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THE WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

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JOHN HAMILTON LINED UP WITH HOOVER IN STRUGGLE FOR GOP LEADERSHIP;
LANDON SEES MID-TERM CONVENTION AS TRICK TO PUT HIM IN BACKGROUND;
HIS BACKERS OPPOSE MAKING NEW PLATFORM NOW; PUSSYFOOT ON NEW DEAL;
OUTCOME OF CHICAGO MEETING MAY DETERMINE HAMILTON'S TENURE OF JOB.

WASHINGTON -- The quiet struggle between Herbert Hoover and Alf M. Landon for leadership of the Republican Party will come to a head at the special meeting of the National Committee in Chicago next month, with GOP moguls sharply divided into opposing groups.

As the party's last presidential candidate, Landon is the titular leader until its 1940 convention. Disregarding this tradition, Hoover is trying to grab off the leadership during the next few years. Landon doesn't intend to let him. That is the story in a nutshell.

The Chicago meeting actually was called by John Hamilton, handsome, marcel-haired National Chairman. But Herbert Hoover was the real instigator. He has made the unprecedented proposal of a mid-term convention to formulate a "declaration of principles" on which the GOP could stage a comeback.

In other words, Hoover would have the party write a platform for next year's congressional elections, rather than wait for 1940 to form a new policy.

This has aroused sharp division among GOP moguls. Their line-up on the point is about like this:

Favoring Mid-Term Convention

Herbert Hoover
John Hamilton
Bert Snell, House Floor Leader
Senator Townsend (Del.), Chairman
Senate Campaign Committee

Opposed to Mid-Term Convention

Alf Landon
Senator Borah
Chas. McNary, Senate Floor Leader
Repr. Joe Martin, House Floor Lead
Repr. Hamilton Fish

HOOVER OPPOSITION

Reason for opposition to the Hoover idea is obvious. A Republican platform would put Republican candidates in a political strait-jacket. Their best tactics in these days of Roosevelt popularity is to pussyfoot on the New Deal. In some districts the less they attack Roosevelt, the less they mention policies, the better off they are.

Most irked over the Hoover mid-term convention idea is ex-Governor Alf Landon. He has two counts against it:

1. Any party platform pie into which Herbert Hoover puts a finger would be too conservative. Landon doesn't think that delegates selected for conventions in 1932 and 1936 are in tune with the times; that anything they draft would be a liability, not an asset.

The local politicians who have to face the music in 1938 should write their own scores, argues Landon.

2. He also views Hoover's move as a canny scheme to push him into the background, then become the big shot of the Grand Old Party.

This does not necessarily mean that Landon harbors hopes for another try at the presidency. His close friends say he has no such ambition. But in any case he does not intend to allow Hoover, if he can help it, to elbow him off the driver's seat.

Landon proposes to remain titular leader of the party in fact as well as in name, at least until the regular convention in 1940. Furthermore, he is determined to have a big voice in what that convention does.

LANDON PLAN

What will be the outcome of this inner struggle only time will tell.

Both champions have powerful support. Landon is the abler tactician and is far more popular among the GOP rank-and-file than Hoover. In fact, the ex-President's biggest handicap is his lack of goodwill in the ranks. On the other hand, he has the very important advantage of a close-knit and aggressive organization quietly built up in the last year.

To offset this, and to snatch the initiative from his rival, Landon has proposed a counter plan to replace the mid-term convention.

This calls for the establishment of a policy committee, or sort of High Command, consisting of Landon, Hoover, Colonel Frank Knox, and Senators McNary, Borah and Vandenberg. While this group is not particularly pro-Landon; on the other hand it is emphatically anti-Hoover. In fact, the only sure pro-Hoover man on it is Hoover, himself.

Under Landon's formula, Hoover would be given the sop of a place in an inner council, but he wouldn't be THE inner council.

HAMILTON OUSTER

Entangled in the tug o' war is the fate of National Chairman Hamilton.

Landon, Knox, most of the congressional leaders would like to axe him. But their problem is to find a suitable successor. Few people want the job. Overhanging the party is a large and unattractive deficit.

This is Hamilton's biggest asset. So far it has kept the very welcome \$25,000-a-year post in his own lap.

Further to strengthen himself, Hamilton tied up with Hoover and is vigorously pushing the convention plan -- a maneuver that has not improved his standing either with Landon or the congressional chiefs.

Last week a movement suddenly broke into the open to replace Hamilton with Landon. The exact source of this idea is clouded in mystery. Landon's friends say he had nothing to do with it, that he would not take the job, as it would be a distinct step-down.

Some GOPers say Senator Vandenberg threw the chairmanship at Landon as a move to undermine Hoover and strengthen his own presidential ambitions. As National Chairman, Landon would be definitely out of the 1940 picture.

Hamilton will not walk the plank at the Chicago meeting. But what happens in the joust between Hoover and Landon will determine in a large measure how much longer he holds on to his cushy job.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

Joseph E. Davies, U.S. Ambassador to Russia, is giving his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin, a unique gift. It consists of 100 modern Russian paintings he purchased during his tours in Russia. The collection will be the only one of its kind in the U.S.....Among the letters of congratulation received by William O. Douglas upon his elevation to the chairmanship of the SEC was one stating, "Thank God the Commission had the good sense not to elect a lawyer." Before coming to Washington, Douglas was professor of law at Yale, salary \$18,000.....A recent survey of Pickett County, Tenn., birthplace of Secretary Cordell Hull, disclosed only one telephone in the entire county and only one Negro family.....There is considerable agitation among Congressmen for an electric railroad between the House and its two office buildings, similar to the one on the Senate side. The Congressmen are saying much about the time such a subway would save them, but nothing about the fact that its installation would cost taxpayers \$60,000.

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