

# Behind the Scenes At Washington

**Calvin Coolidge, Mrs. Coolidge, Senator Borah, Chas. G. Dawes, Herbert Hoover and Andrew Mellon Discussed in Speech by Newspaper Man.**

## McNARY AND SINNOTT ARE LAUDED

### Stanfield Mentioned; Fate of Parties Weighed; Election Prospects in Relation to Control of U. S. Senate; Relations With Japan and With Europe.

By **FREDERIC WM. WILE.**  
In Portland Telegram.

**Mr. Wheeler**—Mr. President and Gentlemen: H. G. Wells, in his "Outline of History," attributes the fall of the Roman Republic to two factors: 1st, the lack of a public press adequately to inform the people, and 2nd, the lack of a system of representative government to provide the necessary machinery for popular expression.

The development of the public press in the last century has been one of the "amazing" outgrowths of our American democracy and is one of the essential safeguards of the democracy. We have grown from a country with 27 daily papers having an aggregate circulation of approximately 10,000 in 1810 to a country with approximately 2,000 daily papers having an aggregate circulation of 25,000,000 to 30,000,000 in 1925. Practically every one in America reads a daily paper.

The lament is often heard that we have drifted away from the good old days when editors of the Horace Greeley type raged against the "four hundred million" with masterful editorials. It is a characteristic of modern journalism that the interpretive writing has taken the place of the old-time editor. People no longer want to be told what to believe but rather are inclined to want an unbiased discussion of the facts from which they can draw their own conclusions. Mr. Wile belongs to this new class of interpretive newspaper writers.

Mr. Wile—Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the City Club, it is a very thrilling experience for an Eastern tenderfoot, far remote from that community of Rumor, Recrimination and Remorse called Washington, to stand before an audience on the Pacific coast. It is also a maiden experience and one in which I take the keenest delight.

As an occasional contributor to the columns of one of your great newspapers, I do not feel myself an entire stranger in Portland. Though I feel myself very much at home, thanks to the typically bountiful western hospitality of which I am the willing and grateful victim, I still reserve to myself the right of the visitor to rhapsodize over this city magnificence. It is a complete eye-opener to me, as is also, if I may venture to say so in Portland, your sister city of Seattle. Their splendor, their beauty, their metropolitan air, their bustling life, their gorgeous environments, their illimitable possibilities of future development, have made a deep and lasting impression upon me.

If I could be born again and start life all over, there is nothing that could prevent the pitching of my tent out here where the west ends. I am afraid I should drive the stakes as near the Columbia River Highway as possible. I have been far afield in two hemispheres in my day, but I recall nothing that can approximate the grandeur of those miles of panorama. Nature has been very lavish to Western Oregon. Your enthusiasm over her gifts is fully justified.

**Disconcerned by Distances.**

I have come among you after four weeks of exploration of the western country lying between the Great Lakes and the Pacific ocean. The northwest was virgin soil to me. It has been a revelation, every inch of the way. The trip has been for me a campaign of education that I, in common with most residents of the east, sadly needed. I have learned, for one thing, why they are called the "great open spaces." My acquaintance with those vast distances is renewed every time I buy a sleeping-car berth.

Along the Atlantic seaboard, when we journey from Washington to New York, or to Pittsburgh, or Detroit, or Chicago, or St. Louis, we think we're taking a long journey. It was a little disconcerting to find that Bismarck, North Dakota, is as far from Helena, Montana, as New York is from Chicago, and that it takes longer to get from Portland to San Francisco than it does to go from Washington to Chicago. I spent the Fourth of July at Minneapolis and said to my host that it felt good at last to be in the heart of the west. He told me that Minneapolis is only 1,300 miles from the Atlantic and that I was still 1,900 miles from the Pacific. Columbus did a great job when he discovered this vast land of ours, though an Englishman once said he didn't see how Christopher could very well have missed it!

**Men, Women and Herders.**

It is a great compliment to a professional chronicler of public affairs to be invited so far afield as Portland to discuss events. "Behind the Scenes at Washington." It is appropriate that you custodians of western destinies should survey these scenes from a vantage point that you are new monarchs there. There has never been a time when the West was so strongly entrenched at the seat of Federal government as it is today.

## Coolidge Does Not Rest on Vacation



An unusual picture of the President and Mrs. Coolidge aboard the Mayflower for a short-cruise along the New England Coast. Despite the fact that the President is badly in need of rest and relaxation, reports from Swampscott, Mass., are that he has again thrown himself into affairs of state with important conferences scheduled almost every day.

taking excellent care of the farmer and likely to make a better job of it than Washington could ever do.

**Haney and Chamberlain.**

Oregon has a capable and respected representative at the national capital, too, in the person of Bert E. Haney, a member of the United States Shipping Board. And the Beaver state has never got a more popular son to the Potomac than George W. Chamberlain. If Oregon doesn't want to return him to the Senate, Washington is quite content to have its bar adorned by a lawyer of such eminence.

**Don Quixote Tilts at Windmills.**

To a western man has been entrusted the toughest job in Washington, one that is the outstanding proof that the star of congressional empire is steadily taking its way toward the Pacific. I refer to that sturdy Kansan of Chickasaw ancestry, Senator Curtis. Curtis is leader of the so-called Senate majority and chairman of the committee on Rules, that citadel against which Don Quixote Dawes is now so vigorously tilting. Dawes says he, too, is banging away at windmills.

**Fickle as the Weather.**

The Republican Party has a statistical majority of 14 in the senate, which now contains 53 nominal Republicans, 40 Democrats and one Farm Labor member—Henrick Shipstead of Minnesota. That statistical majority is about as dependable as the weather. Let only seven Republicans of the less regular type—like Borah, Johnson, Coad, Howell, Norris, Norbeck, and McMeister—leave the reservation, and the so-called Republican majority in the Senate goes where the woodbine twines.

**Temperamental Republicans.**

Indeed, not even seven of these temperamental Republicans need to stray from the straight and narrow path to annihilate Administration control of the Senate. For when the Republicans expelled LaFollette, Brookhart, Ladd and Frazier from the Lodge last winter, it reduced even their paper majority for the next ten days. Subtract from ten the seven capricious spirits whom I named a moment ago, and you have a Republican control reduced to almost less than nothing. These are the conditions that are fast turning Senator Curtis' remaining raven locks to white.

**Solid South and Frenzied North.**

That is the present situation. The future is even more disconcerting. Thirty-five elections to the United States Senate are now in prospect. Twenty-eight of the seats in question are in Republican possession, counting the LaFollette and Ladd vacancies. Seven are held by the Democrats. While all of these democratic seats, being in Southern hands, are secure for that party, many of the Republican seats are highly insecure. Several are bound to be lost. It will not be necessary for the Democrats to gain more than a few of them to wipe out Republican control of the Senate in the next Congress. Coolidge administration policies will face a period of extremely rough sledding, if that contingency arrives.

The time is easily within the recollection of most men here present when the root at Washington was ruled by the East. In those days, only a very few years ago, the West was the political step-child of the Republic. Government was still of the people, but mainly of, by and for the eastern people. Those days are gone. Mining and agriculture and the other basic interests of this virile section of the United States no longer appear at Washington, cap in hand, to beg for favors. They present themselves nowadays in the guise of lords and masters. They command the ear of Administration and Congress, and seldom is it a deaf ear.

**Aiming at the Jaw.**

Events of the past month have clothed the 1926 Congressional campaign with an unexpectedly new significance. The passing of LaFollette and Ladd, who in certain sense were the horse and sniew of the Radical movement in Congress, has opened up inviting possibilities for the Republican organization. You are certain to experience, in consequence of them a vigorous drive to give Radicalism in Wisconsin and North Dakota, and in the Northwest generally, a knock-out blow.

Behind the scenes at Washington, during the next six months, there will be no single political activity with a more definite and determined purpose. The questions the Republican leadership is asking itself are these—does the disappearance of LaFollette mean the break-up of the Radical combination which imposed its will with so deadly effect upon recent procedure in Washington? Is Western Radicalism a flimsy structure that was built around one or two dominating personalities? Is it now doomed to crumble and decay? Was LaFollette the keystone of an arch that cannot stand without him?

idge. One is that he is a silent man. Another is that he is dull-witted. Another is that he is a small-town politician.

He is none of these things. Instead of being silent, he is talkative. He is by far the most inquisitive President with whom the newspaper correspondents in Washington have ever had to deal. At our semi-weekly press conferences at the White House, we do not always find the President informative, but we invariably find him chatty. Sometimes he is positively garrulous. He always is verbose when he wants to answer questions without saying anything or committing himself.

**Charm of Coolidge Personality.**

Although the President is not exactly the "Silent Cal" of popular fiction, he is thrifty with his words when conversational economy is useful. The American people are so swept with wind bags that they welcome the arrival in public life of a man who even has a reputation for keeping his mouth shut.

In private conversation, the President, as I know from personal experience, is as communicative as any man. He has a hospitable manner, a winning smile, and considerable charm. What the outside world looks upon as his coldness is to a large extent shyness and genuine modesty. He cares nothing for show, the cheap social graces, small talk or idle compliments. You seldom talk with Mr. Coolidge without feeling that he has an adequate grasp of the topic under discussion and a mind open to consider it from the other fellow's point of view.

**President's Favorite Ballad.**

The President, I believe, is approaching national and international questions in that mood. He is not a builder of air castles, or afflicted with an exaggerated vision, or fired with any evangelical ambition to reform either his own country or the world at large through a program of Utopian but impractical idealism. Except on the single issue of governmental economy, we detect no sign of the crusading spirit in Calvin Coolidge. On this issue he is imbued with almost religious fervor, but it is tinged, as all Coolidge policies are, with a very practical quality.

Just before the President left Washington for his summer vacation, he delivered a farewell speech on his favorite subject of economy. Economy is the song Mr. Coolidge sings more effectively than any other ballad in his political repertoire. He has undoubtedly lifted it to the dignity of the paramount number on his political program. He told the Business Organization of the Government that he is committed to a policy of "relentless economy."

The President's all-dominant purpose in preaching and then practicing Federal economy is of course the reduction of taxes. He wants the American people to understand that without persistent economy in the expenditure of public funds, there can be no progressive decrease in tax burdens.

**Coolidge Bends Like Granite.**

Calvin Coolidge had not been President very long two years ago before Washington realized that an unusual type of American citizen was now established at the White House. The Republican Party, which it was commonly understood, had no intention of abandoning the quiet man from Massachusetts for the Vice Presidency in 1924, discovered, to the consternation of many of its leaders, that a masterful personality was at the helm; not a spectacular personality, not an orator, not a half-fellow, but a man of calmness, courage and caution. With these qualities to recommend him, it did not take long to "sell" the new President to the country.

Before Calvin Coolidge was President six months, the oil scandals engulfed the nation's attention and rocked the country with fears and unrest that seemed for awhile to be unsettling the very foundations of the Republic. At such times this emotional and easily excited America of ours needs calm, courage and caution in the White House.

The comparison, of course, is not wholly pertinent, yet I have often thought that, as the crisis of Secession found us with a Lincoln, and the World War with a Wilson, we were perhaps more fortunate than we at the time realized that in that moment of overwrought national nerves in the winter of 1924, there was in the presidential chair an individuality and a temperament of the type of Calvin Coolidge—something of the granite of the Green Mountains, of that fibre against which even the most violent storms break, but which they do not bend.

**Clinging to Cautions Calvin.**

The presidential campaign of 1924 came on. Upon that contest the Democratic party entered with as formidable a mass of fighting material as ever was at the disposal of an American political organization seeking to wrest control of the Federal government. The administration in office was tainted with the oil-scandals and the Veterans Bureau corruption. The Republican congress was in general disrepute. Coolidge himself, with what many of his followers felt to be reckless courage, had vetoed the soldiers' bonus. It was no small tribute to Calvin Coolidge that the party which, only a few months previous was prepared to drop him, now saw in him practically its only source of salvation in the impending struggle for retention of power at Washington.

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