

From
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90 Embarrassed Leaders

THE tone as well as the text of speeches at the gathering of "third-term" Democrats in Fort Worth Thursday night revealed the unease of those who have undertaken the assignment of "fronting" in Texas for the "Stop Garner" conspiracy centered in the suburbs of the Administration at Washington. The speakers showed consciousness of their renegadism, and could not avoid the tone of apology, along the lines of what the lawyers call a plea of confession and avoidance.

To a man, they referred to the current issue as if it were a choice between Garner and Roosevelt, each claiming to be not "against" Garner, but only "for" the President. The validity of this plea is exploded by the simple fact, known to all, that the President is not a candidate and that no man, however clairvoyant he may be, can say at this time that the forthcoming convention will ever be faced with a choice between the President and Mr. Garner.

Only in the minds of men listening to voices from far beyond Texas' boundaries can such an assumption be imagined to be sufficient grounds for Texas to turn its back on its own great public man and to sabotage both its own prestige and the campaign chances of its favorite son.

Texans, as well as all other Democrats, have a right to assume that the two-terms tradition—which is almost as sacred to the Democratic party as is the doctrine of States' rights—will not be overturned by Mr. Roosevelt. In that presumption, which is the only one Texas' self-respect allows it to make, the sole issue before the forthcoming Democratic state convention, and before the thousands of precinct conventions preceding it, is whether Texas shall honor itself and its favorite son by giving him an instructed delegation to the national convention.

In hundreds of instances in the past, States have instructed for favorite sons whose claims upon the State and whose national service were as a molehill beside the mountain of John Garner's worth. It is neither unusual nor rebellious for Democrats of a State thus to recommend one of their own to the attention of the national convention. In fact, if a State has a man who has earned prominence in the party's establishment, it is unusual not to instruct for him.

Mr. Garner obviously has attained rank high enough to classify him as a favorite son, and obviously has brought to his State honor and prestige enough to earn not merely the compliment of an instructed delegation but the united effort of all Texans toward his nomination.

Texans have a word for the sort of movement that aims at knifing Garner, under the plea that Texas' convention vote should be saved for an eventuality they have no right to expect ever will arise. The third-term boys have not "come clean". It is the voice of Jacob, but the hand of Esau.

This suggestion was inescapable in the speeches Thursday night. Former Secretary of State Clark feelingly denied that he was "against" Garner. Union labor's legislative representative, Joe Steadham, did himself and his cause justice by almost making a Garner speech, pointing out that the Vice President's rating as labor's friend, dating back to the legislative service in Texas, was 100 per cent. Former Governor Ferguson repeated the theme song, "I'm not against Garner; he's all right." Even Mayor Miller of dam-conscious Austin, self-elected head of the "Texas Draft-Roosevelt Movement," was willing to concede that there are good Texans who believe that, since the President is not a candidate, the State's convention vote should go to Garner.

All in all, it was somewhat a lugubrious gathering, which seemed to call more for sympathy than condemnation. After all, the boys are in a bad way when they are driven by outside "contacts" to turn renegade to their Texas loyalties.—Ft. Worth Star-Telegram.