

Eisenhower and a 'Campaign for America'

There is abundant evidence that President Truman, if he follows his own strong inclination, will not seek re-election. The indications are convincing that he would like nothing more than to pass on the presidential burden which he assumed with some reluctance in the first place but which by the end of 1952 he will have borne manfully and courageously for nearly eight years. Mr. Truman came into office at a difficult time and has tried to do a good job. Even his bitterest critics scarcely can question the honesty, patriotism and sincerity of purpose with which he has sought to deal with problems made larger and more complex by growing world crisis.

Although the rules of politics have restrained him from a frank avowal up to this point, it can be taken that the Truman intent—in the absence of compelling reasons to the contrary—is not to run again. Circumstances, of course, could alter this intent. The circumstance most likely to do so would be the prospect that the presidency might pass to a man who would destroy the policies, especially in the foreign field, which Mr. Truman strongly believes to be in the interest and the safety of the nation.

The man foremost in President Truman's mind when he considers such a possibility unquestionably is Senator Taft. Despite Mr. Taft's undeniable ability, intelligence and honesty, there are many who will join President Truman in distrust of his alternately hot and cold attitude on foreign policy and his yearning tendency toward isolationism.

Danger of a Divided Nation.

If anything could cause the President to abandon all thought of retirement and spark in him a determination to stay and fight it out, it would be the nomination of Mr. Taft by the Republicans or pre-convention signs that the nomination virtually was within his grasp. The result would be a bitter, rancorous, disruptive campaign which would divide the country sharply at a time when unity is urgent.

The great issue of the moment, and of the next few years, is one of war and peace. The primary national concern should be the speedy building of a great weight of arms that can be thrown into the balance on the side of peace. What the country needs at such a time is not an aggravation of old differences and the creation of new ones, but a healing of differences and a closing of ranks under a leader who is not the head of any faction or party but who is capable of appealing to and representing all the people. What the times call for is a man who is above politics and above party, who instead of conducting a campaign of partisanship can be the trusted leader of a campaign for America.

General Eisenhower Fits the Need.

Without reflection upon any who are now or who may become active aspirants for the presidency, we believe the man who best fits these specifications is Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower.

If the President could be certain that General Eisenhower would be the Republican choice for the nomination, it is likely that he would feel that foreign policy would be in safe hands. A military figure, but not exclusively so, General Eisenhower has demonstrated throughout his career a sincere devotion to the United States and to the cause of keeping it strong and free. He has exhibited precisely those qualities of mind and the capacity for leadership which domestic and world conditions urgently demand and which the people assuredly would like to see in the national presidency.

To be sure of winning in this year's election, any presidential candidate, and particularly any Republican candidate, must be able to attract not only the votes of all who are "regulars" in his party but also a healthy share of the large body of independent voters. It was this vote that elected Mr. Roosevelt in 1932. Who would be better able than General Eisenhower to appeal to the vote of those

who make no fetish of party loyalty and who look to the man rather than the party?

If there were any way by which presidential nominations could be made directly by the people at the polls, as in a nationwide primary such as was advocated by President Wilson, we believe General Eisenhower would be the unmistakable popular choice. And if there were some scheme, such as the cross-filing system in use in a few states, by which popular preference could be expressed regardless of the party affiliation of candidates, we believe General Eisenhower would be the overwhelming favorite for the nomination by the rank and file of both major parties.

Essence of the Eisenhower Appeal.

A large part of the Eisenhower appeal, in the political sense, lies in the fact that he has never been closely identified with either party, and until recently had made no open profession of party adherence or preference. This leaves him free of political fetters, free of the political professionalism of which the people show signs of being thoroughly tired, and unobligated to the controlling powers and ruling cliques of either party.

We fail to share the horror which some profess at the idea of a military man in the White House—provided he is the right sort of military man. We think the public, too, would feel no qualms about having a military figure of the Eisenhower characteristics in the presidency. He is, in the first place, a soldier of exceptional type. There is no evidence of the "brass hat" in his mentality, no indication that his thinking is cast in a rigid military mold.

On the contrary, his speeches and statements have revealed a remarkable insight into political, social and moral problems. They have shown him to have a keen understanding of economic matters, a strong grasp of public issues, a set of basic convictions which coincide with those of the rank and file of the people. As it has been put by an astute observer: "General Eisenhower has a civilian mind with military training."

Strength to Insure Survival.

Under the circumstances confronting the nation, the Eisenhower military know-how might prove invaluable. The central problem of national government in the next few years will be the strength, both military and economic, to insure survival. The central fact in the administration of any President will be the unavoidably huge military budget, about which all questions of domestic and foreign policy must revolve.

Foreign policy necessarily must be to large extent a balancing of commitments against our ability—again both military and economic—to carry them out. Domestic policy must hinge upon the extent to which we are able to make enormous defense outlays and at the same time carry on normal and desirable functions of government. Who better could judge what is essential and what is excessive or wasteful in the arms program than a man of General Eisenhower's profound military knowledge? Who better could relate the needs of rearmament to the ability of the nation to pay than a man with his awareness of the essential importance of national solvency?

Could Play Even More Important Role.

General Eisenhower is now playing a supremely important role in Europe and there are those who say he should not abandon it to seek nomination for the presidency. It is an argument we regard as without merit. If General Eisenhower were called to the higher duty of the presidency, he would be in position to play a dual role of extreme importance—the development of solidarity among the free nations of the West and of the unity which is necessary at home.

Nor are we bothered by the fact that his present assignment prohibits General Eisenhower from speaking freely upon public issues of the moment. Friends who know him best are confident that when the time comes, he will call the shots as he sees them, regardless of partisan politics. Besides, the people, we believe, have come to place no great confidence in political statements and campaign pronouncements. Not lost upon them is the fact that there often is a wide gulf between pre-election statements and post-election performance.

Moreover, no candidate for high office can say with certainty what he would do in the face of events largely unforeseeable and under the pressure of changing circumstances. In the last analysis, a candidate must be accepted on faith—faith based upon judgment of his ability, his character and the sincerity and rightness of purpose he has demonstrated throughout his career.

The People Know and Trust Him.

The American people know General Eisenhower as a man of warm personality and refreshing genuineness. They know of his dedicated service to the nation in critically important roles which have demanded not only intelligence, energy and determination but tact, diplomacy and the ability to fuse clashing temperaments into a working team. These are qualities which would stand him in good stead in the hard game of practical politics.

From his numerous speeches, interviews and writings, the people know General Eisenhower's philosophy to be one of fundamental Americanism. They know him to hold to middle-of-the-road beliefs which probably accord with those of the great majority of the country's citizens.

As capsuled in one of his utterances, General Eisenhower's simple creed is that "I have no end to serve but the good of the United States." What better platform could any presidential candidate have?

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