

Why Not Nominate a Winner?
(Missouri Cash Book, June 23)

There are two classes of Democrats who are urging the nomination of Francis M. Wilson for governor. The first class are those who believe in boss control, that is they think the few should do the thinking for the masses, and the second are the band wagon riders who are always ready to jump on the candidate they think is a winner. When the latter class find that they have climbed on a wagon prematurely they naturally become bitter and begin grabbing at straws to save themselves.

Two years after being defeated for governor in 1928, Francis M. Wilson began a tour of the county court houses and newspaper offices of the state. He succeeded in getting some pledges of support in advance of any knowledge of his having an opponent during eighteen months of continuous solicitation on the argument that he was entitled to another trial to satisfy a life-long ambition.

In the opinion of this paper the personal ambition of no man should be given consideration at party expense, and we are firmly convinced that the defeat of Russell L. Dearmont in the August primary will be disastrous to the Democratic party in Missouri.

Why, may we ask his supporters, is Francis M. Wilson entitled to the Democratic nomination for governor? Is it by divine right, is it because he has been spared to live his nearly three score and ten, or is it because of his service to his party?

What, may we ask, has been Mr. Wilson's outstanding service to his party? Was there any outstanding legislation enacted during his term in the State Senate for which he was responsible? Has he been actively upon the firing line in the many campaigns waged by his party since he reached his age of majority? Did any one ever hear of Francis M. Wilson actively leading his party in a fight when it was assailed by the enemy?

And, if his services have merited reward in the matter of honor, did not his party honor him with nominations for state senator, for congressman, and governor of one of the greatest states of the Union? If, on the other hand his party was indebted to him financially did it not also meet this obligation equally as well? His appointment as receiver for the Kansas City Street Car Company, at the hands of his brother-in-law who was a district federal judge, netted him an income of \$189,875 for six years' work, and to earn an equal amount as chief executive of his state it would require nearly forty years in the governor's chair.

Scores of spokesmen for the Pendergast candidate have been going over the state enlisting band wagon riders on the theory that their candidate is a great vote-getter and the only candidate who can be elected in November. Here is Mr. Wilson's record:

Never won a political fight with opposition.

Elected to the State Senate for four two-year terms, in a district overwhelmingly Democratic, without opposition.

Defeated for congressman in 1904 by a plurality of 1,300 votes. In the same election Joseph W. Folk carried the same counties for governor, which rolled up a majority against Mr. Wilson, by a plurality of 2,139, and Alexander Dockery carried the same counties in the previous election by a majority of 2,283 votes.

He was defeated for governor in 1928 by 52,510 votes. In the same election, Charles M. Hay who had much wet opposition in his party, received 1,046 more votes in Missouri outside Jackson county than Wilson.

What is there in Francis M. Wilson's record to indicate that he is a miracle man when it comes to getting votes?

It is true that he has the support of the Pendergast machine in Kansas City, and if it were not for this fact any informed Democrat knows that he would have never had so much as a chance for the nomination. But why should this endorsement be given serious consideration by out- state Democrats? What has Pendergast ever done for the Democratic party in a general election? He has been interested only in governors and never supported but one in a primary who was elected in the succeeding November. Jackson county failed to give a single candidate for state office in Missouri, outside of two governors, so much as a majority in the last three general elections. The Pendergast machine has repeatedly thrown down and deserted Democratic candidates, permitting Harding, Coolidge and Hoover to carry its boss-controlled county. By what right should he dictate the nomination of the candidates of Missouri Democrats? Because Pendergast can vote his 40,000 or 50,000 rabbits and goats as a unit, is this any reason why rural Missourians should follow his wishes?

And more important, the Democratic party needs a real leader in Missouri. Victory will not be handed on a platter in November, but will come only after an aggressive fight waged and led by one possessing the necessary aggressiveness and judgment. Mr. Wilson made no campaign for congress in 1928. Not once did he step his foot into the Democratic headquarters during the 1928 campaign, refusing also to make an active campaign. Even in the present primary campaign he is depending upon others to wage his fight.

Why should the Democratic party in Missouri cast aside a golden opportunity to be restored to power, by satisfying the personal ambition of one man whose record for party service is not so much as noticeable, who has been a consistent loser, who has refused or been physically unable to make aggressive campaigns, and who must, if nominated, go into final campaign defending the disastrous charge of being machine ridden and boss controlled?