straw votes? Polls may be useful in pointing out trends. But the more accurate pre-election polls become, the less value they have as prophecy because voters are influenced by them. The best commentators still find it necessary to travel, to talk with competent observers on the spot and to consider generally how current happenings are likely to affect voters. Politics is still an art, not a science.

lationalist," and both were reelected. Fish, however, goes to his thirteenth term in the House by the scant margin of 4,062 votes, lowest of his career. He won despite the opposition of President Roosevelt and leaders of his own party—Wendell L. Willkie and Gov.-elect Thomas E. Dewey. Rep. Clare E. Hoffman, an outstanding isolationist before Dec. 7, whose defeat was earnestly desired by the New Deal, was reelected in Michigan.

But pre-Pearl Harbor interventionists also fared well—Gov. Harold E. Stassen and Sen. Joseph H. Ball, Minnesota Republicans, who were attacked bitterly in the primary campaigns for their support of Mr. Roosevelt before Dec. 7, and Sen. James E. Murray, Montana Democrat, whom Sen. Burton K. Wheeler, his colleague, had accused of "trying to ride into office on the coattails of war fever."

President Roosevelt's comment on the election was brief: he assumed the new Congress would be as much in favor of winning the war as the Chief Executive himself. He was expressing only part of the consensus of commentators the country over. The mandate, it was agreed, was for an end to inefficiency and bureaucratic feuding in Washington. "It will be surprising," wrote Roscoe Drummond in *The Christian Science Monitor*, "if the election does not have a chastening effect upon the Administration."

As for its effect upon the Republican party, commentators and GOP leaders alike called upon the party to realize the burden of victory: let the party now demonstrate, said the *Republican New York Herald Tribune*, "that it has learned by its blunders, and possesses the ability and the bravery to support the war effort wholeheartedly and to place in key positions men sufficiently wise and farseeing to take command in a national crisis. If they do not give this proof . . . their victory will be an empty success leading nowhere. If they live up to their opportunities their march to power cannot be halted."

The attitude of the Republican command was set forth soberly by Rep. Joseph W. Martin Jr. of Massachusetts, House minority leader. Announcing his retirement as GOP National Chairman to give his full time to Congressional duties, he said the Republicans would "devote themselves as Americans to winning the war and not play politics."

There were three outstanding defeats in the elections aside from the beatings taken by candidates. The powerful machine of Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City, Democratic boss of New Jersey and a vice chairman of the National Committee, failed to reelect Sen. William H. Smathers over Albert W. Hawkes, Republican. The Kelly-Nash machine of Chicago was trounced by the victory of Senator Brooks over Rep. Raymond S. McKeough. And Democrats appeared likely to quarrel through 1944

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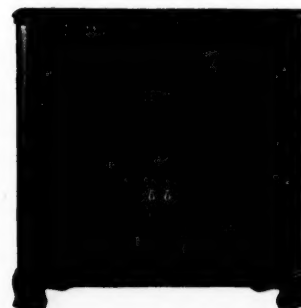
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