

Economic Highlights---

Neither presidential convention produced any important surprises. Governor Dewey moved to the top of the GOP list when he beat Stassen in Oregon. His organization made those of the other hopefuls look woefully amateurish, and he was clearly the logical choice. The stop-Truman movement within the Democratic party was noisy, but it never controlled many votes, and when Eisenhower refused unequivocally to run it promptly died.

The vice-presidential selection came pretty close to being non-controversial. Governor Warren is a magnetic figure, with a remarkable record of vote-getting in the important state of California. Senator Barkley has performed arduous and faithful service, and the delegates obviously wished to honor him.

The platforms, like the keynote and nominating speeches, were exactly what were to be expected. They were designed to offer something to everybody and, so far as is humanly possible, to offend nobody. Couched in general terms for the most part, they are subject to practically any interpretation. In this connection, it would be interesting to know just how many voters pay attention to the platforms anyway. Certainly, they are completely overshadowed by the statements and personalities of the contenders.

All of the commentators reported that a pall of gloom overhung the Democratic conclave. The party leaders were going through the motions out of necessity. Delegates wandered out while the speeches were going on. The spectators' seats were only partly filled. More important, the machine leaders—the men who run the vital state and city organizations and get the vote out—were conspicuous by their absence. They were always present, certain of victory, in Roosevelt's day.

The Republicans, on the other hand, were jubilant when they met in the same hall. They were obviously convinced that after 16 years of starvation they were at last in sight of the promised land. All the polls bear them out in this so far—though it's a long time until November. And most of the commentators are writing as if the election were over, and Dewey is about to enter the White House.

That brings up the question of possible Republican over-confidence—the feeling that the ticket can't lose. However widespread that



spirit is in some circles, it doesn't appear to be pervading the Dewey camp. He and Warren will take no chances. They will go to every section of the country. It is said that he has decided on a constructive campaign—that is, he will not just denounce Truman and his works but will stress a positive and specific program. He did that with enormous success in New York, where he has sometimes left opponents at a loss by acting as if they didn't exist, and by sticking to his own guns.

The nearest thing to the unexpected that has occurred is Mr. Truman's calling a special session of Congress. This was hardly a bombshell, however. It is a political move, designated to embarrass the Republicans. The President said he wants the GOP to put its platform into law at once, and he would be more than human if he didn't hope for fruitless dissension and debate by the Republicans. He could then go to the country with the theme that the opposition is incapable of running our affairs, and that

the only hope is to return a Democratic president and congress.

Time and the march of events will prove whether that theory is sound or not. But the Republicans are prepared to deal with it. They knew that Congress might be called back before the election, and they have made their plans. They must and will stand on the record of this Congress—their first in 16 years—which the President has described as the worst in our history. They believe that their major acts—tax reduction, the Taft-Hartley law, etc.—have earned majority backing, and they will point to them with pride. And they will probably put into effect some of the legislation which they didn't get around to in the regular sessions such as the Taft-Ellinger housing bill, a broad-

ening of the social security base, and so on.

Mr. Truman faces one substantial difficulty if he attempts to demonstrate that his party holds the hope of the nation. The difficulty lies in the fact that he has not been able to control the democrats in Congress. For instance, his veto was over-ruled on three occasions—Taft Hartley law, tax reduction, and a bill to legalize rate making among railroads under ICC supervision. This was an all-time record for disregarding the Presidential veto.

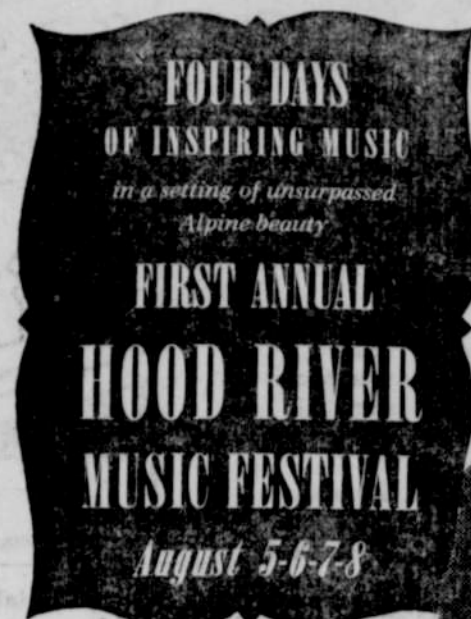
And on all three occasions either a majority or a substantial minority of the Democrats in both houses of Congress went along with the Republicans, and cast their ballots against the titular head of their party. Mr. Truman and his inner circle just haven't shown the talent for controlling reluctant members of Congress that was so vividly demonstrated by the late President Roosevelt.

In any event, it will be all politics

from now on, and on both sides of the fence. Every speech, every decision, will be influenced in some manner by the pending election. November will provide the decision.

Being in a rut isn't bad if it is on the level.—E. R. Birkenbeul.

You can get a government bulletin on every subject, except on how to reduce the cost of government.—Samuel B. Pettingill.



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