

Platforms of the People

BELIEVING that the people, not merely the politicians, should frame the policies of great parties, The Outlook invited its readers to prepare their platforms for the Presidential campaign. It therefore drew up a ballot setting forth the principal issues and, on March 26, asked its readers to vote on them.

Each reader had the opportunity to approve, condemn, or ignore each of the following:

I—TRANSPORTATION

1. Voluntary consolidation of the railroads.
2. Compulsory consolidation of the railroads.
3. Compulsory freight rate reduction.
4. Continuance of Esch-Cummins Act.
5. Nationalization of the railroads with co-operative administration by workers, shippers, and public.

II—AGRICULTURAL RELIEF

1. Formation of a Federal Grain Export Corporation.
2. Federal aid for Farmers' Co-operatives.
3. Federal purchase of wheat.
4. Price fixing of staple farm products.
5. Further extension of farm credits.
6. Development of St. Lawrence waterways.

III—TAXATION

1. Reduction of taxes by Mellon plan.
2. Reduction of taxes by Garner plan.
3. A Federal tax on land held out of use.

IV—TARIFF

1. Continuance of Fordney-McCumber Tariff Law.
2. Continuance of flexible provision for revenue only with lowering of tariffs.
3. Tariff for revenue only without flexible provision.

V—BONUS

1. Adjusted compensation for all war veterans.

VI—PROHIBITION

1. Rigid enforcement under Civil Service.
2. Change in the alcoholic content as now limited by the Volstead Act.

VII—GENERAL WELFARE

1. Equal social, legal, and industrial rights for women.
2. An amendment enabling Congress to prevent exploitation of children in industry.
3. Federal Anti-Lynching Law.
4. Establishment of a Federal Employment Bureau.

VIII—EDUCATION

1. Extension of principle of Federal aid for education.

IX—IMMIGRATION

1. Registration of aliens.
2. Continuance of quota method of restriction.
3. Further restriction.
4. Less restriction.
5. Examination of prospective immigrants at ports of departure.

X—PREPAREDNESS

1. Expansion of Navy to standards set by Conference on Limitation of Armament.
2. Extension of Air Service.

XI—AIR MAIL

1. The further development of air mail service.

XII—LABOR

1. Continuance of Railroad Labor Board.
2. Abolition of injunctions in labor disputes.
3. Nationalization, and democratic administration by technicians, workers, and consumers, of coal mines.
4. Federal licensing of private detective agencies.

XIII—KLU KLUX KLAN

1. Programme of Klan.

XIV—SUPER-POWER

1. Government control and distribution of high-power transmission.

XV—MONEY

1. Issuing of Federal currency based on commodities and labor.

XVI—CONSERVATION

1. A vigorous conservation policy with extended Federal control over public properties.

XVII—MERCHANT MARINE

1. Sale of Government ships to private owners.
2. Operation by Government of Government-owned ships.
3. Federal ship subsidy.

XVIII—GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

1. Reorganization of the Executive Departments on the lines proposed in President's Annual Message.
2. Effort to arrest the development of bureaucratic power.

XIX—FOREIGN RELATIONS

1. League of Nations.
2. World Court.
3. Hague Tribunal.
4. Development of Four-Power Treaty principle.
5. Secretary Hughes's present policy:
 - (a) Non-recognition of Russia.
 - (b) Strengthening Monroe Doctrine.
 - (c) Sale of arms to foreign governments.
 - (d) Unofficial co-operation with foreign commissions.
 - (e) Least possible participation.
6. Cancellation of foreign debts.

The response has been far beyond The Outlook's expectations. The accompanying account reports the effect that this ballot has had in various parts of the country in arousing an understanding interest in public questions.

WHILE the table of statistics is omitted in this issue, pending final tabulation of all the ballots received prior to the closing date, those who have co-operated in The Outlook's inquiry may be interested in learning how they themselves have made the poll successful and important in more ways than one.

It has been impossible for the editors to reply personally to each of the letters received. The limitations of space preclude any possibility of these letters being published in their entirety. Some of them include ten typewritten pages. Many are similar in respect to the ideas advanced. There have been all sorts of comments, flattering and otherwise, but for the most part they have been constructive. The writers have been sincere in stating views and developing arguments. Invariably they have admitted the need for some such gleaning of sentiment from the thinking people. A gentleman writing from his compartment on the Overland Limited expressed the idea as follows:

"You are giving to the thinking public and to the patriotic man in the street a great opportunity. The inarticulate private citizen is recoiling from a choice be-

tween the 'kettle' and the 'pot,' and yet hesitating to register his protest in the form of adherence to an untried and presumably radical leader. As his only alternative he should welcome the chance to impose upon the existing party machines a wholesome sense of their obligations to conduct the approaching campaign on the basis of clear-cut principles and policies dictated by the popular will."

To which the editors would reply that the people have actually registered their protests. They have outlined certain principles and policies for the existing parties. These should go far toward dictating the course to be pursued in the campaign. But there is another result of this inquiry more far-reaching than that and possibly more permanent. Interest in National problems has been created in quarters where it had been either indifferent or utterly lacking. Many correspondents have noted this public indifference.

"Laxity among the voters in their interest in politics" is a charge common in all parts of the country. On the other hand, the thousands of ballots indicate a spirited interest in National questions. Many have gone out of their way to in-

cite interest among others unfamiliar with the issues involved. This sort of missionary work has led to innumerable converts in every State, people who are signifying a desire to help in the government of this country.

Many have stated that after spending an hour or two filling out the ballot they have laid it aside and sought out sources of information before completing and mailing it. The occasional criticism that the ballot was too long and involved for the average person to understand is more than offset by the truth brought home to people as to the extent of their knowledge on questions affecting the National welfare. To quote one of many such comments:

"Surely an advantage of such a ballot is that it reveals to the prospective voter the kind and the amount of information he requires in order to be able to vote intelligently. I shall try to obtain the necessary information."

There was very little carelessness in marking the ballots, a fact in itself serving to show the sincerity and serious purpose in the minds of the voters. Few persons became confused in indicating their preferences, notwithstanding that an average of three hours was required

to mark the entire ballot, not to mention the time spent in writing the interesting letters.

When the small daughter of a household undertook to mark a ballot with colored crayons, her father was undismayed as he set out to devote an evening to the task. Instead he laboriously removed the earlier effort, which must have resembled a futurist painting. Then he registered his views legibly. Another wrestled with the problems for several hours, and then, tucking his ballot in his pocket, he sought out the editor of the local newspaper. Together they reasoned it out. Then the editor went to a news-stand and purchased another copy of *The Outlook* that he might send in his own ballot.

The radio and the motion pictures were abandoned by entire families, who gathered about the table in the dining-room and there argued each question pro and con in order to register a family vote, whole families voting as a unit. The womenfolk had a part as well as the men in these councils; and there are instances recorded where, after several hours of discussion, the head of the family made out his return and requested more ballots for the other members, "because they couldn't agree." Some of these family councils must have been most interesting and enlivened by arguments from many points of view. One imagines the father trying to maintain his point as to the fallacy of Government ownership while son and daughters insist that nationalization of all industry must be inevitable if the new generation is to come into its own.

Three women in New England required as many ballots. Though they lived in the same house, they were at variance on many questions. A North Carolina farmer explained that his ballot represented himself and his large family, "excepting the son-in-law; and I haven't any idea how he feels. He was in the war."

There were many occasions where the ex-service man had views which failed to coincide with the others of his household. For that reason it may be assumed that the older men anticipate contradictory sentiment from the younger element. Not only have the ex-service men themselves established this feeling, but their elders seem to accept it as a foregone conclusion, basing their opinion no doubt on the veteran bloc system which developed after the Civil War.

Nevertheless there is one marked change in American life apparent throughout the country. How many years has it been since men generally have credited their womenfolk with sufficient intelligence to take part in a dis-

cussion of National affairs? Where once the corner grocery, the cigar store, and the club were the main localities for political discussion, now we find politics in the home. It is not unusual to find a ballot signed by "Mr. and Mrs." Is this a result of equal suffrage, whereby the men concede their womenfolk a voice in the affairs of the Nation as well as in the home? Or is it to be attributed to the general progress which women are making in all walks of life—in politics, economics, business, and the professions? Or is it simply because, as one explained, "a busy man cannot do that ballot justice"?

Increased facilities of communication, more periodicals, better transport, and therefore more current reading matter, the development of the public school system, motion pictures, and more recently the radio—all these agencies have a part in keeping the public relatively well informed as compared to twenty years ago. More people are traveling, and thereby meeting new conditions which quicken their minds and must stimulate their curiosity. At any rate, here we have a tendency to make the home a forum instead of the casual haunts where only men are found.

As an illustration there is the note from a Western farmer. He writes: "I have voted for a further development of the Air Mail Service, though I shall probably never get any direct benefit from it. But I would like to see the Rural Free Delivery developed so I could get my mail every day, for I live five miles from the post office."

It is evident that the oracles of the crossroads store would never have countenanced such heresy in the old days. It would have been R. F. D. or nothing; under no circumstances such new-fangled inventions as the air mail.

A rancher in Arizona requested more ballots. On their arrival he set out in his car and visited all his neighbors, who live many miles apart, explaining to them the purposes of the ballot and pointing out that it was their duty as citizens to register their views. A man living in the country in New York State handed ballots to five acquaintances, including a priest, an organist, an architect, a hardware merchant, and a writer. In one way or another this has occurred throughout the country.

In many communities from Virginia to Oregon and California civic research societies organized campaigns to bring the ballot into the homes of all the residents. Public meetings were held and the subjects debated. Extra ballots were distributed and the voters instructed in the significance of many policies.

Numbers of high schools in Colorado,

Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Louisiana, Maryland, and Ohio included the ballot as part of the courses in several classes. Returns printed in *The Outlook* were studied and discussed. Teachers saw to it that their colleagues had copies of the ballot.

Many colleges were interested from the start; and others later joined in analyzing the results of the poll. Professors of political science and economics set their classes to studying the issues. Letters from educators sometimes attain the status of essays in which each subject is thoroughly considered. Agricultural schools have taken a deep interest in pointing out the relationship between subjects, such as transportation and agriculture, to offer one example.

There are instances without number where business men have kept extra ballots on their desks. These were handed out to certain associates and others who called. Lawyers and doctors have undertaken to bring the matter to the attention of their clients and patients. Clergymen have introduced it at meetings of the church societies. Many clubs, such as the Westinghouse Research Club of Pittsburgh, held special meetings at which authorities addressed the members and ballots were distributed. In an Iowa high school a class was organized as the House of Representatives. "The result," as the teacher expresses it, "was a splendid three days' discussion."

Officials of the Government, technical officers of the Army and Navy, and experts in many other departments have taken pains to express their views frankly and at length. Railway men, executives and workers, machinists, carpenters, and representatives of other trades have explained their reasons for voting one way or another on issues of peculiar interest to them.

None of the letters has been wasted. Each has been read several times and studied carefully. In this manner the editors acknowledge with sincere appreciation the help thus contributed. It has been of the utmost value in amplifying and explaining the trend of thought in different sections of the country.

Nearly as many letters have been received from women as from men, a remarkable fact in that the former apparently have well-defined views concerning the more or less technical problems of Government, business, and economics. Other tables will be compiled for purposes of comparison. The relative views of men and women, for example, may be interesting because this is the first Presidential campaign in which women throughout the country have had a part.

The Book Table

A Noted Player's Reminiscences

A Review by JAMES L. FORD

THE actor's recollections of his career are usually concerned only with what happened in the space that lies between the footlights and the back drop. To read one of the thick volumes in which he has set down the history of his life is to marvel at his complete disregard of all that was taking place elsewhere. Of the cities he has visited, of the men and women he has been privileged to meet, he has little to say; but of the parts he has played, of the favorable comments received from critics and private citizens, he says overmuch. It is difficult to imagine a more self-centered life than that of the actor as recorded by himself in pages liberally besprinkled with his own portraits.

That is why I entered upon the task of reading Otis Skinner's "Footlights and Spotlights"¹ with a mind darkened by gloomy apprehensions; and it was because I found something very different from my anticipations that the task soon became a pleasure.

The volume resembles others of its kind in that it is primarily a history of the author's professional career, of the many parts he has played and the dramas in which he has appeared, the whole illustrated with too many pictures of himself and too few of the lovely Mrs. Skinner. But it contains also much that is unusual and of far greater value in the shape of stage history and shrewd comments on the art of acting. Of the many distinguished persons, professional and otherwise, with whom he came in contact he speaks with fairness and discrimination. To him they were more than mere casual acquaintances.

As a history of Mr. Skinner's professional career the book will have a certain interest for the dramatic profession, in which he is deservedly popular. But it contains other material as well, including scenes and episodes in which he had no part, and these pages give his work a value that entitles it to a place in the library of every one intelligently interested in the American theater.

Fortunately for himself, and the readers of his book, Mr. Skinner began his career at the moment when the old-time stock and star system had gone into eclipse and the so-called "commercialization" of the theater was soon to take its

¹Footlights and Spotlights. By Otis Skinner. Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis. \$5.



Courtesy Bobbs-Merrill Co.

Otis Skinner in "The Honor of the Family"

Portrait by George Luks, in the Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C.

place. In his earlier chapters he has given us a striking picture of theatrical conditions in the late seventies when he was serving his novitiate as a member of the Philadelphia Museum stock company managed by William Davidge (destined to later fame as Dick Deadeye in "Pinafore"). The company was one of those family affairs so common in those days, all the best parts going to blood kin of the management, with Davidge ready to swoop down on and appropriate to himself any rôle that gave promise of "fat." The leading man was Mark Bates, whose wife, Marie Bates, is not unknown to the present generation of playgoers; and there was another member of the company who could hark back to a still more remote era, for he had been a member of the strolling English company which Charles Dickens joined for purposes of study, and later made immortal in "Nicholas Nickleby."

It is my personal belief that all forms of art flourish better under the hard conditions of poverty than on the soft cushions made possible by wealth, and the period which aged mummery are fond of terming the "palmy days of the drama" was one in which salaries were uncertain and constant changes of bill the rule. It is true that the player of those days found much variety in his work, but he did not have time to develop a part and give full force to every line before he was called on to study a new one. I may add that the joke of the actor walking home along the railway ties enjoyed frequent repetition during these "palmy days."

During the years of his apprenticeship Mr. Skinner played in support of many of the most distinguished artists of the day, including Madame Janauschek, John T. Raymond, Lotta, Chanfrau, Mary Anderson, and others, and he