

GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE

Election Post-Mortem

By DR. HENRY GEORGE III

It has been a week now since the Republican party took the city election by a landslide. The much-vaunted Democratic wards were for the most part swamped by the Republican activity, and the Republican Mayoralty candidate, who some weeks ago did not appear too strong, proved himself a veritable Paladin for getting out the votes. It is of interest and importance for future action that a careful analysis be made of the past election.

As to the success of the Republicans and the failure of the Democrats, first and foremost was party team work. The Republicans proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that they could work together and could get out the vote. They had the workers, they had the voters' lists, and they went after the public and got them to the ballot box. We of the Democratic party were not so successful. There was considerable dissension within the party itself; there were pitifully small funds with which to pay the workers to pound a district instead of their usual job, and there were no voting lists for any of the Democratic workers who might want to get out the public.

The effort of the independent and liberal Democratic group to get out the vote by circular, throw-away and post card helped considerably to get the people out, and instead of a quiet election there was a heavier vote than had been expected. But lack of team-work, and being without lists, deprived the Democrats of many votes they might have had.

A second factor that militated against the Democrats and contributed to the Republican vote was the objection taken by many honest, well-meaning citizens to certain planks in the Democratic platform. In an election feelings run high and rational thinking is frequently suspended. We Democrats had maintained that we should have a city hospital in which our Negro doctors and nurses should have all the rights we enjoy. We also maintained that by a civil service examination Negroes should have the right to apply for public positions. Unjustified inference was drawn from these statements, and many who might have voted a democratic ticket voted against us.

There were those, I have been told, in the Democratic party who opposed their candidates because we had advocated reforms in the appointive power of the elected officers. They felt sure that were we elected the spoils system would be shortlived and they would rather continue under the present Republican setup than have an administration that was dedicated to clean up the town.

There were many who opposed us feeling that the expenses of government would rise with our entry into office, though it was the Democratic officials elected in 1933 who reduced the city tax rate to its present figure. The negative appeals of the Republicans were more acceptable to many for they felt that were we to increase pay and pensions, were we to provide for the city's aged as they should be cared for, then their taxes would rise, and they did not want that to happen.

No doubt there were a thousand other reasons why we Democrats did not get into office while our Republican opponents, with but one exception made the grade.

It is very interesting to try to examine into the cause of success and failure, particularly when the opponents presented such divergent platforms. For in this past election, as in many other elections through out the nation, the liberal platform, the one that gave promise of considering the problems of the little man, of the minority groups, and of civic reform, while it might be assumed to be the popular appeal, was proven not so to be when the ballots were counted.

I personally am inclined to believe that irrespective of how fine a platform may be presented, or how splendid the ticket, the party that can get the vote out is the party that wins.

If we Democrats ever hope to bring about the reforms for which we stood, we will have to get rid of the deadwood within our party, get down to work and get a voting list of the voters in our districts, and then when election comes around be prepared to sacrifice a day's pay in order to get out the vote.

It is improbable that we will ever have the financial affluence of our Republican opponents, and if we are ever to beat them, then with faith in our ideals we will have to more than match their money by personal work.

I believe that the public is well satisfied with the way the election went, and in a democracy it is incumbent upon each of us to do our best under our elected leaders. Therefore we Democrats offer our services in any way they may be used.