

"EVENTUALLY, WHY NOT NOW?"

IMMEDIATELY in the Governor's Dictionary Means Maybe, or Pretty Soon.

(AN EDITORIAL.—Fort Worth Star-Telegram.)

"So I make this challenge to the Attorney General. The primaries come on July 24. Regardless of the result, he and I could stay in office until the second Tuesday in January, 1927; but I will agree that if he leads me one vote in the primary that I will IMMEDIATELY (the capitals are ours) resign without waiting until next year, if he will agree that if I lead him 25,000 votes in the primary on July 24 he will immediately resign."

This statement is clear cut and unequivocal. It is a verbatim quotation of the challenge Governor Ferguson herself read when she opened her campaign at Sulphur Springs on May 22. It is the challenge that Attorney General Moody immediately accepted and which he repeatedly asserted he would live up to, to the very letter.

Now contrast the language quoted with the statement issued by the Governor when the returns in the primary are sufficient to show the most stinging rebuke to the Fergusons and Fergusonism that seldom, if ever, has been administered to a candidate for high office in Texas: "In compliance with the agreement heretofore made and bowing to the will of the people expressed at the polls on Saturday, July 24, 1926, I desire to say that I shall resign the office of Governor upon the happening of the matters hereinafter referred to, which I hope in no event will be later than Nov. 1926." And the matters referred to are the validation of district road bonds by a special session of the Legislature, called for Sept. 13, investigation of any state departments that body may see fit, and the consideration of such other matters as the Governor may later submit.

In other words, the pledge of the Governor to resign immediately should Mr. Moody lead her by one vote means nothing when he leads her by more than 100,000. It may mean that she will relinquish her office on Nov. 1 and it can mean, through the submission of topics for legislation, that she will remain in office until the expiration of her term."

As earnestly as a great body of citizens desired the quickest possible elimination of the Fergusons—and that is shown by the overwhelming vote cast for Mr. Moody—the failure of Governor Ferguson to carry out

her pledge is a greater blow to her and a more damaging indictment of Fergusonism than would have been possible had she stepped down right now. She could have retired with fairly good grace and good feeling. Even Jim would have received credit for her immediate resignation and it would have been evidence he had had a hand, at least, in the keeping of the pledge. As it is, her action can leave only a bad taste with the public generally and even among many of the Fergusons' most enthusiastic supporters. She has placed herself in the position of making an absolute pledge and then breaking it without the slightest excuse or the slightest effort at explanation. She adds insult to injury by the statement that she is complying with the pledge by her willingness to resign when the Legislature shall have completed, not only the task for which it is summoned, but any other task she may give to it. Here must be a strange logic that can regard a resignation in November as complying with a pledge of immediate resignation following defeat on July 24 by so much as even one vote.

Whatever the State has thought of Jim Ferguson, it has thought better of his wife. She has escaped censure for most of the things that have happened under her administration. The public has accepted it in a fair spirit. The shortcomings and the failures it has charged to proxy governorship and bad advice. The Governor has, in a measure, had their sympathy and seldom, if ever, their blame. But now she has taken upon herself her own share of blame in this instance, for she has put herself in the light of a woman making an absolute pledge, insisting it was made in good faith, and then deliberately breaking it. The public expected it of Jim Ferguson, but did not expect it of his wife.

However, there is this great consolation to be had. Whether Mrs. Ferguson resigns on Nov. 1 or continues in office until the expiration of her term, the second Tuesday in January, the time at best is not so very long. An early end to the political career of the Fergusons and to Fergusonism is in sight, and when it comes it is certain to be permanent. The State can then rejoice that at last the Fergusons have been removed from its political stage forever.