

November 25, 1922

KLAN VICTORIES IN OREGON AND TEXAS

THE KU KLUX VICTORIES in Texas and Oregon, where the influence of the hooded organization is said to have elected a United States Senator in one instance and a Governor in the other, indicates to *The Nation* (New York) that "the Ku Klux Klan has now passed out of the amusing

stage and has entered the domain of practical politics to challenge our existing parties." The Senator-elect from Texas, a former member of the Klan, and State Commissioner of Railroads when he announced his candidacy, "has never denied that he was the Ku Klux candidate," we are reminded by the *New York Times*, which sees a possibility, if his election is challenged, of a "fight in the Senate that will parallel in national interest the battle to unseat Senator Newberry." "Never was there a worse tangle," admits the *San Antonio Light* (Ind.), which brings this report from Texas:



THE NEW TEXAS SENATOR.

Earle B. Mayfield, Democrat, former State Commissioner of Railroads, who won an overwhelming victory with the assistance of the "drys" and the Ku Klux Klan.

"There were injunctions for this and against that, injunctions against injunctions, counter decrees of courts, rehearings, reversals, citations for contempt, orders for one thing and then an-

other, until the average voter was ashamed of his State and exasperated with the whole thing. Many men absolutely refused to go to the polls because of their disgust over the entire matter."

Senator-elect Mayfield, who is a Democrat, favors the repeal of the Esch-Cummins Transportation Act, is "dry," is for the soldiers' bonus, and will be one of the "farm bloc," we are told. In the opinion of the *Dallas Journal* (Ind. Dem.), "the factors that made for Mr. Mayfield's success were his personal following; the support of the Ku Klux Klan; the fact that his name was printed on the ballot in a considerable number of counties, whereas his opponent's name was not printed on the ballot in any county; and the pull of the primary election pledge." But the *Houston Post*, which is of the same political complexion, says in a column editorial in which the words Ku Klux Klan are not to be found, that the election of Mayfield is "a triumph for Democracy and Decency." Continues this Texas paper:

"His election comes as a tribute not only to the candidate, but as an evidence of the splendid solidarity of the Democratic party of Texas, and its power to resist the mightiest attacks both from within and without the party.

"In view of the character of the combined attack upon the Democratic nominee for the Senate, Senator Mayfield's victory stands out as tremendously significant. It stands as a fitting rebuke to the discordant elements in the Democratic party in Texas for their effort to dismember and destroy the party. It serves notice to all outside interests, political, ecclesiastical, and otherwise, that Texas is capable of running her own affairs, and intends to do so. It presents evidence that the people of Texas stand unreservedly for the great moral and social reforms wrought under the administration of the Democratic party. Particularly,

does it mean that Texas is stronger than ever for Prohibition, and that it will not tolerate any movement designed to revive the legalized liquor traffic, either openly or by subterfuge. The election of Mayfield is among other things a tremendous triumph for Prohibition. It insures not only another 'dry' Senator from Texas, but it spells the doom of the pro-liquor movement in this State."

When we move beyond the Rockies, down the valleys of the Snake and Columbia, we find an entirely different situation in Oregon. There the Compulsory School Bill, which requires parents to send children between the ages of eight and sixteen years to a public school during the entire school year, unless the child is taught by parent or private teacher, "was the most upsetting factor in the history of Oregon since the agitation over slavery," notes the *Portland Oregonian* (Ind. Rep.). Only two Oregon newspapers, declares the *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, opposed this measure, and none supported it.

Oregon has no "negro problem," but "a religious dust-storm" is said to have obscured the issues in the recent campaign, and to have made possible the election of the Klan candidate for Governor, former State Senator Walter M. Pierce, Democrat. The issue, as the political editor of the *Portland Telegram* (Ind. Rep.) saw it, was "whether the religious liberty guaranteed in the State Constitution" should be preserved. This issue was a vital one, he declared the day before election, because "it strikes at the very foundation of the Government itself." Nevertheless, we learn from Portland dispatches to New York papers that the Compulsory School Bill, sponsored originally by the Scottish Rite Masons and later taken up by the Ku Klux Klan, was approved by the voters.

When we look for an explanation of the Oregon victory, in which the reduction of taxes also was a prime issue, we learn from the *Portland Oregonian* that—

"Mr. Pierce bargained for the vote of the patriotic societies and the Ku Klux and he got it. It helped greatly. He is an adroit campaigner and that helped. The Republican party was more or less divided, and the position of Mr. Olcott within the party was not so strong as to bring about a union of factions or to inspire great enthusiasm for him among men to whom party has a genuine appeal. Doubtless there are other contributing reasons for the Democratic sweep; but these are enough, and more. The public was determined on a change."

"The whole campaign was carried on without speakers and without press support or opposition. It was really all done by secret propaganda. Thus Governor Olcott goes down to defeat for supporting the principles on which the Government of the United States was founded. He was defeated for protesting against intolerance and bigotry," asserts this paper. "The State of Oregon seems to be suffering from an acute attack of Ku Kluxism, which has taken the form of a violent anti-Catholicism,"

(continued)



OREGON'S NEXT GOVERNOR.

Walter M. Pierce, Democrat and former State Senator, who won a victory over Governor Olcott, Republican, with the aid of the Ku Klux Klan.

KLAN VICTORIES

observes the *Baltimore Evening Sun*. As for Governor Olcott, "it is better to have character than to win any election," maintains the *Portland Oregonian*.

"Until now parents have had the alternative of sending their children to private or parochial schools," notes the *New York Times*, "but the new bill takes from the parent all discretion, and makes the child a compulsory ward of the State." "It will fan the flames of religious hatred," predicts the *Portland Telegram*, editorially. Moreover—

"Since full religious freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution, and since no attempt has ever been made by any State to impair that sacred constitutional right, the country will wonder what sinister influences had been at work in Oregon to impair the reason of a majority of her citizens."

"The school law just ratified by the voters of Oregon is a virtual attempt to Ku Klux education in that State," avers the *Baltimore Sun*; "it applies the Ku Klux principle of force to educational training." In *The Sun's* opinion—

"The motive is, of course, to force Catholic children to attend the public schools. But it strikes not only at Catholics but at Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and other Protestant denominations who prefer parochial or private educational institutions for their children.

"This Oregon law is a challenge to a religious civil war. It undertakes to deprive parents of the liberty of educating their children in schools of their own selection, against which nothing can be said except that they generally combine certain features of religious with mental training. It is a reproach to this country that a single State in the American Union should have yielded to this degrading and shameful spirit of bigotry."