

WM. PROCTOR HAS HABIT OF AIDING CAMPAIGN FUNDS

By David Lawrence

Washington, May 28.—William Cooper Proctor's \$500,000 contribution to the campaign fund of General Leonard Wood stirred fond recollections here today in the minds of many friends of President Wilson, who pointed out that another \$500,000 contributed just 10 years ago this month in another cause had as much to do with electing Woodrow Wilson to the presidency as any other circumstance in his political journey to the White House. Proctor gave \$500,000 in 1910 toward the establishment of a graduate school in Princeton university, of which Wilson was then the president, but the latter turned the gift down because the Cincinnati soap manufacturer attached certain conditions to the expenditure of the money which involved the retention of a certain personnel in the college.

FIRST STEP TO OFFICE

Wilson argued that gifts should come without strings attached and the incident provoked such a controversy among Princeton alumni that it led Wilson reluctantly to resign the presidency of the college and accept the gubernatorial nomination, which the Democratic leaders in New Jersey were eager for him to take.

Again and again that half million dollars has been facetiously referred to among Princeton men as the "first important contribution" toward Wilson's first campaign for the presidency. Proctor's testimony in defense of his expenditures for General Wood did not create the impression that he contributed large sums of money for any selfish purpose. He contributed heavily to the Hughes campaign in 1916.

SOLE OUT DESIRED POSTS

Cross examination on the stand rather led to the conclusion of disinterested persons that Proctor is the kind of man who was persuaded by ardent and enthusiastic friends of General Wood that he ought to use his fortune to help advance the candidacy of so vigorous a character as General Wood. Of course the game of roping men of wealth into a political campaign is an art in itself and in every case the "patriotic opportunity" offered to the man of means is emphasized rather than any suggestion of personal advantage in the form of political office.

On the other hand, it has been customary for election candidates not to forget some of the wealthy contributors to their campaign funds either in ambassadorships or cabinet positions.

PROMISES NECESSARY

The bold action of Governor Lowden of Illinois in spending considerable money to be nominated but spending it out of his own pocket rather than be under obligations to any individual or group of individuals is in marked contrast to the method in which the Wood campaign has been conducted, though the General is not wealthy and was dependent en-

tirely on the voluntary contributions of interested friends. The general himself does not solicit campaign contributions. Few candidates ever do. It's when the men who get around a prospective candidate do the soliciting for funds that the embarrassing promises are made. Even President Wilson found after his campaign in 1912 that some of his managers had promised jobs and certain courses of action of which he had no knowledge, with the result that the president-elect met some bitter feeling inside his own party at the outset, a few grudges still remaining.

EVIDENCE IS SLIM

The whole effect of the investigating committee of the senate is to show that the various candidates for the presidency are being backed by individuals or private interests who will have a string on the next president of the United States. It is within the power of a congressional committee to spread innuendo just the same.

The Kanyon investigating committee gets plenty of publicity. The reporters attend en masse. Some questions which might provoke many a libel suit if asked outside of congress by one individual of another are given the widest currency. Both sides suffer. Men are subpoenaed without a particle of evidence.

Barney Baruch was called purely on the basis of a story published in the Hearst papers to the effect that he had gotten up a million dollar fund for Wood. It turns out that Baruch swears that he didn't contribute a cent.

On the other hand the effort to besmirch Mitchell Palmer by the implication that he got contributions from concerns who evaded their income tax obligations and were later required to pay millions of dollars in back taxes to the treasury, is in effect a criticism of the department of justice which would never have anything to do with income tax matters, even though those concerned were guilty of evasion.

The administration of the income tax and indeed all prosecutions are conducted by the treasury department officers, who are only technically in the department of justice roster.

AMOUNT NOT UNREASONABLE

The whole episode is another instance of a way a congressional committee can be handled for partisan political purposes, though in this instance the effort is entirely inspired by the Hiram Johnson followers in the senate, and is aimed not merely at Democrats but at Republican rivals of Senator Johnson.

Again and again congressional committees have conducted inquiries of this kind without proving anything especially but raising political smoke screens of doubt.

The present pre-convention campaign has been a costlier one than usual, but the expenditures have been distributed over more candidates and the contests under the primary system are more responsible for the situation than any newly developed cupidity or political corruption. Most of the money has been spent in publicity and advertising and not in buying votes.

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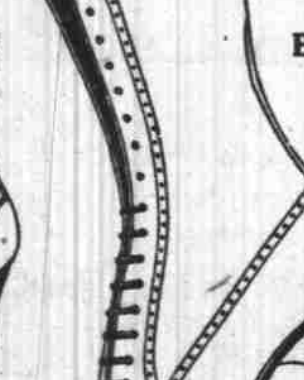
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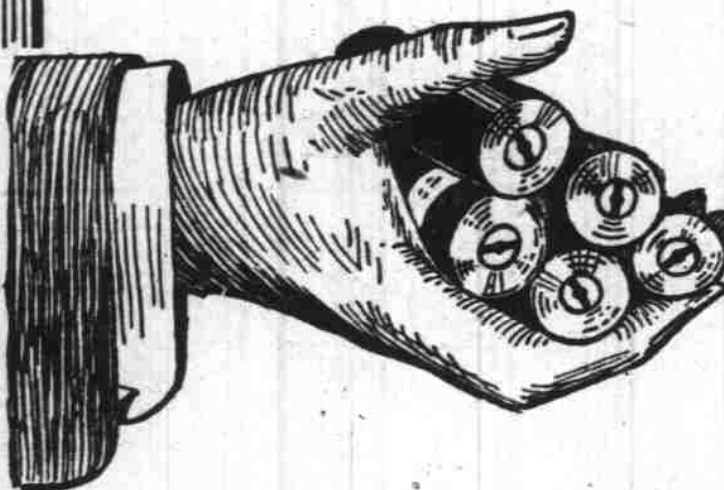
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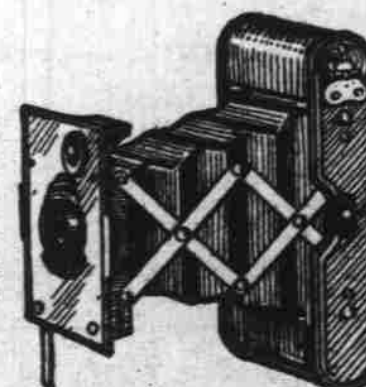
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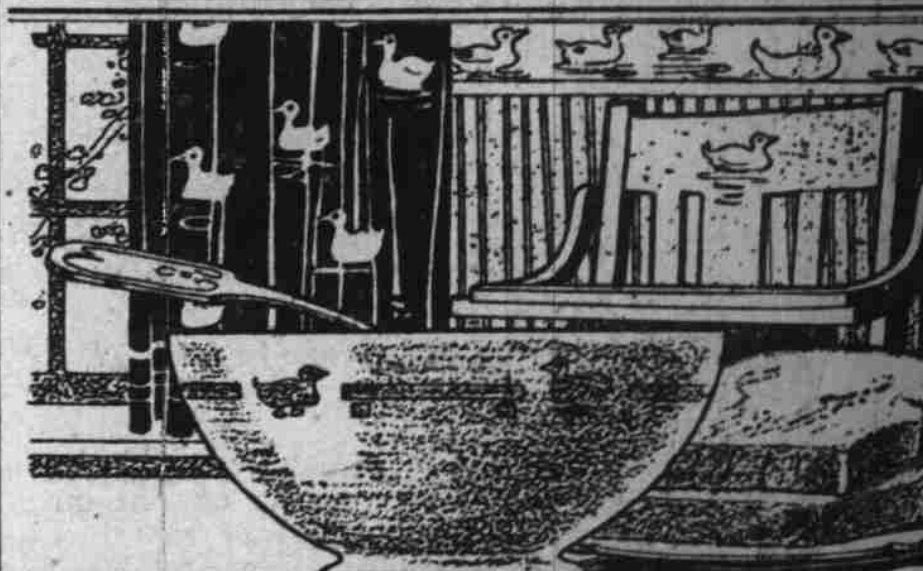
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