

# The Logic of Lowden

**T**HERE is a logic to Lowden, once you grant the premises. He comes from the middle of the country, he stands in the middle of a road, in the middle of his party, about midway between Wood of New Hampshire and Johnson of California. He has risen from a farm to an estate, from obscurity to moderate fame, perhaps not quite the darling of the gods but surely one of their favorite sons. They rejoiced over him at the start, worried over him a while and watched him solicitously, and now smile again. He entered politics when Cannon and Lorimer were powerful. He was of the Old Guard at Chicago in 1912, and yet not of them altogether. He voted for Taft without making an enemy of Roosevelt. He stayed with the party and he will always stay with the party. He does not secede himself, but he does not excommunicate those who do. So Roosevelt could write to him in 1916: "I earnestly hope you will now assume a position of leadership. What I most desire is that you shall help bring the Republicans far enough forward to enable us to hold the Progressives far enough back to keep a substantial alignment." He is thus the candidate of peace without victory for those who stood at Armageddon and battled for the Lord.

It is a series of events in the past that emphasize the candidacy of Lowden today. His most intelligent supporters regard him as a kind of liquidator of situations which happen to control American public life today and may continue to control them for a short time after the election. The first of these is the grim memory of the politicians that Johnson seceded in 1912, and ratified only with nullifying reservations in 1916. The second is the eight years of Republican famine under Wilson plus the recollection of the seven years turbulence under Roosevelt which have combined to create a nausea at strong men, moral heroes, crusaders, saviors, and supermen. The third is the condition of the voters, more composed than they were a few months ago, but still jumpy and yawning for a rest. The people are tired, tired of noise, tired of politics, tired of inconvenience, tired of greatness, and longing for a place where the world is quiet and where all trouble seems dead leaves and spent waves riot in doubtful dreams of dreams.

Lowden is the noiseless candidate in this campaign. I have watched him appeal to the voters. He tells them that he will talk only of prosaic things, and he does. He assures them that he won't bother them much and he will not. He pro-

mises to relieve their taxes, to see that the government is unobtrusive, and that it will run itself without too much cost and without too much friction. He does not invite them to look to Washington for salvation, or to stake much hope upon politics. He invites them to go about their own business with the sense that though the government is a necessary institution which ought to be run inexpensively and well, it is not the chief instrument of destiny. His own campaign literature names in the first of five reasons why he is "outstanding Presidential timber" the fact that "many have called him a second McKinley."

There is nothing highfalutin' about Lowden. He is not burning with moral zeal or with personal ambition. He has a diminished conception of the office which he seeks, and if he represents any "movement" it is the movement away from overshadowing personalities in the White House. Wood and Johnson arouse fierce passions, inquisitor and crusader, hot blue blood, and hot red blood. They are the turbulent spirits of the Republican campaign: Johnson the expansive, pioneering courage of continental America, Wood the angry ambitions of a receding caste in the first crude manifestation of world power. Both represent an idealization of the American purpose and, therefore, at this moment a somewhat highly flavored version of it. But Lowden is unmistakably the typical member of a going concern, the experienced guardian and manipulator of established American custom in the relation between business and politics. That is the logic of Lowden. His premise is the American social system, modified from time to time by the reformer, but never captured by him. In that system the progressive is free to permeate if he is content also to be permeated. ". . . . help bring the Republicans far enough forward to enable us to hold the Progressives far enough back" for what purpose? "To keep a substantial alignment."

The philosophy of a substantial alignment is the premise of Lowdenism. Historically it is a real premise, no matter how unreal it may prove to be in the years to come. The philosophy when it is articulate, says that in a country so vast as this the differences between sections and between classes are so numerous that organized government would be unworkable if all local interests and all class interests were clearly represented in political action; that without the selecting and neutralizing and binding peace of the two party system the

American constitution would be infinitely confused. The philosophy asserts that without the coercion of a national partisanship over all factional differences national unity could not have been created and national administration organized. This philosophy accords usefulness to the political machine for which the ordinary reformer does not make allowance. That function is the fusing of localism by the attachment of local leaders to a national organization in which they have a vested interest. The power of that machine is the power to enforce conformity by blockading political advancement of those who do not work with it and through it. In its higher reaches this philosophy insists that no particular reform achieved by a destruction of the machine is valuable enough to warrant the destruction; that to capture the machine from within is legitimate, to secede and break it and try to supplant it is dangerous and in the end vain.

Now among the convinced machinists there are, of course, immovable and corrupt men mixed with shrewd and generous men. The usual opposition of temperaments and interests occurs within a political machine as within any other human group. There is a right, a center, and a left wing, and all gradations between. There are the usual bourbons who will never learn, and finally destroy the institution if they govern it. There are those who work from within to readjust it to new necessities. And there are those in the center who, recognizing the need of fresh adjustments, devote themselves to hauling the bourbons along while they hang on to the coat tails of the reformers. Lowden belongs to this center, to the right center in all great questions of statesmanship, to the left center in questions of routine and partisanship. The center, mind you, is the center of the Republican party conceived as one of the two indispensable organs of government. I am not discussing whether that party as a whole is too far to the right to govern America successfully after a world war. I am not discussing it here because the consciousness that there is such a question is not part of the premise on which the Lowden campaign proceeds.

The Lowden campaign is not based on any diagnosis of the social system. The Wood campaign is. The picture, it seems to me, is frenzied and misleading, but it is a picture. There is a conscious social theory behind Wood, as there is behind Johnson and Hoover. The attention of these men is fixed upon the country; the attention of the Lowden campaign is fixed upon Congress and the departments and the mechanism of parties. It is fixed on these primarily. The impulse behind the Lowden campaign is that an election is decreed by law for this year, that a man must be elected

to the office of President who will do the job well. The job is conceived as the administration of the government at Washington, not as a moral purification, not as the redemption of America from perils, not as gawdsaking in any form.

It is characteristic that while Wood is the hero of a large number of biographies, while Johnson is personally known and loved by multitudes of people, there are no biographies of Lowden and he is comparatively little discussed. He is not a household name as yet. He has not been extensively and intensely analyzed. The talk about him is not curious and eager talk. He is not a natural subject for American publicity. He rarely says witty things; and he has almost no gift of phrase. To find out about Lowden you have to inquire among people who have known him. I have found no substantial disagreement among his friends and his critics.

He was born in 1861 at Sunrise, Minnesota. As a little boy he followed his father's prairie schooner into Iowa. He taught school when he was a young man, and worked his way through Iowa State University. He seems to have been extraordinarily winning, and many stories are told of the way in which his genius for making friends presided over the opportunities which were offered to him. Frank Lowden was the sort of student whom everyone accepts as a coming man. He has been a good deal of a regular fellow in his time, and at sixty the marks are there. But the underlying texture is homespun—however much it may have been overlaid.

He came to Chicago in 1885 and worked as a law clerk; he studied law at what is now Northwestern University; his quick professional successes corresponded with quick social success. In the early nineties there were plenty of silver spoons offered in lieu of the one he had lacked at birth. He seems to have been a lawyer engaged primarily in the organization of what are loosely called "trusts." He made money. In 1896 he married into the social set to which he had been adopted. He married the daughter of George M. Pullman. I mention it because it is always mentioned in connection with Lowden, not because I can trace any specific result of the Governor's relation to the family which sacrificed its name to one of the outstanding horrors of a hurried civilization. He has been accused, of course, of a corporate bias, but that bias, such as it is, is the bias of his time and his group, and not specific to the sleeping cars. The Wood supporters in South Dakota charge that a tax commission appointed by Lowden reduced the assessed valuation of powerful public service corporations including the Pullman Company. The charge was

made by Mr. William H. Malone, the former president of the State Board of Equalization. This board was elective. It was abolished in the Lowden reorganization of state affairs. Said Mr. Malone:

The Pullman Corporation was favored with a reduction of \$17,802,284 from the 1918 figure established by the old board of \$33,802,284 to the 1919 figure fixed by the Lowden Commission of \$16,000,000.

The Lowden reply is as follows. It comes to me in the form of a personal letter from Mr. Frank H. Scott of the firm of Scott, Bancroft, Martin and Stephens:

Governor Lowden does not own any stock or securities of the Pullman Company; Mrs. Lowden owns less than one per cent of the stock of the company; the entire Pullman family owns something less than six per cent, including Mrs. Lowden's interest.

In the investigation referred to (i. e. by a joint committee of the Legislature) each person who had made any charge that the Governor had interested himself for the Pullman Company, was put upon the stand before the investigating committee. The charges collapsed utterly. The State Board of Equalization had for years been looked upon as one of the most iniquitous factors in the government of Illinois, and for years governors of the state had desired to see it abolished. Governor Lowden months before the charges were made, or before any question of raising the Pullman taxes had arisen, instructed Mr. Woodward to prepare the bill abolishing the Board and establishing a Tax Commission of three members. Certain members of the Board concocted a scheme to defeat the bill by raising the Pullman Company's assessment and then following that by statements that the Governor, through the State Director of Finance, had threatened to present a bill abolishing the Board if the taxes were raised. As I have said, the fact was that the bill was prepared months before the question of raising the Pullman assessment had been broached. Governor Lowden immediately demanded an investigation by a joint committee of the Legislature. That the matter was a plot was so clearly exposed that the Legislature, the majority of whose members had been opposed to the bill abolishing the Board, immediately passed it by an overwhelming majority.

Men with established fortunes who have political careers ahead of them do not behave as these charges allege. They are not credible charges, for they involve an undue simplification of the economic interpretation of politics. What determines the point of view of Lowden is not Pullman money or any strong-box full of securities. He is determined by the prevailing views of an established order of business and politics in which he has been a favored person. The determinism is by no means complete. The history of Lowden shows a steady modification of the normal views of his environment by the interests of a personal career. To put it very bluntly Lowden has all that money can buy, and he seeks now the things that money does not buy. His later career is marked by the growing independence of an independent fortune and conspicuous political success.

It was not always so. Lowden's apprenticeship in politics began with the first McKinley campaign. He was offered patronage by McKinley and declined. But his political associations from the Republican convention of 1900 through the gubernatorial contest of 1904 when he was defeated for the nomination, through three terms in Congress, through the convention of 1912 to his election as Governor in 1916 is without evidence of independence of the dark forces of American politics. Lowden went to the top through the usual channels, a rich man and a favored man accepting the standards of his time.

The change comes after his election as Governor. Lowden braced up. Lowden reformed. Lowden made himself one of the very best state governors in America. Again and again I was told in Chicago by friends and opponents that they had expected nothing and that he had done extremely well.

The thing he did was to persuade the legislature to adopt a radical reorganization of the business of the state, by consolidating about a hundred and twenty-five separate boards and departments into nine departments, with a real budget and with a centralized purchasing agency. Of course, extravagant claims have been made. I have heard Lowden orators talk as if these reforms would solve all social wrongs from the high cost of living to industrial unrest. I heard the Governor in Detroit make rather over-enthusiastic claims. And it is well to take with caution the figures as to tax reduction.

That, however, is not the significant aspect in a definition of Lowden as a Presidential candidate. The scheme is not his scheme. It is the result of expert investigation started before he was Governor. It embodies ideas that are the common property of administrative reformers. The thing which is Lowden's is primarily that he could take up an idea so unpleasant to the politicians of all parties, and yet persuade and compel them to accept it with a minimum of friction. There lies his strength. That would be his strength in Washington. He has shown extraordinary skill in dealing with our kind of representative government. He has the patience and the good fellowship and the modesty to find his way tolerably well through the existing confusion in America between legislature and executive. No other man mentioned, Wood, Hoover, Johnson, starts with much prospect of good feeling between the White House and the Capitol. Lowden has that prospect, a very heavy factor, indeed, in the logic of his candidacy.

But, of course, internal good feeling on Pennsylvania Avenue is not the whole of statecraft in this age. And when you examine Lowden's external relations the outlook is different. He has

shown in Illinois that he can in some of his appointments be quite class-blind. His dealings with labor in Illinois show tolerance and good will and consideration but little more can be said for them. On state business he is a well-informed enthusiastic man; on all the wider questions of diplomacy, and economics, even on the wider aspects of his own administrative reforms, he is meager. Because he is meager he bends to every wind of doctrine that blows in the circle of his associates.

He has had the red hysteria mildly, and because he is fundamentally uncritical and alien to the world of ideas, his oratory is full of stock prejudice and canned platitudes. They are part of the going concern. But the homespun saves him. Real contact with the Prussian spirit in America is doing to Lowden what it will always do to the balanced American, to the American who is not exalté. It is resurrecting the good humor of free men. Lowden may have said and done foolish things in the recent excitement, but he did them as a member of a crowd and because he is gregarious, not because they are organic to him. And he has done some wise things recently. In the last few months when so many Americans have been frightened into violence, Lowden has been a good deal the candid friend of local big business. He has reminded Chicagoans of the familiar idea about sitting on the safety valve.

He has done it as one of them, and that too is part of the logic of Lowden. He is one of the insiders who know when they have had enough, know when to yield, know when not to stand pat. He believes, as Roosevelt said, in a substantial alignment; he is shrewd enough and sufficiently professional in politics to know when the strain and stress are too great. He will feel the pressure rather than understand it, and he will feel it concretely not as the incarnation of an ideology. He will go only a very little way with the reconstruction, but when he has reached the end the first thing that occurs to him will not be to ship or shoot. He is a clean opponent and a tolerant human being.

No volcanic ambitions dominate him. He is a normally satisfied man, without restlessness and with a capacity for contentment. He is not fiercely avid of power nor of fame, and he is under no delusion that he is the savior of America. He is a leading candidate this year because the turn of the calendar brings the campaign at a time when old situations are still controlling and newer alignments not quite formed. The logic of Lowden is excellent on the premise that the present mood of public discussion is a true reflection of what the next President must face. On no other.

WALTER LIPPMANN.

## Strawinsky

THE new steel organs of man have begotten their music in *Le Sacre du Printemps*. For with Strawinsky, the rhythms of machinery enter musical art. With this, his magistral work, a new chapter of music commences, the spiritualization of the new body of man is manifest. Through Debussy, music had liquefied, become opalescent and impalpable and fluent. It had become, because of his sense, his generation's sense, of the infirmity of things, a sort of symbol of the eternal flux, the eternal momentariness. It had come to body forth all that merges and changes and disappears, to mirror the incessant departures and evanescences of life, to shape itself upon the infinitely subtle play of light, the restless, heaving, foaming surface of the sea, the impalpable racks of perfume, upon gusts of wind and fading sounds, upon all the ephemeral wonders of the world. But through Strawinsky there has come to be a music stylistically wellnigh the reverse of that of the impressionists. Through him, music has become again cubical, lapidary, massive, mechanistic. Scintillation is gone out of it. The delicate sinuous melodic line, the glamorous sheeny harmonies, are gone out of it. The elegance of Debussy, the golden sensuality, the quiet, classic touch, are flown. Instead, there are come to be great weighty metallic masses, molten piles and sheets of steel and iron, shining adamantine bulks. Contours are become grim, severe, angular. Melodies are sharp, rigid, asymmetrical. Chords are uncouth, square clusters of notes, stout and solid as the pillars that support roofs, heavy as the thuds of trip hammers. Above all, there is rhythm, rhythm rectangular and sheer and emphatic, rhythm that lunges and beats and reiterates and dances with all the steely perfect tirelessness of the machine, shoots out and draws back, shoots upward and shoots down, with the inhuman motion of titanic arms of steel. Indeed, the change is as radical, as complete, as though in the midst of moonlit noble gardens a giant machine had arisen swiftly from the ground, and inundated the night with electrical glare, and set its metal thews and joints relentlessly whirring, relentlessly functioning.

And yet, the two styles, Debussy's and Strawinsky's, are related. Indeed, they are complementary. They are the reactions to the same stimulus of two fundamentally different types of mind. No doubt, between the two men there exist differences besides those of their general fashions of thinking. The temper of Debussy was profoundly sensuous and aristocratic and contained. That of Strawinsky is nervous and ironic and violent. The one man issued from an unbroken tradition,