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Tammany Hall Needs Another Murphy, Says Pendergast, the 'Boss' of Missouri

By WINSTON MURRILL, World-Telegram Staff Writer.

THOS. J. PENDERGAST
(Kansas City Boss).

JAMES J. DOOLING
(Tamany Boss).

Tammany Hall lost control of New York at the last election because it does not have "boss leadership," Thomas J. Pendergast, powerful, square-jawed Democratic boss of Kansas City and the State of Missouri, declared in an interview at the Waldorf-Astoria today. Then he told how a boss keeps his job and what money means in a national election.

"Tammany Hall needs another Murphy, and won't be strong again until it gets some one like that," said the 62- year-old politician.

"A political machine has got to have a boss. It can't be run by a board of directors, even if you give them Indian names. You've got to have a boss to tell those guys with fancy names what to do."

The Missouri boss talked in the lobby of the hotel, where he had been conferring with "My Mayor of Kansas City," Bryce Smith, here for a meeting of the General Baking Co., of which he is a vice president. Mayor Smith nodded agreement as the lusty Missourian told of his city and organization.

"Yes, sir," said the boss, "you've got to have boss leadership. Now, look at me. I'm not bragging when I say I run the show in Kansas City. I am boss. If I was a Republican they would call me a 'leader,' but 'boss' is good enough for me.

"I have controlled Kansas City for twenty-five years and I'll continue in control as long as I treat the people right. They call me all

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TAMMANY NEEDS A NEW MURPHY. SAYS K.C. 'BOSS'

Pendergast, Here with "His Mayor," Finds Machines Need a Leader.

HE RUNS HIS STATE

His Organization Even Provides All the Relief, He Points Out.

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kinds of names out there. There is not a daily newspaper in the State that supports me. They slug the hell out of me at every turn, but I go right along winning elections. How do I do it? Well, here's how:—

"I am honest with the people. I gave them a good government. I take care of the poor. I give out all the jobs I can find. I never ask a man his politics, but I do him a good turn if I can. When I have treated the people right they will vote my way on election day. That is, 75 per cent of them will. The other 25 per cent aren't worth bothering about.

"Take Kansas City now. We operate there within our income. That is one of the two cities in the country today that hasn't a deficit.

Have City Manager.

“We have the city manager form of government and we give the people their money’s worth of government. We have had a \$32,000,000 ten-year improvement project on now. We sold bonds and spend one-tenth of that sum annually. That has given jobs to thousands of men during the depression.

“In Kansas City we have job relief, some of it financed by the government, but we have no municipal home relief. The taxpayers are not taxed to provide funds for the purchase of food for the poor. . . .

“I am the home relief of Kansas City. My organization, all by itself, sees to it that not a family goes hungry in the city. We raise funds by securing donations from the city and State employees, appointed or elected by our organization. Business men, friends of ours, contribute their part. In each ward our organization functions just like your home relief here. That is for the same purpose, but is not a lot of foolishness about it. If a family needs food they get it and get it today, not next week or next month.

Shuns City Hall.

“I haven’t been in the City Hall since I was councilman twenty-five years ago. I put men in office who know their jobs. If I find that they don’t know their business I find somebody else.”

The keen-eyed old fighter, who developed his early organization partly by the use of his fists, is one of the finest friends a man ever had, Mayor Smith said, and he can be a tough enemy.

He never goes back on his word, the Mayor continued, and induced the boss to tell of one experience:—

“Senator Reed wrote me one time that he wanted me to do what I could for some chap, I’ve forgotten his name, who wanted to be Lieutenant Governor. There was another candidate by the same name and this second fellow came to me one day and asked for my support. Thinking he was the Senator’s friend, I told him I would help him. Later I found out I had promised to help the wrong man. I couldn’t go back on my word, so I supported this wrong guy and elected him. That just goes to show.”

The Mayor nodded again. . . .

Under questioning Boss Pendergast admitted that he “was a bit interested” in what the boys were doing at City Hall and at the State Capitol.

“Bupt, as I said, I never go near the places,” he added. “When some of them get off on the wrong steer I call them over to my office and get them straightened out. Sometimes I have to slug the hell out of them. I don’t mean with my fists, I tell ’em.”

He said he hadn’t a fist fight in twenty years, “but I used to be pretty good at it,” he laughed. “I remember the time when Fireman Jim Flynn, the old heavyweight champion who once knocked out Jack Dempsey, insulted one of my friends.

“Well, I met him on a street corner, and I beat the hell out of him. It was a tough job and took me 15 minutes, but he never was much good after that.

Softened Up Now.

“That’s all out now. I’ve softened up and am one of the best family men you ever met. Don’t go out at nights or nothing.”

“A political boss does not have to be a grafter, or a robber, or any of those things the papers call me out in Missouri,” the politician commented. All he has to do is to serve the public, make friends and do the right thing.

“I’ve made a lot of money, but not out of politics,” he explained. “I started the system of selling already mixed concrete. Contractors found that I could give them a better product and a hell of a lot cheaper than they could mix it themselves. Of course, I sold to

city, State and government contractors. They had to buy the best and cheapest concrete they could find, but I never used my influence to sell it.”

Mayor Smith broke in to tell about all the building they were doing in Kansas City and how they had spread out employment by eliminating as much labor-saving machinery as possible. It costs the city some 20 per cent more, but more men have jobs, and it all comes back in the long run.

Eliminate Machinery.

“Do you mean that all possible labor-saving machinery is eliminated on all of your building projects?” he was asked.

“Yes, sir,” was the reply.

“And do the contractors mix the concrete used by hand and thus give thousands of extra jobs?” was the next question.

“Ah . . . well . . . no.” And the Mayor’s face flushed slightly. “They find that they can buy better and cheaper concrete all ready mixed.”

“And do they all buy it from Mr. Pendergast?” the questions continued.

“Oh, sure. He sells nearly all of the mixed concrete. But men can’t mix it as well as it can be mixed by machinery.”

After explaining fully the quality of and necessity for Pendergast mixed concrete, the boss switched over to national politics.

Roosevelt Will Win.

“Hoover’s too smart to accept the Republican nomination. Roosevelt will be re-elected by a huge majority, and there’s not a bit of doubt about that in my mind.

“Hell, if he can’t be re-elected with all the money they’ve got to spend, nobody ever could.

“But I could beat Roosevelt, and there is only one way to do it.

“I could beat Roosevelt or anybody else and become President of the United States—if I had five billions of dollars to spend and a year to do it. . . .”

He laughed heartily.

He referred jokingly to the fusion movement in Kansas City last fall when all the newspapers, Republicans, young voters’ leagues and “all the other disgruntled” combined to break the Pendergast machine.

Slugged Hell Out of Them.

“What did those fellows call themselves who ran against you last fall?” he asked Mayor Smith.

“I don’t remember—fusion or the youth’s movement or something like that,” the Mayor remembered.

“Well,” the boss reflected, “the name didn’t matter. We slugged the hell out of them on election day—I mean at the polls—not with fists. What did you win by? Three to one, wasn’t it?”

The Mayor nodded again.

“Slug the hell out of” is his favorite expression, and it may mean anything. Even his horse, Stolen Colors, slugged the hell out of the field at Empire City yesterday.