

The Machine and the Pennsylvania Election

By BERTRAM D. WOLFE.

POLITICAL machines all over the country are about the same. The Tammany machine in New York City, which has so often been in the limelight, functions exactly like the Philadelphia machine of Boss Vare or the Pittsburgh machine of the Mellon family, which have had the spotlight of publicity focused on them during the last week or so. The paid "watchers," the purchase of votes, the purchase of support by political appointments ranging all the way from dog catcher to cabinet secretary, the raising of enormous "slush" funds to "win public opinion," the trading in municipal contracts, the "bread and butter" pressure on city employees—all these are familiar features of every machine and of every machine election.

Democrats Seek Issue.

The only difference that the Pennsylvania election presents from the normal machine election is that there were two powerful rival machines competing for control of the state, and that the democrats, looking for an issue to differentiate themselves from the republicans in the forthcoming congressional elections—after they had voted with them on every measure of interest to big business—now seized upon this dispute between the Vare and Mellon machines as a good chance to raise such an issue.

If the democrats in congress, however, chose to turn the spotlight a little and focus it on democratic New York City or on the democratic machine in Boston, or in other cities where their party is dominant, they would reveal exactly the same phenomena in more or less the same proportions.

Mellon Ambition.

What happened in Pennsylvania?

The Mellon machine decided to extend its control from western Pennsylvania over the rest of the state. Its center is Pittsburgh. The symbol of that control was to be the renomination of Senator Pepper, who had been first made a senator, not by election but by appointment on the death of his predecessor in office, Senator Penrose. Since the death of Penrose the state had been in a sort of political chaos, with Pinchot, Vare and Mellon competing for control of the state machine.

Pepper Mellon Lackey.

Senator Pepper was a most obedient and faithful servant of Mellon and the Mellon-Coolidge administration. Immediately on being seated (January 10, 1922), only two days before the final vote on Newberry—when the least he could have done would have been to plead ignorance as to the question—he voted to whitewash Senator Newberry, convicted and sentenced to Leavenworth for having purchased his election to the United States senate.

Before entering the upper house Pepper had been an opponent of the league and the world court, but when Mellon commanded Pepper obeyed and became a world court senator. He voted for the Mellon tax reduction measure, which shifted the burden of taxation almost completely off of big business. He voted for the gift of millions of dollars to Mussolini so that private bankers might make a new loan to Italy at a substantial rate of interest. He supported all of the debt funding agreements, opposed farmers' relief, voted for the Watson-Parker bill—in short, was a 100 per cent machine senator under the control of the powerful Mr. Mellon.

Obstacles to Mellon.

But two obstacles stood in the way

of his renomination, and these two obstacles were the attempt of Mr. Pinchot, while governor of the state, to build up his own political machine, and the attempt of Boss Vare of Philadelphia to extend his machine to the rest of the state. Back of these rival bosses were powerful minority industrial interests in Pennsylvania opposed to the domination of Mellon.

The result of the general scramble was that all three tried to buy the election and that the "cheapest skate" of the three, Mr. Pinchot, spent more than Newberry on his campaign. The "swell" Mr. Mellon spent over \$1,500,000 that is acknowledged because it cannot be concealed. Perhaps again as much as that can and has been concealed. Boss Vare gave out jobs in the city administration of Philadelphia and brought in people from all over the state to work on his Sesqui-Centennial and as he spent many millions belonging to the state of Pennsylvania he had to spend only from \$600,000 to a million in extra cash. So that the net result of the scramble was that practically every "regular" party voter in the state received anywhere from \$5 to \$10, up to a Sesqui-Centennial, a city, a state or a national job.

Vare Buys Nomination.

Boss Vare won the nomination because his Philadelphia city machine and with his little Sesqui-Centennial had more jobs to give away than Mellon with only federal appointments and the lesser number of city jobs in Pittsburgh at his disposal.

Just as Teapot Dome was typical of countless brazen thefts of national resources, but was the only one to come to light on account of a conflict of interests within capitalist forces, so the Pepper-Vare-Pinchot scandal can be produced in every big machine contest in the country.