President Coolidge---The Machine Man of the Big Bankers

Third Article on Coolidge, the Strike Breaker President.

By JAY LOVESTONE.

Whoever thinks that Cal Coolidge's rise to the Presidency was meteoric, has got another guess coming to him.

Our thirtieth president has been in practical politics for almost a quarter of a century. During this period, Coolidge has gone thru the school of political hard knocks and has made the most of his bumps and successes.

The President is a graduate of the well-known school of practical American politics headed by the late Senator Murray Crane, of Massachusetts, who was one of the most skilled political jobbers and horsedealers Washington has ever seen. This Bay State Senator was a high grade specimen of the ex-Senator Lorimer type of legislator; except that Crane put it over and delivered the goods with such skill as to avoid the fate that befell the Illinois man.

Protege of Murray Crane.

It was Senator Crane who projected Coolidge into national politics. The late Senator built up a powerful machine in Massachusetts and was always on the lookout for promising political prospects. Crane picked up Coolidge, polished his rough edges, taught him the tricks of the game and turned him out the finished product that he is today.

Indeed, so finished a product did Coolidge turn out to be that Judge Field, his law partner in Northampton and a first-rate politician himself once said: "Calvin Coolidge is a shrewd politician. He has learned the game of politics from the bottom up."

A Machine Man.

President Coolidge is a firm believer in the Party machine and Party loyalty. In actual every day life, loyalty to the Republican and Democratic Parties means loyalty to the employers and financiers who operate and finance them.

Commenting on the importance of this attitude of Coolidge, a Boston publication, "Practical Politics," sometime ago wrote: "He knows how to hustle for votes and realized what the Party owes to man who give their time and energy to Party work."

And while he was governor Coolidge dropped the following significant remark to a prominent New York newspaperman: "We have a government of parties. We must recognize the party. A man ought to be loyal to those who have been loyal to him."

This policy was vividly reflected in President Coolidge's recent appointment of Campbell Bascom Slemp as his secretary. Mr. Slemp, of Virginia, is the only Republican to have been sent to Congress from the South in the last fifteen years. He is a notorious political pawnbroker. As State Chairman of the Republican Committee of Virginia Slemp solicited contributions and collected money from aspirants to office in his State while he was a member of the House of Representatives. Here we have an open indorsement of political office jobbery on a grand scale.

Coolidge—the Bankers' Pet.

With the advent of Coolidge into the Presidency the newspapers opened a strong barrage to prove that "Cal" is a poor man. In order to appease the discontented farming population. Coolidge was even baptized a "rock" farmer whose forefathers blasted the rocks to get bread.

Tho Coolidge may not be as wealthy as his predecessor, Harding, yet he is where he is today primarily because of his powerful banker-friends who have influenced, guided, and made his policies for years.

There is one friend of whom Coolidge prates a good deal and of whose friendship he is particularly proud. This friend is none other than Dwight P. Morrow, of the firm of J. P. Morgan & Co. This noted banker was a schoolmate of "Cal" at Amherst, and Coolidge never fails to acknowledge his debt to Mr. Morrow.

Since the days of McKinley and America's entry into world politics as a full-fledged imperialist power every president is said to have had his own "Mark Hanna." Harding had his Daugherty. Coolidge has his Stearns. Mr. Frank W. Stearns, the wealthy Boston banker and merchant is the chief confidant of the president. Mr. Stearns has for years pushed Coolidge for the presidency. At the Republican Conventions of 1916 and 1920 Coolidge was Stearns' man.

The sort of influence Stearns has had on Coolidge is best understood thru a consideration of Mr. Stearns' standing in business circles. Frank W. Stearns is Chairman of the Board of Directors of R. H. Stearns & Co. millionaire wholesale and retail dry goods merchants. Among his co-directors in this firm are such well-known New England financiers and industrialists as R. W. Maynard, Atherton Clark, W. B. Mossman, A. B. Chapin, and W. I. Wood of the Wool Trust.

Mr. Stearns is director and member of the executive committee of the American Trust Co. which reported, in March, 1923, total resources of $30,413,000; a surplus of $2,000,000 and undivided profits of $1,040,000. This giant bank works hand in glove with such internationally known institutions of finance as the Chase National Bank, the Guarantee Trust Co., the Continental and Commercial Bank of Chicago, and the Girard National Bank of Philadelphia.

Mr. Stearns is also a trustee and member of the investment committee of the Provident Institution for Savings, a bank whose latest annual report shows a total of $4,147,000 in surplus and profits and $71,168,000 in deposits.

Another friend of and maker of Coolidge is the banker and textile baron, William M. Butler. So great a debt does our President owe this industrial and financial magnate that many expect Coolidge to have him take Daugherty's place. It must be remembered that the Attorney General is the actual liason between Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington and Wall Street in New York; between the Stock Exchange and the White House. In so far as the assets column of the ledger goes and in so far as profitable business connections are concerned, there is no more lucrative office one can hold than that of the Attorney Generalship.

Mr. Butler, a class mate of Coolidge in Murray Crane's school of New England politics, is one of the leading textile manufacturers of the country. He is the president and director of a half dozen mills running about 10,000 looms and almost 500,000 spindles. The Butler Mill, Hoosa Cotton Mills, New Bedford Cotton Mills Corp. Quisset Mill, Nemasket Mills, and West End Thread Co. have, according to their latest reports, total assets of over $20,000,000. In December, 1922, in the midst of the textile strike, while the workers were fighting against a 20% decrease in wages, the New Bedford Cotton Mills Corp. declared a 200% stock dividend and the Quisset Mills a 60% stock dividend.

Besides being a powerful textile baron, Mr. Butler is also director of the Atlas Tack Co., 30% of whose product goes to the shoe trade and whose last total assets are $8,963,737. Among Mr. Butler's co-directors here are such influential men in finance and industry as H. C. Dodge, W. Bancroft, C. H. Dwinnell, W. F. Donovan, and Ralph Hornblower of the firm of Hornblower and Weeks, Boston bankers.

In the Boston and Worcester Electric Co. and in the Boston and Worcester Street Railway Co., Mr. Butler holds the office of president, trustee, director, and chairman of the executive committee. Mr. Butler is also a director of the Merchants National Bank of Boston which had, in March, 1923, an undivided surplus of $3,645,000; deposits amounting to $55,913,00 and total resources of $70,096,000.

All in all, Mr. Butler is interested as director, president, or in some other official capacity in corporations and banks whose total assets and resources are over $93,000,000. It is this Mr. Butler and Mr. Stearns who are the guiding spirits of President Coolidge.

Goes Harding One Better.

Harding was noted for his having surrounded himself with a cabinet of millionaires. His cabinet officers were worth a total running into the billion dollar column.

Coolidge has not only left this cabinet undisturbed but has even gone Harding one better. In his appointment of Slemp as private secretary the President has chosen a man of great wealth and a bitter foe of unionism to work most intimately with him. Mr. Slemp is very close to the Republican textile manufacturing interests of the South which are closely allied with the textile interests of New England dominating Coolidge. The Consolidated Textile Corporation, for instance, owns 750,000 spindles in the South. Mr. Slemp, as president of the Hamilton Realty Co. and the Slemp Coal Co. also has large land and coal holdings in south western Virginia.

Stock Exchange Welcomes Coolidge.

Coolidge's loyalty to the open shoppers and capitalist reactionaries is given the blanket indorsement of our financial and industrial overlords in the following estimate of the country's chief executive by the president of one New York City's greatest banks: "Coolidge is a man with a thorough knowledge of basic economics, and in his public life has demonstrated the fact that he is a sane and constructive force in government."

Under these conditions it is small wonder that the bankers and manufacturers from coast to coast are rejoicing over the rise of Coolidge to the presidency. The feeling of security the big employers have with Coolidge at the helm, is best shown by the fact that when he stepped into his office the reactionary New York Tribune remarked: "The stock-trading simply recorded a quiet confidence that all was well—surely a rare tribute to President Coolidge."