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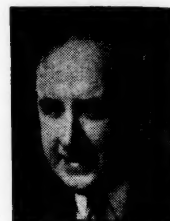
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Perspective

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Crisis in California

by Raymond Moley



THE political chips are down in California, and they represent immense values to all of us. The fate of Senator Knowland in his campaign for the governorship against Attorney General Edmund G. Brown is incidental. Knowland can live with his conscience, since he stands without compromise on the most vital of domestic issues—the right of a man to work at his trade, free from forced union membership.

But over the nation the defeat of Knowland would have great repercussions. Our two-party system, already weakened, would crumble. Republicans would either accept a minor role in national affairs or surrender to a me-too course. The Democratic Party would fall more deeply into captivity to the AFL-CIO COPE political machine. This power is already supreme in Michigan, Oregon, and to a degree in several other states. Democrats who cherish the Wilsonian liberal tradition would see the party of their traditions become a labor party, just as the British Liberals were engulfed by the Socialists.

The California Legislature after 1960 would gerrymander the state so that a probable 25 of its coming 38 representatives in the House in Washington would be elected by the union-controlled Democratic Party in the state. This would be a sufficient number to swing the ideological balance in the House for ten years.

KNOWLAND CAN WIN

This margin, added to the present "liberal" bloc in Congress, would assure more inflationary spending, progressive invasion of the states and of economic life, drastic weakening of Taft-Hartley, and ultimate welfare statism. All over the nation most employers who have resisted the closed shop would be overwhelmed, and a great union monopoly would emerge. Basic liberties, guarded by a two-party, classless society, would be still more gravely endangered.

Such considerations should move conservatives in California to intense activity while there is still time. Indifference, selfishness, and a hypnosis induced by the apparent innocence of "Pat" Brown permitted the primary to go by default. The Republican or-

ganization alone cannot do the job. Power must be added by Knowland himself and by those Democrats who share his principles.

And it can be won. In 1934 Upton Sinclair overwhelmed his opponent in the primary, only to be beaten in the election by an aroused citizenry. Taking into account the growth of the state since 1934, the margin of change in that election would win for Knowland this year. In 1946 Knowland trailed his opposition in the primary but defeated Will Rogers Jr. in the election. The pickup then was 630,000. The pickup needed now is less—24 votes per precinct.

THE MARKET FOR VOTES

The votes to win are there. More than 900,000 registered Republicans and 1.4 million registered Democrats were missing in the primary. Among those Democrats are tens of thousands of conservatives who are politically homeless since the unions have taken over their party. These abstainers in both parties provide the market for vigorous canvassing in the precincts by self-employed businessmen, salesmen, doctors, farmers, dentists, engineers, wage earners who have their right to work at stake, and the wives of those workers. (The workers' wives turned the Labor tide in Britain in 1950.) These can win if they work. It is their vital interests that are concerned.

The primary result was not a defeat for the right-to-work principle. The opposition had been mobilizing for a year or more. Knowland's support was undermanned and underfinanced, and no real effort was made to present the case to the voters. But a reliable poll before the primary indicated a very considerable majority for the right-to-work principle.

Knowland's opponent suggests to me the man, now forgotten, who ran against Taft in Ohio in 1950—an ordinary, run-of-the-mill politician, fairly well known around county courthouses, who has never taken much of a stand on any issue except on right to work, in line with the union bosses whose votes he needs to win.

The choice should be obvious. Also, the priceless values that might be lost in a fog of indifference.