

INVESTIGATION OF BOB'S CAMP REVEALS GRAFT

"Bob" Plays With Old Party Corruption

By JAY LOVESTONE.

(Fifth Article.)

In the course of the campaign the LaFollette forces will do much yelling about purity in government. The Wisconsin Senator will rail against the tyranny of political machines. Another one of those perennial "final" efforts will be made to elect only good, honest, progressive citizens to office.

It is on such a program and under precisely such slogans that LaFollette has captured Wisconsin.

Yet, the facts show conclusively that the Badger state senator has become the political boss only thru the organization of a powerful machine, of a machine as effective as those against which he is now fuming. More than that. LaFollette's machine in Wisconsin is not and has not been as free from graft and corruption as he would have the world believe. Bribery, secrecy of campaign funds, the support of fake progressives and crooked "honest" men have been part and parcel of the ideal "Wisconsin Plan" of good, clean government.

Handled With Silk Gloves.

The proof that the fundamental cause for corruption in government is to be found in the private ownership of the means of production and exchange socially used, is afforded by the LaFollette regime in Wisconsin. Social-Democratic Herald, the predecessor of the honesty of the individual men at the helm of the administrative machinery is only a secondary factor in governmental corruption.

When LaFollette was making his entry into practical national politics, he was offered a bribe ranging from five to fifteen hundred dollars by United States Senator Philetus Saw-

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yer of Wisconsin. A certain Charles T. Pfeister, who held many positions of trust and confidence in moneyed and manufacturing corporations, was charged with bribery, fraudulent granting of franchises, and other crimes against the public. Pfeister had Senator Sawyer try to bribe LaFollette to "fix things" up with the judge who was to try his case, Judge Siebecker, LaFollette's brother-in-law.

Of course, LaFollette refused the bribe and openly declared that Sawyer had attempted to buy him. But that is where this case of rank corruption ended. Sawyer was never prosecuted. LaFollette never did anything to secure a criminal indictment against Sawyer. And Pfeister, member of the firm of Pfeister-Vogel and Company, which has for years been promoting a blacklist against organized labor while it was at the same time supporting the so-called "good government" league, also escaped harsh treatment. This bitter foe of the workingmen was handled with silk gloves in the "Model Commonwealth." Recently Mr. Pfeister became associated with Judge Backus, a member of the LaFollette machine, in the board of directors of the Milwaukee Sentinel, a Hearst publication.

Not Free From Corruption.

When LaFollette was governor of Wisconsin, he had the opportunity he is now seeking as president to banish graft and corruption from government. How successful LaFollette was as a purity crusader in his gubernatorial career and to what extent LaFollette would bring "clean" government to Washington if elected president, can best be seen from the conditions which prevailed in his state when he was governor.

If we examine the files of the Social-Democratic Herald, the predecessor of the LaFollette mouthpiece, the Milwaukee Leader of today, we find the following description of "clean" government under "Battling Bob's" governorship:

"The so-called half-breeds, or the followers of Robert M. LaFollette, are by instinct, make-up, and past history as wicked a set of grafters as their stalwart brethren ever dared to be. As a matter of fact, there is a constant flux from the stalwarts to the half-breeds and vice-versa, according to how the jobs and the graft that was to be gotten, reached around—for the men who did not get any, immediately turned 'reformers.' Theodore Zilmer, one of the present leaders of the stalwarts, was one of the original LaFollette men and original half-breeds in Milwaukee.

"The office of sheriff made a stalwart of him. The present leader of the half-breeds, Fred C. Lorenz, was formerly a friend of Payne and Pfeister. Otto Seidel, one of the self-confessed grafters, ran on the half-breeds' ticket last fall. And all in all, there is not the least doubt in anybody's mind that the half-breeds are in no way or shape better than either the Stalwarts or Democrats. Only they happen to have the district attorney

on their side." (August 12, 1905).

And in the Milwaukee Sentinel of October 1, 1905, we are given the following insight into the reign of honest government in the model commonwealth: "The grand jury which has been in session since early in June, probing graft in city and county government, made its final report to Judge Brazee of the Municipal Court at ten o'clock last night and was discharged. Twenty-four indictments were returned with its final report, as follows:

"William Murphy, former alderman of the third ward, two indictments, charged with perjury in connection with testimony against two 'reformers' before the grand jury.

"One of the sensations of the evening was the indictment against William Murphy. It will be remembered that several days ago Murphy wrote a letter to the grand jury saying he was ready to furnish it with some information. He was summoned, but as soon as the jury ascertained that he had evidence of bribery to furnish against two 'reformers' and LaFollette leaders, the jury excused him. He told his experience to the newspapers, and the jury, finding public sentiment aroused, thought best to let the former alderman testify, especially since for weeks the district attorney had been trying to get Murphy to testify on graft.

"Murphy went before the jury and said that one of the so-called 'reformers' had given him \$400.00 for his vote for the Wells tunnel grants. He also charged that another 'reformer' had given him, through his agent, \$50.00 for his vote for a sidetrack."

The orgy of corruption in LaFollette's Wisconsin commonwealth, particularly when "Battling Bob" held undisputed political sway, is summed up in this fashion by the Social-Democratic Herald, of October 21, 1905.

"The bribery, stealing and open debauchery in Milwaukee was such that even the bribers could not stand it any longer. Public opinion compelled the district attorney about two and a half years ago to ask the criminal court for a grand jury. Since then several indictments have been returned. Over a hundred city and county officials have been indicted. They have been indicted for almost any crime that public officials could possibly commit."

Campaign Funds Are Secret.

Despite all the demands of the LaFollette forces for publicity in congressional and senatorial campaigns, these "progressives" have not been so anxious to put such policies into effect in Wisconsin where they are masters of the political situation. In the Milwaukee Journal of January, 3, 1922, we are given the following indictment of the LaFollette machine:

"For nearly two years the Wisconsin Progressive League worked in the state to bring about the LaFollette Blaine victory. The league now says it was 'educational' and it has failed to file a record of its expenditures. No one knows to what extent money influenced the primary, nor the source whence the money came. The LaFollette candidates filed personal reports for the period of the campaign only,

but nothing is disclosed relative to the prolonged period of preparation."

Backs Capitalist Politicians.

In essence, LaFollette's political machine is like the political machines of the corrupt and reactionary cliques dominated by the biggest capitalist interests. The Wisconsin senator has been a rather glib talker for many years against big whips, bosses, and misleaders utilizing their hold on the government either for service to big corporate interests or for their own ends. Looking into LaFollette's actual doings over a span of years in politics and power, we find that his machine has served to build gods and make bosses out of as many tools of the big exploiters as have the machines of the democratic and republican parties.

Thus the Milwaukee Leader of March 14, 1918, unfolds the following tale of "Battling Bob" placing himself squarely behind the worst type of employing class politicians and tools:

"So Senator Robert Marion LaFollette, according to the Free Press, places himself squarely back of the candidacy of James Thompson.

"That's an old story. 'Bob' placed himself squarely back of Isaac M. Stephenson in his day. 'Bob' placed himself squarely back of Jim Davidson a little later. 'Bob' placed himself squarely back of Francis E. McGovern. 'Bob' placed himself also squarely back of Irvine Lenroot, and 'Bob' placed himself squarely back of Paul O. Hustung as a 'fair-minded' Democrat.

"We could mention a dozen other prominent politicians in Wisconsin behind whom Robert M. LaFollette 'placed himself squarely.' With the exception of those who have died—all of these protégés of 'Bob' are great jingoes, reactionaries, and profiteer patriots today. As a matter of fact, every one of them, after Robert M. LaFollette had placed himself squarely behind him, turned clear around and placed his right foot squarely upon the solar plexus of 'Bob' with telling effect.

"The only exception to this rule that we know of just now, is Colonel John J. Hannan, 'Bob's' purveyor of good will and who sticks to him with remarkable fidelity. But it is not quite clear whether John is squarely behind 'Bob' or 'Bob' squarely behind John.

"And now Robert M. LaFollette places himself squarely behind Mr. Thompson. This gentleman at least cannot disappoint 'Bob' much. Thompson already promises the most vigorous prosecution of the war, and, therefore, if he wants to be consistent he must oppose 'Bob' after election."

Among the progressive saviors or honest men in capitalist government with whom LaFollette associated himself at one time or another, in his program or whom the LaFollette machine supported are the following men who blossomed out into supine servants and vigorous defenders of the blackest employing class interests: Albert J. Beveridge, of Indiana; Albert B. Cummins, of Iowa, author of the Esch-Cummins act; Hiram W. Johnson, of California; the fake Teapot Dome investigator, Sen-

ator Irvine L. Lenroot, of Wisconsin; Miles Poindexter, Washington; Gifford Pinchot, now governor of Pennsylvania; William Allen White, of Kansas, and Medill McCormick of International Harvester Trust fame.

Finally, at this very moment, the differences between the cogs in the wheels of the LaFollette machine and the active supporters of, and workers for, Coolidge in Wisconsin, are so thin and so vague, that Mr. Arthur Evans, was led to the following view of the situation in the Chicago Tribune of August 15:

"Thus the Coolidge movement in Wisconsin is being directed largely by elements quite as closely identified with the progressive legislation that made the state famous ten and twenty years ago, as were the present LaFollette captains, and even closer.

"The 'regulars' scorn the word 'conservative' in this state, and they make much of saying the active Coolidge workers here are advanced, constructive, and up to all Wisconsin's standards of progressivism."

New Russian Film

The Beauty and the Bolshevik is the title of a new, fascinating Red Army romance, that has arrived in the United States from Russia and will be shown at the Lenox Theater, 111th Street and Lenox Avenue, New York, August 22nd to 29th.

Story Based on Civil War.

This story is based on the events in Soviet Russia toward the end of the Civil War. A Red Army brigade settles down after four years of fighting in a little village—there it becomes the center of the village life. It brings joy to the poor and rouses the resentment of the rich landowners.

The Red Army soldiers are sequestered in the homes of the villagers. Kombrig Ivanov, the Red Army Commander, finds himself housed in the home of a rich priest—Kulak. And, as inevitably happens, there is a young daughter—the Beauty.

Courting With the 'ABC' of Communism."

In a short time Kombrig and the Beauty find much in common. The Red Commander interests her in communism and they are seen together making love with Bukharin's "ABC." And then, as you would expect, Kombrig asks for her hand in marriage.

Marriage Old and New.

As an orthodox bourgeois young lady, she proposes a high church ceremony, with full ritual. Kombrig, however, has thrown off the superstitions of the past and insists on a civil marriage.

A break is imminent. . . .

How Kombrig finally wins the Beauty, the ingenious scheme he carries out, can best be known by seeing the latest Russian Art Production, The Beauty and the Bolshevik.

The picture is replete with stirring scenes of the Red Army in action, of the struggles between the poor peasants and the rich landowners and many other events typical of the new life in Soviet Russia.