1920 gubernatorial election in Montana

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THE 1920 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION IN MONTANA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter | Page
-------|------
I | INTRODUCTION | 1
II | THE MONTANA PRIMARY, 1920 | 16
III | PRIMARY POST MORTEM | 79
IV | THE 1920 ELECTION: WHEELER VS. DIXON | 84
V | ELECTION RETURNS, "A CASE OF JITTERS" | 133
VI | EPILOGUE | 147
VII | APPENDIX | 150

BIBLIOGRAPHY | 155
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M.L.K.
III: Memorabilia

I recall
Civil War letters of a great-grand-uncle,
fifteen at Chancellorsville,
    no raconteur,
    no speller, either; nor to put it squarely,
    much of a mind;
    the most we gather
    is that he did write home:
    I am well,
    how are my sisters, hope you are the same.
    Did Spartan battle-echoes rack his head?
    Dying, he turned into his father's memory.

    History's queerly strong perfumes
    rise from the crook of this day's elbow:
    Seduction fantasies of the public mind,
    or Dilthey's dream from which he roused to see
    the cosmos glaring through his windowpane?
    Prisoners of what we think occurred,
    or dreamers dreaming toward a final word?

    What, in fact, happened in these woods
    on some obliterated afternoon?
IV: Consanguinity

Can history show us nothing
but pieces of ourselves, detached,
set to a kind of poetry,
a kind of music, even?
Seated today on Grandmama's
plush sofa with the grapes
bursting so ripely from the curved mahogany,
we read the great Victorians
weeping, almost, as if
some family breach were healed.
Those angry giantesses and giants,
lately our kith and kin!
We stare into their faces, hear
at last what they were saying
(or some version not bruited
by filial irritation).

The cat-tails wither in the reading-room.
Tobacco-colored dust
drifts on the newest magazines.
I loaf here leafing ancient copies
of LIFE from World War II.
We look so poor and honest there:
girls with long hair badly combed
and unbecoming dresses--
where are you now?

You sail
to shop in Europe, ignorantly freed
for you, an age ago.
Your nylon luggage matches

eyelids
expertly azured.
I, too, have lived in history.

--Adrienne Rich

taken from READINGS IN HISTORY
Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law (New York: W.W. Norton
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The gubernatorial election of 1920 has fascinated historians both academic and non-academic for many years. It has been dealt with (see Bibliography) simplistically, categorically and in vast detail. Moreover, aspects of it have been covered with bewildering and plethoric detail.

Why then another study of this complex election? Because, in my estimation, in the simplistic and peripheral treatments thus far produced, the essence of the election and its long term results have essentially been lost. The election, though he lost it, was clearly the making of Burton K. Wheeler. He went to the Senate in 1922 largely on the basis of what he learned in the gubernatorial election of 1920--and he remained there until 1945 as one of the most powerful Senators this country has yet produced.

What is widely overlooked about the gubernatorial election of 1920 in Montana is that it was in the crucible of this election that the futures of both Wheeler and Senator Thomas A. Walsh [to a lesser degree] were forged. [Walsh had learned in 1918 that one must walk a political tightrope in Montana to be elected. See pages 8-10.] Walsh, too, became a powerful U.S. Senator.
It is true that Wheeler lost his race for the governorship. But he learned something utterly essential to his future success. He now, and with care, could undoubtedly keep "radical"-liberal Montana voters. It was not enough. He must dig into the conservative vote. He had to get rid of the label "Bolshevik Burt," which he had been given in the 1920 election. He had to come to terms with the Anaconda Copper Mining Company. And he had two years in which to do this. He had help, too, in the worsening agricultural situation which was rapidly converting conservative farmers into reform and radical-minded farmers.¹

He had other help--Senator Thomas J. Walsh, which the study of Walsh's correspondence clearly demonstrates.² And he had two vital years, 1920-1922, to think, to mend bridges, to create his "new" image. He was highly successful--and that success was deeply rooted in the election of 1920.

By 1924 Wheeler was a vice-presidential candidate with Robert LaFollette on the national Progressive ticket. He had already won a leading position in the beleaguered little vanguard of Congressional liberals. By 1940 Time could see

¹The period from 1917 to 1920 was a critical one for the Montana farmer as well. Droughts brought severe economic depression: high freight costs, depressed local markets, and the national inflationary economy added to their dismal picture. Moreover, in the winter of 1920-1921 economic disaster hit the copper industry which led to panic in Montana. See Wheeler, p. 185-86.

in him "a Washington landmark, not just another cow-country Senator...First-grade, first rank Democratic material." \(^3\)

He wanted the presidency, according to Joseph K. Howard, but Roosevelt's decision to seek a third term blasted his hopes. Wheeler said he had refused the President's offer of second place on the ticket; had he accepted, he might have been the nation's Chief Executive. \(^4\)

Wheeler was defeated in the general election by Joseph M. Dixon--himself a liberal of long-standing, but less an anathema than Wheeler to the "Company," (as the Anaconda Copper Mining Company was always called in Montana) and to conservatives. Why? Because Dixon had been U.S. Senator from 1907 to 1912 and had not been embroiled in direct Montana political machinations. In 1920 he was by no means popular with Montana conservatives, however, because he had left the Republican fold to become a Progressive. He had begun to advocate such "radical" reforms as the graduated income tax and railroad legislation. \(^5\)

\(^3\)Time, June 24, 1940, p. 15.


had deserted his party not merely to become a Progressive but later to handle Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose campaign. Not only did this further alienate Republican party regulars, but it meant that he could spend little time keeping his coalition in Montana intact. And so he lost his bid for senator in 1911.

Dixon, however, was far from being finished politically. When Joseph M. Dixon decided to make his comeback via the gubernatorial election of 1920 is not known. Certainly by 1917, via his ownership of the *Daily Missoulian*, he was sounding very much the politician. He was, in effect,

6The Dixon papers, complete and unexpurgated, are in the University of Montana Archives, unavailable to researchers until 1973. Professor Jules A. Karlin of that institution has been working on a two-volume biography of Dixon which is nearly finished. He has had sole access to the papers for nearly twenty years. Professor Karlin was unavailable for comment on this statement.

"standing on the stump" by 1918.

In any event, this adroit, remarkable and experienced politician became Wheeler's opponent in the general gubernatorial election of 1920. He won--only to spend an incredibly painful but wholly remarkable four years as governor. If we had no other evidence--and we do have some--his two State of the State messages, one in January, 1921 and the other in January, 1923, would mark him as one of Montana's outstanding governors--indeed, probably its most outstanding governor.

The large Montana daily newspapers (with the notable exception of the Great Falls Tribune) gave their pages, both in the news and editorial columns, over to the most scurrilous and venomous campaign against Dixon. Even the

in a personal interview with the writer, recalled that her husband was staggered when he discovered that the ACM held Seattle banknotes that represented the money involved in the paper's purchase. Hutchens had bought the newspaper with two colleagues from Dixon in 1917. The details of the sale remain obscure, particularly the part played by the Anaconda Company, but the Hutchens soon learned that their newspaper was at the financial mercy of the Company. Ibid.


K. Ross Toole had this to say about the Dixon addresses: "No governor before or since has shown such a penetrating grasp of Montana's historical and economic problems. No one has so clearly and bluntly defined them. He dealt with the deficit and recommended new and sensible sources of revenue. He pointed out the anachronisms in both state and local government and proposed changes which were practical. But most of all, he concerned himself with inequalities in taxation." Toole, p. 223.
"captive press, known for its invective and opprobriousness, outdid itself in the "political assassination" of the man and governor. Both the legislative sessions of 1921 and 1923 were notable for their determination to block all of Dixon's far-reaching reforms.\(^9\) And they did. He vanished from the political scene in 1924.

In the period up to 1920, Montana's prestigious Senator Thomas J. Walsh, though a close friend of Wheeler's, found himself constantly on the defensive at home because of the latter's pugnacious political intransigence. Walsh's sponsorship of Wheeler dated to 1911 when the latter supported him vociferously in the state legislature of that year.\(^10\) (United States Senators were elected to office by the state legislature until 1913.) Such support coming for a "liberal" from a young representative from Silver Bow County (Butte) was courageous indeed.

Walsh rewarded Wheeler by obtaining his appointment as United States District Attorney during October of 1913. But his protégé was a constant source of discomfort to him.\(^11\) In the hysteria that accompanied World War I, Wheeler refused to prosecute "aliens," people of German and other foreign

\(^9\)Toole, \textit{ibid.}, p. 224.

\(^10\)Toole, \textit{ibid.}, p. 213.

extractions,¹² and stuck to the letter of the Espionage Act of 1917.¹³ While he built up an intensely loyal group of liberal and "radical" supporters, he alienated practically all the conservative elements in Montana, including the Anaconda Copper Mining Company and its "captive" press¹⁴ which began a four-year excoriation of him. Wheeler's activities as District Attorney came under sharp attack


¹³Walsh had supported the Espionage Act in Congress. In 1918 he sponsored the Unlawful Associations Bill which he later refused to support feeling that it would harm civil liberties. See Congressional Record, 65th Congress, 2nd session, May 2, 1918, pp. 8082-8083. Wheeler said of the act: "...my careful study of the espionage act convinced me that there was not one word in it to make criminal the expression of pacifist or simple pro-German opinion." Wheeler, ibid.

by the Montana Council of Defense. That body, failing to convict Wheeler of any crimes, fought his reappointment as United States District Attorney. Walsh, facing re-election in 1918, was reluctant to renominate Wheeler. The former asked Wheeler to resign for the good of the Democratic Party but Wheeler refused.

This hurt Walsh politically in Montana. Indeed, it is doubtful that he could have been re-elected had he not dumped Wheeler before 1920 as U.S. District Attorney. He wrote Wheeler avuncular letters: he tried to convince the young firebreather that he would get no place in politics with the Non-Partisan League and "radical" support only. Wheeler, while he did not resent Walsh's failure to push for his reappointment, paid little attention to Walsh's lengthy advice; he went into the election of 1920 with the

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16Bates, p. 65. Wheeler, angered at Walsh's behavior, vowed to take the fight to the people "or at least not let them forget the affair." He did resign from his position, however. Bates, ibid.
formal endorsement of the Non-Partisan League and of "radical" labor. (He learned—and did not do so in 1922.) He went in breathing fire and speaking in 1920 from every stump he could find. He attacked the "Interests" (as the Anaconda Company, the Montana Power Company, and their powerful allies were commonly called), the railroads, high interest rates, bankers, "monied interests," conservatism, high taxes, and just about every aspect of the status quo he could think of—and he lost.

In Washington, with his own election coming up, Walsh was trying desperately to build a machine at home which, in effect, was based on a solid core of liberal support but basic conservative support as well—a coalition by no means simple at any period of United States history, to say nothing of the polarized situation in Montana (and throughout the nation) in 1920. And here was his protege, now become his bête noir, undoing his efforts, for it was no secret in party circles in Montana that Wheeler was Walsh's man.17

Accordingly, practical politician that he was, he removed the albatross of Wheeler from around his neck, did not actively support Wheeler in his campaign and, even before that, had bluntly explained his situation to Wheeler

17Bates, p. 36.
for not supporting his renomination as U.S. District Attorney.\textsuperscript{18} And Walsh won, kept his power base, and returned to the Senate until death. He was chosen as Franklin D. Roosevelt's Attorney General in 1933 (he died before he could be installed in office). He had already attained fame on the national level for breaking the Teapot Dome case in 1924—and he remained a liberal in the Senate with a carefully balanced liberal-conservative stance in Montana.\textsuperscript{19} Senators Mike Mansfield and James E. Murray are probably the only Montanans since to weld such a coalition and hold it together.

So three wholly remarkable Montanans—one indirectly, Walsh; and the other two directly, Wheeler and Dixon—were involved in the election of 1920. That, by itself, would have made it an election of great importance and one which was bound to attract future political historians to a study of its intricacies.

The year 1920 in the United States (and Montana was no exception; indeed, in many ways, it stood in the vanguard) was an unusual one. It represented the apogee of a histor-

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., pp. 55-65. See Richard Ruetten, "Burton K. Wheeler, A Liberal Under Pressure."

\textsuperscript{19}Toole, p. 215. Describing Walsh's political stance, Toole wrote that "he walked the tightrope of senatorial liberalism and local conservatism with consummate skill." Ibid.
ical fear of "reds." Bolshevism had arisen in Russia and seemed to be spreading like a plague across the world. Americans responded to it with a mingled fear and wrath which, like all volatile mixtures of hysteria, led to the equating of all things "liberal" and all movements toward "reform" with sinister "red" plots. Intrigue by the "red ones" was all prevailing. "Bolshevism was disquieting—to a nation seeking normalcy, it represented the direct antithesis of all that was hoped for." Yet in the 1920 general election in Montana, indeed, was the inherently conservative and intensely patriotic Montanan, confronted with a man commonly known as "Bolshevik Burt" and by Joseph M. Dixon, whose entire career as a "liberal" was public knowledge. How could this have happened? Moreover, it was the first time since statehood that the "Interests" did not have a candidate for governor that they could control.

How that happened is not simple. The election is multi-faceted and, on many occasions, hard to pin down.

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21 Murray, p. 111.

22 Merriam, ibid.
How the Dixon victory occurred is rooted in the primary as well as the general election—and how it happened is sometimes speculative (particularly in view of the inaccessibility at the present time of the Dixon and Wheeler papers)—and one is apt to fall into the error of post hoc; ergo propter hoc.23

Historians and scholars have tackled the election of 1920 in bits and pieces.24 They have studied it from Walsh's point of view (J. Leonard Bates); and from Wheeler's point of view (Richard Ruetten, unpublished Master's thesis and Ph.D. dissertation—and Wheeler himself contributed in autobiography in Yankee From the West); Joseph Kinsey Howard in "The Rise and Fall of Burton K. Wheeler," Harper's Magazine (March, 1947). The election was skimmed over by K. Ross Toole in Montana: An Uncommon Land, though Toole has done a much more thorough and penetrating analysis in Montana: A Twentieth Century Portrait, to be published by the University of Oklahoma Press in November, 1971.25 Howard gives the election a brief treatment (nevertheless penetrating) in Montana: High, Wide and Handsome. Shirley DeForth, while she has done a good job with the press's treatment of Dixon in the 1920 gubernatorial election in Montana, has not given

23Interview with K. Ross Toole, June 21, 1971, Missoula, Montana.

24See Bibliography for annotated analysis of these works.

25Manuscript available to the writer.
much attention to Wheeler nor the shifting positions of the major dailies between the primary and general election in her Master's thesis, "The Montana Press and Joseph M. Dixon, 1920-1922." There are other works listed in the Bibliography.

There are important peripheral studies, mostly unpublished (except for Toole, Howard, and Gutfeld), which deal with the general period of hysteria in Montana and, hence, deal, in some part at least, with Wheeler and Dixon if not with Walsh.

But the fact remains that there is much to be said about the election of 1920, primary and general--and what is treated in this thesis is not merely a rehash of overworked ideas and conclusions. I have used what unpublished sources were available and have relied heavily on the press--both Company owned or controlled, and independent papers. [There was no other choice.] I interviewed men who lived during this era; their comments were valuable. [See Bibliography.] Because of limitations (the unavailability of the Dixon and Wheeler papers--and those of other principals), this is not a definitive study. It is an attempt to look at the whole election and in broad content, posing questions and points of reference for succeeding scholars (since history is an accumulative process) rather

26 See Bibliography.
than one aspect of it. That may have some value. The study focuses on the shifts in position of the Democratic newspapers.

My greatest methodological problem has been repetition, if not redundancy. One cannot work primarily with newspapers (see Bibliography) without running this danger. The differences with which newspapers approach a man or an event--and particularly so in 1920--lie very often in nuances. Yet those nuances can be the harbingers of important policy changes and often are. Moreover, if the cumulative effect of dealing with what paper after paper had to say about a man or an event seems dull and repetitive, it is the cumulative effect that comes closest to getting at this kind of campaign. I have been conscious of redundancy but have deliberately erred (since I knew that I would inevitably err, anyway) on the side of overdoing rather than underdoing who and what paper had to say about whom and what, in hope of having clarity in the final picture. This is, after all, a Master's thesis, not a drama. However, this is, in a sense, a historical drama, despite how thinly it shows through because of the methodological demands,

27See Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism (New York: Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 539. Montana editors responded to the Hearst style of journalism--sensational headlines, news-column name-calling, libelous accusations, perjorative character attacks--with rapacity. One might be named a "liar" or "bum" in one breath and the next minute be named a hero.
because these were men who shook their times--and were shaken by them. In Wheeler's own words, the 1920 election was one of the bitterest and roughest political campaigns in American history.

Mary Lou Koessler
Missoula, Montana
August, 1971
CHAPTER II

THE MONTANA PRIMARY, 1920

Political alignments, complicated and tenuous, began forming early in 1920 as the public, the Montana press, and party machinists laid preliminary groundwork for the primary election. The press scrutinized cautiously the state's political power centers (Butte, Helena, Missoula, Great Falls, and Billings) for clues to behind-the-scene intrigue—standard election activity. The actions of possible candidates for the gubernatorial race were screened closely. All eyes turned toward the Company because, for the first time since statehood, it was unable to present the voters with one candidate that it was certain it could control effectively enough to win. It was widely known in Montana by 1920 that the Company was uncomfortable with the growing

1Political alignments in Montana history followed the same traditional pattern since statehood: industry, railroads, cattlemen, and real estate management vs. labor, craftsmen, small farmer and service trades. The former were usually Democratic; the latter were Republican. See Jules A. Karlin, "Progressive Politics in Montana," A History of Montana, ed. by Merrill G. Burlingame and K. Ross Toole, and Others (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1957) I, p. 248.

2Helena Independent Record, February 2, 1920, p. 2; February 5, 1920, p. 4.

3Howard, p. 246. Incumbent governor Samuel Stewart's term of office expired in 1920 and he could not seek re-election.
public consciousness of the problems facing Montana. Indeed, it was \textit{l'année terrible} for the Company because the ground swell of liberalism from the preceding decade\textsuperscript{4} had reached far greater proportions than could now be ignored.

Although the "Interests" had dominated Montana politics since statehood—and they were known to have controlled the legislature, judiciary, and executive branches of city, county, and state government\textsuperscript{5}—they were unable to silence all opposition of their policies and practices. The Levine affair, which had been, in essence, a sensational exposure of the inequities in the state's taxation,\textsuperscript{6} caused no little

\textsuperscript{4}Karlin, p. 249.

\textsuperscript{5}Howard, pp. 83-84, 238.

\textsuperscript{6}Arnon Gutfeld, "The Levine Affair, A Case Study in Academic Freedom," Pacific Historical Review, XXXIX (February, 1970), pp. 19-38. Professor Levine's book, The Taxation of Mines in Montana (New York: W.B. Heubsch, 1919), a technical discussion of the disparities between public and corporate taxes, aroused the indignation of the Company. When Edward C. Elliott, Chancellor of the state university in Missoula, appointed Levine to make the study of the state's tax system due to declining educational revenues, it was apparent that the chancellor failed to see the political ramifications. Fearing Levine's work would contain "radical" thought which might be interpreted by the Company as having "red" tendencies, Elliott asked Levine to drop the project. Levine refused, subsequently published the report, and a dramatic battle between Levine, Chancellor Elliott, and the University's Board of Regents ensued. The Montana press almost unanimously reproved Levine with the notable exception of Dr. E.B. Craighead's New Northwest. Levine was ultimately reinstated on the university faculty. Levine left Montana and went on to become a reporter, later editor of the New York World, and an economic adviser of the United Nations. He died in 1970.
fury in Montana in 1919. Moreover, the Company, although it exercised a compelling control over the Montana daily press, was learning that the urgent issues in Montana could neither be buried nor ignored.

A less controversial report than the Levine study, but by no means less significant in its exposure of conditions of the mining industry was the Harrington and Lanza Study.\(^7\) The report, technical and scientific in approach, was a governmental investigation of the pulmonary conditions prevalent among the metal workers. It stated clearly that dangerous working conditions prevailed in the mines and that miners' compensation for industrial accidents provided a real grievance in the mining camps.\(^8\)

\(^7\)Daniel Harrington and Anthony J. Lanza, Miners' Consumption in the Mines of Butte, Montana. Preliminary Report of an Investigation made in the years 1916-1919. (Washington D.C.: United States Bureau of Mines, 1921), p. 5. The study was the result of a four-year investigation of working conditions in the Butte mines. The report, a brief pamphlet of about 20 pages, stated that pulmonary troubles were widely prevalent among the metal workers and that dangerous conditions prevailed in the mines. While the report stated that some progress was being made in dust abatement and better ventilation, the main air chutes were generally very dusty. (Ibid.) The report contained several photographs of broken step ladders. These ladders, often the only entrances to the floors underground, were the cause of many industrial accidents--some fatal--the report stated. (Ibid.) The report was never mentioned in any newspaper, which is noteworthy. It seems certain that the mining industry was cognizant of a federal investigation since Harrington and Lanza undoubtedly visited the mines.

\(^8\)Ibid. This situation bears a striking resemblance to other potentially explosive issues which were "officially silenced" by the mining company.
What conservatives, both Democratic and Republican, feared most was that the Non-Partisan League would capture both parties in the primary. The League had entered Montana in 1916, establishing headquarters in Great Falls, with intent to "make government actually and fully responsive to the wishes of the common people--to secure economic relief for the exploited and oppressed classes primarily the farmers through political action."\(^9\) By 1918 it had made such progress in Montana that politicians foresaw that at the next general election it would sweep the state.\(^10\)

Agrarian unity had been inspired by the Montana Society of Equity, which had been organized in 1914 in protest of the conditions there being responsible for it. ibid., p. 617.

\(^9\) Charles Edward Russell, *The Story of the Nonpartisan League* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), p. 4. Five basic points in the League's program made it particularly attractive to the depressed Montanans who saw no relief from the state: state credit facilities, state operated grain and terminal elevators, state hail insurance, state supervision of the dockage and grading of grain, and the removal of taxes upon farm equipment. See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Election Tactics of the Nonpartisan League," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVI (1949-50), p. 613. By entering the primaries of the major political parties, supporting progressive major party nominees in the general election--or its own candidates--the League could work through party machinery and yet could claim indifference to it. It had been founded in North Dakota by Arthur C. Townley--conditions there were responsible for it. ibid., p. 617.

\(^10\) Wheeler, p. 170. It had elected two GOP candidates to the state senate; by 1919 it claimed 13 members of both parties in the House. The Scientific Farmer advocated that the state run utility corporations and operate rural telephone systems (REA) at cost. Campbell's *Scientific Farmer* (July, 1920), p. 239.
unprofitable wheat market, the high cost of farm supplies and consumer goods, and the perjorative influence of the mining interests in the state government. By 1920 the League, then claiming a membership of 20,000, virtually replaced the Society of Equity and eagerly awaited its first concerted test on a state-wide level for congressional seats and for the governor's chair.

A persistent thorn in the side of the Anaconda Company was the Butte Bulletin, a radical labor organ, edited by the brilliant and vitriolic William F. Dunne, who preached class struggle, the overthrow of capitalistic systems everywhere including Montana, openly hammering at traditional Company strong-holds by shouting personal abuses at management, exposing the giant corporation's "evils"—as well as those of their allies. If Dunne did not have news of corporate corruption, he fabricated it. And his newspaper was sensational; indeed, it was melodramatic. Name-calling of the "enemies of the people," of the "Interests," and of conservative forces within the state in the most vehement manner filled his news columns. Because of the repetition and voracity of the charges, anti-Company propaganda à la Dunne


was certain to carry more than some sway on public opinion especially in Butte where the embittered, exploited laborer stood in the shadows of the affluent industrialists day after day.

Dunne had supported Wheeler enthusiastically during the latter's fight for reappointment as Federal District Attorney and he had offered to take Wheeler's case to the people single-handed. Indefatiguable and bold, Dunne canvassed the state in 1919 expounding the virtues of Socialism. Later, as a Non-Partisan League leader, Dunne's influence in the farmer-labor coalition would increase as the 1920 campaign grew.13

The Company was not reacting openly to its anxiety. Through its newspapers it reflected indifference, even apathy, toward the Montana political scene, presenting Montanans with a serious picture of national and international events. [This, of course, excluded the Butte Miner which fought quid pro quo with the Bulletin]. Accounts of the Bolshevik movements in Russia and in Eastern Europe were given great attention by the press. [See pages 33 to 36]. The majority of the Montana newspapers, with the notable exceptions of

the Butte Bulletin, New Northwest, Hamilton Western News, and Plentywood's Producers' News, were most often filled with accounts of New York society scandals, the beau monde of Europe, travel gossip about theatre celebrities, and sensational stories of bizarre murders. Editorial columns did touch local issues, however, particularly in the weekly press. News-reports occasionally dealt with community affairs of the various regions.

Days before the 1920 gubernatorial campaign began, a significant issue surfaced in the murky political waters of Montana, demonstrating the gradual weakening of corporate influence in Montana affairs. The Order No. 4 case, as it was commonly referred to by the press, was a law designed

14Edited by the mercurial Charles "Red" Taylor of Plentywood, the Producers' News was an actual Communist paper. See Charles Vindex, "Radical Rule in Montana," Montana: The Magazine of Western History, XVIII (January, 1968), pp. 2-18.

15Montana journalism of 1920 was a curious hybrid of more than 200 publications--17 daily, 220 weekly, and 20 or more bi-monthly and monthly newssheets. Of the 17 daily newspapers, nine were nominally Republican, seven Democratic, and one a labor organ. There were 71 weekly Democratic papers, 55 Republican, and 78 claimed an independent policy. Four weeklies were farmer-labor organs. Other papers were monthlies and bi-monthlies with special interests: financial, religious, road, educational, and labor. Newspapers were the most important news medium since pamphlet and billboard advertising avenues were limited. [Thirteen dailies and eighteen weeklies were chosen for this thesis on the basis of geographic location and political affiliation. They are, in the opinion of this writer, a broad, representative group]. See Bibliography.
by the Montana Trade Commission allegedly to combat the high cost of living and inflation. The bill would establish price fixing and minimum pricing.\(^{16}\) The Merchants Association of Montana fought the order, claiming that it was unconstitutional, a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The order stated that retail merchants should list the cost of their goods on the label of the good with the consumer's price.

Dr. Edwin Booth Craighead, former president of the university in Missoula and "liberal" editor of the New Northwest [who had campaigned on Levine's behalf], attacked Order No. 4 pointing out that the merchants should add the cost of freight, heat, light [aimed at the railroad interests and Montana Power Company], and taxes in order to give the consumer a realistic picture of the retail price.\(^{17}\) Craighead charged the Company with instigating the bill and indicated that the attack was on the merchants by the Company who was selling copper to the government for twenty-five cents and buying it back for fifteen.\(^{18}\) The case was eventually brought to the federal court by the A.M. Holter Company of Butte. Federal Judge George M. Bourquin ruled

\(^{16}\)New Northwest, December 19, 1919, p. 2.

\(^{17}\)Ibid.

\(^{18}\)Ibid.
in favor of the Merchants Association, granting a restraining order against the bill.\textsuperscript{19} The issue was carried primarily by the New Northwest, the Dillon Examiner, a Democratic weekly, and the Butte Bulletin.\textsuperscript{20} Craighead maintained that if the law had been kept it would have driven the little merchant out of business.\textsuperscript{21}

On December 27, 1919, W.W. McDowell of Butte announced his candidacy for governor on the Democratic ticket, unofficially opening the gubernatorial campaign. His candidacy did not come as a surprise. McDowell, twice Democratic speaker of the state's House of Representatives, (1908-1912) was completing his second term as lieutenant governor.\textsuperscript{22} There was little newspaper reaction over his announcement. The Butte Miner, edited by J. L. Dobell, set the tone for McDowell's campaign, stating that he had about the longest experience in handling official affairs

\textsuperscript{19}Dillon Examiner, December 24, 1919, p. 1.


\textsuperscript{21}New Northwest, January 19, 1920, p. 1. Significant in the case was the unwielding judicial integrity shown by Judge Bourquin who said of the decision, "This court may be wrong but never in doubt." Dillon Examiner, op. cit. Wheeler said that the judge was "a model of judicial integrity, conscientious, independent of political favor." Wheeler, pp. 107-08.

\textsuperscript{22}Rocky Mountain Husbandman, January 1, 1921, p. 2.
of any man connected with the Stewart administration.\textsuperscript{23} Representing old-guard Democratic party lines, the Rocky Mountain \underline{Husbandman}, a Great Falls agrarian weekly, took a conservative position which carried ominous overtones:

...the lieutenant governor will make his campaign in a straight out and out all-American platform. If the real issue develops into a question of anti-Americanism, the lieutenant governor will be foremost in advocating straight Americanism.\textsuperscript{24}

However, Dr. Craighead, apparently recognizing something significant and sinister about McDowell's early candidacy, quickly pointed out that the latter had "made no fight against the corrupt policies of the legislature with which he has been connected."\textsuperscript{25} Craighead added that McDowell's record was dubious:

Senator McDowell's association with Governor Stewart and the reactionary element in the democratic party will be for him a serious handicap.\textsuperscript{26}

The Butte \underline{Bulletin} did not comment on the McDowell candidacy; instead, that newspaper devoted its attention to organized labor and the deteriorating union situation in Butte as the New Year began.

\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Butte Miner}, January 1, 1920, p. 4. The \textit{Yellowstone Monitor}, January 6, 1920, p. 2, carried a brief notice of McDowell's candidacy.

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Rocky Mountain Husbandman}, \textit{loc. cit.}

\textsuperscript{25}\textit{New Northwest}, January 9, 1920, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{26}\textit{Ibid.}
On January 11 the Helena Independent Record, edited by Will Campbell who had been a chief tormenter of Wheeler for the past three years, announced that McDowell led other gubernatorial contenders in a straw vote taken among the "rank and file" Democrats in Helena. Tom Stout, former Congressman from Lewistown and editor of the Lewistown Democrat News and of the Judith Basin Farmer, was mentioned as the other Democratic contender, along with A.E. Spriggs, ex-governor, and Burton K. Wheeler. Of the 54 straw votes, 22 went to McDowell, 16 to Stout, 5 to Spriggs, and 4 to Wheeler.

However, Campbell pointed out that "it is understood that Wheeler will run on some ticket, but it has not yet been decided by his backers whether he will file as a Republican or not."  

It was certain that Wheeler had political intentions of some kind since he had made a dramatic entrance into the public eye as a champion of the oppressed; first in the state legislature in 1911 where he served one term, and in private

28 Unfortunately, the Lewistown Democrat News, an important "liberal" newspaper during this period, was unavailable to this writer at the time of this research.
29 Helena Independent Record, loc. cit.
30 Ibid.
practice beyond the work he did as Federal District Attorney between 1913 and 1918. During the war he defended persons throughout the state from super-patriot organizations (e.g., the Montana Loyalty League), which had tried many times to convict persons of alleged disloyalty and subversion under the Sedition Act of 1917. Refusing Company support as a state legislator, Wheeler received statewide recognition in his struggle against the corrupt practices of the large corporations of the state. Flamboyant and outspoken, Wheeler was one of the most widely known men in the state. It was certain that he would stage a show in the 1920 elections.

Born in Massachusetts of Puritan ancestry, Wheeler was graduated from the University of Michigan Law School at Ann Arbor, then went to Butte in 1905 where he stayed. An imposing figure, tall, erect, wearing an omnipresent dented Stetson and chewing incessantly on a cigar stub, Wheeler looked the part of a politician. Personable, quick-witted, yet tough-minded and shrewd, Wheeler possessed an unusual facility for anecdote and hyperbole and in true frontier tradition, he was a fighter. Unusually cognizant of the complexity of Montana politics, which he learned as state legislator and as federal district attorney, he exercised a

31Wheeler, pp. 97-114.
compelling kind of spell over people. Possessing a Churchillian love for battle, action, and legal drama, Wheeler was zealous in his fight for human rights. He was 29 when he entered state politics, where he saw that Montana politics was not child's play. It was there that his hatred for the Company began in earnest; its cruel practices and injustices angered him.33

The New Northwest had indicated earlier than did the Helena Independent Record that Wheeler was politically alive and possibly seeking the governorship. On October 17, 1919, Craighead printed a large page-one photograph of Wheeler and reported he would speak in Missoula.34 The story said:

The copper press of the state for the past years has been endeavoring to submarine Wheeler, but as time goes on, he grows stronger with the honest citizens, and especially with those who are attempting to loosen the grasp of the Anaconda upon the political and industrial life of the commonwealth. The reason for the animosity of the Anaconda papers toward Wheeler is apparent. He has been independent in public life and in the practice of his profession, the law. Independent men are taboo with the powers that be in Montana.35

Craighead printed an account of Wheeler's speech the


34New Northwest, October 17, 1919, p. 1.

following week. Wheeler had attacked the Company which he said had "owned both the Republican and Democratic parties in Montana for the past ten years." 36 Wheeler had said that he supported the laboring men and the Non-Partisan League.

In November Craighead sharply criticized the Butte Miner for its saying Wheeler would bolt the Democrats and join the Republicans in the 1920 election. 37 In that rebuff he told the Miner that he did not know what Wheeler would do, but he seriously doubted that Wheeler would desert the party. 38 Furthermore, the New Northwest added:

The Miner hates B.K. Wheeler worse than a rattlesnake. If it ever tells the truth about Wheeler, Wheeler himself will not believe it. 39

Later in November, 1919, Craighead printed in his paper that Wheeler had spoken in many areas of eastern Montana and had gained popularity in the event he were to run for office. 40 Craighead was a friend of Wheeler's and, indeed, a political ally.

Eager to get campaign activity moving, the Independent Record bluntly outlined the political situation in regards

36 Ibid., October 24, 1919, p. 1.
37 New Northwest, November 7, 1919, p. 4.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
to the 1920 gubernatorial campaign.

Republican politicians of Montana are being given the most interesting and unusual game of politics that has ever been witnessed in the state if what one hears in exclusive political circles is correct. Almost every republican of any prominence has been mentioned as a candidate for governor, but so far, although the primaries are presumed to be held in April, not one has dared announce himself for the office. The reason, it is said, is because A.C. Townley, president of the Nonpartisan league, and D.C. Dorman, former state manager for the N.P.L. and considered Townley's right-hand man here, have not yet made up their minds as to who they desire to be governor of the state.

The grand old party's affairs are in a mixed state, say members of the party, if it is true that former U.S. Senator Joseph M. Dixon, who managed the presidential campaign for Roosevelt, is willing to await the decision of Townley. It is also understand [sic] Attorney General Ford will not enter the primaries unless B.K. Wheeler, who is supposed to be the choice of the league, is eliminated and retires from the game this year so far as the governorship is concerned.

It is no secret that Townley would prefer Wheeler, but his candidacy has not been definitely decided upon because it is doubtful if Wheeler would have any chance at all on the republican ticket...With Wheeler out, if he does get out of the race, S.C. Ford, Joseph M. Dixon, State Senator J.C. Kinney, Speaker O.W. Belton and five or six prominent men who have been mentioned as possible candidates, are wondering what the N.P.L. will do.41

Campbell's campaign remarks seemed indeed prophetic. Republican party machinery was effete, in need of "tuning up," and in no condition to meet the challenge posed by the Nonpartisans. Wheeler, Dixon, Ford, Kinney, Belton. Where was McDowell's name? Campbell did not point out that the

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Democratic Party was in no better condition than the Republican organization.

Toward mid-January political action began in earnest. The Montana Federation of Labor announced that it would enter politics, hoping to unite the discontented farmer and labor elements.42 Stephen Ely, the federation's president, said in Butte on January 16 that the state federation of labor, the Cooperator Farmers' Congress, the Non-Partisan League, and the Railroad Brotherhood Union could become a powerful political bloc if they would unite. Ely expressed labor's attitude toward the Company which the Bulletin reported.

If there is any lingering doubt in the mind of any man as to where the seat of government in this state is located, I want to tell them right now it is in the city of Butte, on the sixth floor of the Hennessy Building...and not in Helena.43

If there was any response to Ely's proposed coalition, or any rebuttal of his remarks about the Company's control of state government, it met with impervious silence from the press. It seems certain, however, that Ely's remarks were heeded by politicians and pundits as it was only a year since Wheeler had urged the farmers to erect a strong, unified front to combat the mining interests more successfully.44

42Butte Bulletin, January 16, 1920, p. 3.
43Ibid., January 19, 1920, p. 4.
44Ruetten, op. cit.
Meanwhile, dramatic accounts of bearded, fiendish-looking men being deported in large numbers continued in the daily press throughout Montana in January. Reverberations were inevitable. The Helena Independent Record, Butte Miner, Billings Gazette, and the Daily Inter-Lake in Kalispell reacted most vociferously to the Red Scare. Those newspapers, accompanied by the Anaconda Standard, and the Helena Record-Herald to some degree, carried sensational accounts of the Palmer raids on their front pages throughout January and February and lengthy elaborations of strikes, the movement of the Bolsheviks in Eastern Europe, and alarming accounts of a "red" conspiracy taking place in the United States.

The Helena Independent Record, which had led the insidious attack on Wheeler and Dunne during the Butte strikes in 1917-1918 and in the Montana Council of Defense proceedings of 1918, was now unremitting in its crusade against "radicals,"


46Ibid.

47Ibid.
"reds," and Bolshevists." Moreover, Will Campbell advocated the suppression of all radical newspapers.

Repeated vituperative demonstrations of hostility toward socialists and subtle innuendoes about the connection between socialism in America and Bolshevism in Russia far outweighed news coverage of state affairs. This policy of news priorities carried significant overtones. Could it be that the reactionary press had, at last, found its shibboleth to be used against reform? It was during this period that Campbell first associated unionism with revolutionary socialism and communism in his newspaper.

The Butte Bulletin, fearful that the publicity given the raids would give substance to the Communist conspiracy theory in the United States--and in Montana--declared vigorously that the purging of Bolshevism from America was merely a guise used by reactionaries to stifle public expression, civil liberties, and opposition to the prevailing capitalistic economics. The odds against Dunne were awesome.

In Butte open contempt for Non-Partisan League members

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Ibid., January 1, 1920, p. 4.

Ibid.

was reported and it was feared that anyone heard espousing radical beliefs would be met with mob violence.\textsuperscript{52} The \textit{Miner} had said repeatedly that all radicals should be stamped out like rattlesnakes.\textsuperscript{53} Elsewhere, League members were called "red radicals," "Bolshevists," and anything else that might bear a sinister meaning. At the same time several newspapers began linking the Bolshevism menace with treason, unionism, repeating Campbell's theme; the Bozeman \textit{Chronicle}, edited by James Bole, called American Communists "traitors,"\textsuperscript{54} suggesting that they were the cause for the steel strikes of the previous year. Laurence D. Spafford of the \textit{Daily Inter-Lake} carried that argument one step further in stating that the League was "red" and that its affiliation with the unions constituted a "foreign invasion" and should be treated as such by the federal government.\textsuperscript{55}

While the Montana Loyalty League was circulating advertisements in the weekly newspapers of the eastern parts of Montana telling how the League had failed in North Dakota, that the conditions of the North Dakota farmer were "deplorable," and their farm assessments raised to five times

\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Ibid.}, January 16, 1920, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Butte Miner}, December 26, 1919, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{55}\textit{Daily Inter-Lake}, January 5, 1920, p. 1.
their previous values. Craighead told readers of the New Northwest that the Loyalty League workers were "errand boys of Wall Street, sewing the seeds of anarchy more than the IWW." At the same time Townley was reported to have said, "What we have done to North Dakota, we will do to Montana." Crossfires of an early campaign propaganda war grew but neither side was confident of its position nor of its ammunition supplies.

During this time, Montana's United States Senator Thomas Walsh was mentioned in political discussions in regards to his role in the Sterling Bill. The Sterling Bill, in effect, an amended version of Walsh's wartime "unlawful associations bill," was directed at the radical press and groups which were protesting unjust governmental practices. The bill would bar from the mails any matter advocating force or sabotage against the United States government. Walsh went on record saying that he thought it an excellent idea to arouse the people against Bolshevism, the associations of Bolshevism, and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) activities in America but he took exception to radical

56 Judith Basin Farmer, loc. cit.
57 New Northwest, January 15, 1920, p. 4.
58 Judith Basin Farmer, loc. cit.
socialism—a position that should gain him support in Montana.\textsuperscript{60} Liberal Democrats in Congress, however, had been saying that the only way to meet radicalism was to deprive it of food and that the only way to keep men from agitating against grievances was to remove the grievances.

In Montana public opinion on the Sterling Bill was divided. Union men almost unanimously were against it and businessmen for it.\textsuperscript{61} Walsh, at the same time, was having difficulty justifying the bill in his own mind. In a letter to John Ford of Billings Walsh wrote that he was very sure that there were no farmers and very few workingmen advocating the overthrow of the government by force and that the Sterling Bill aimed at reaching only the advocates of violence.\textsuperscript{62} In the end Walsh condemned the bill, thinking that it would be misinterpreted. The bill passed the Senate but was later rejected by the House. After the defeat of the bill, Walsh told an audience of the International Association of Machinists in Deer Lodge that he still advocated

\textsuperscript{60}Bates, p. 195. Maximum penalties fixed in the bill are a fine of $5,000 and five years imprisonment, applying to all acts or circulation of literature in furtherance of forcible overthrow of the United States government. The bill would not limit peaceful agitation. It would penalize attempts or acts hindering execution of laws, or federal agents in their duties. Helena Independent Record, loc. cit.

\textsuperscript{61}Bates, loc. cit. Helena Independent Record, loc. cit.

\textsuperscript{62}Walsh to John Ford, February 18, 1920, Walsh papers. Quoted from Bates, \textit{ibid.}
punishing the man who would advocate violence or the overthrow of the United States government.

I am for punishing the man, by the severest penalties, who advocates the use of the torch or stiletto, the bomb or the stiletto, the bomb or the bludgeon to accomplish any of these ends. [Walsh was referring to the bombings of the previous year, which he interpreted as attempts to overthrow democracy.]

Significant in the primary election build-up was the New Northwest's becoming a daily publication on February 6. The newspaper declared that it was changing from weekly to daily status because its readers wanted more coverage of facts. More basic to its change was its zealous crusade against Montana's "big business," particularly the Company, its machine, its "captive" press, which Craighead pursued relentlessly.

During this period the radical press concentrated primarily on its principal theme: venomous condemnation of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company and its snake-like grip

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63 Ibid.
64 New Northwest, February 6, 1920, p. 1.
66 The radical press consisted of the Butte Bulletin and the Producers' News. What constituted "radical" was their general animosity toward capitalism, their avowed affinity toward socialism, toward overthrow of American government. See Wetzel, loc. cit.
on the state. At the same time, presenting a rational view of the dangers of extremism on either side of the political spectrum, Craighead said that both radical and reactionary forces should be held in check and that Montana wanted a governor with backbone. 67

The political scene was quiet during February. However, in mid-February Judge George M. Bourquin in Butte denounced the Palmer commando raids as "the intolerance raging through our country." 68 This generated some attention. Bourquin said that the raids would ultimately damage human rights. 69 Walsh supported Judge Bourquin at this time and later led an investigation of Attorney General Mitchell Palmer who was responsible for the raids to ferret anarchists from the nation. 70

The debate in Congress over the Cummins-Esch Bill attracted attention in Montana during February. The bill was designed to have the railroads given back to private interests. Herbert Hoover supported the bill, saying that keeping railroads under government control was a "socialist experiment brought on by the war." 71 Montana's senior

67 New Northwest, February 18, 1920, p. 4.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Bates, p. 166-69.
71 Helena Independent Record, February 8, 1920, p. 1.
senator, Henry L. Myers of Hamilton, in an unprecedented move, lashed out at forces who opposed the bill saying that "organized labor is the greatest menace before the country today." Moreover, he vigorously opposed the bill. Farmer and labor organizations not only in Montana but in the entire nation appealed to Wilson to veto the bill. In Montana Myers' action was applauded by Company and non-Company newspapers alike. Myers' action and the newspapers' responses carried ominous overtones of the instability of party affiliations.

Disgruntled farmer and labor elements met on February 23 in Great Falls to discuss taking concerted action against the Cummins Bill. They unanimously condemned Myers' statement against labor and sent a telegram to him in Washington, D.C. stating their displeasure. The theme of the meeting was to expose the tax evasion methods of the Company, the Montana Power Company, and the railroads.

Townley and Dunne were assisted at the meeting by Wheeler and Attorney General Ford. Wheeler criticized the Butte


Miner and the Independent Record for supporting Myers. The Independent Record printed an attendance list of the farmer-labor congress, which gave each person's association to the organizations represented at the congress.

The Great Falls Tribune, careful to maintain its role of detached observer and reporter of events, remained aloof in its independent position, reporting the meetings of the congress without editorial comment or discussion of the problems facing the groups. Campbell summarized the congress's activities calling the meeting a "fine spectacle and a fake."

On February 28 President Wilson signed the railroad bill with the reservation that union demands would be considered by a special board appointed by the White House. There

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75 Helena Independent Record, February 25, 1920, p. 4. The Independent Record reported that "Townley and Wheeler were hot under the collar" and that they "cursed the corporations." Campbell called them "Red Chiefs." See Independent Record, February 27, 1920, p. 1.


78 Helena Independent Record, loc. cit.

was no reaction from the press with the exception of the Butte Bulletin which said that unionism, American labor, had been dealt a severe blow. 80

Wheeler, meanwhile, kept himself in the public eye without yet declaring himself a candidate for governor. Now in private law practice in Butte, he spent a great deal of his time defending persons from the Loyalty League, speaking publicly in defense of civil liberties, and defending laborers in Butte. The New Northwest printed Wheeler's activities thoroughly. For a week before Wheeler was scheduled to speak in Missoula, Craighead published two-column by twelve-inch advertisements each day. 81 Craighead reported the Wheeler speech which carried a familiar ring: the Anaconda Company must be removed from Montana politics—and it must pay a fair share of taxes. 82 The Missoula speech was mentioned by the Helena Record-Herald, a Republican newspaper. 83

Coinciding with Wheeler's Missoula activities was a speech given by C.W. Fowler, secretary of the Montana Development Association (a commercial organization which

81New Northwest, March 2-7, 1920, p. 3.
claimed 4,000 members), who spoke to the Helena Rotary and Helena Commercial Club on March 4, stating that the MDA was well-organized and that it would fight against unscrupulous politics and agitators in the coming campaign. The association issued the following press release carrying the same intentions Fowler expressed:

Montana merchants will enter politics this year in an attempt to defeat persons accused of creating class hatred and discord....

The news item was carried by newspapers in Butte, Great Falls, and Missoula. Attorney General Ford reacted strongly to the merchants' statement by calling the MDA "a creature of the Anaconda." His statement was not challenged by the association.

Politicians had been eagerly awaiting the decision of the State Supreme Court concerning the attempted repeal of the six-year-old primary law by reactionary forces in the state legislature. Calling a special legislative session ostensibly to pass relief measures for the drought-stricken farmers, the legislators met in Helena early in 1919 and enacted another law, ignoring the farmers. The new law

84 New Northwest, March 5, 1920, p. 1; Helena Independent Record, March 5, 1920, p. 5.

85 New Northwest, loc. cit.; Butte Miner, March 5, 1920, p. 1; Great Falls Tribune, March 5, 1920, p. 1.

86 New Northwest, op. cit., p. 2.
would abolish the direct primary. Moreover, a peculiar feature of the new law would render referendum ineffective by declaring that the law was an emergency measure, being needed at once for the security and welfare of the state. Defeated temporarily, the Non-Partisan League hammered at the session’s handiwork and finally had the law appealed to the State Supreme Court. The new law prohibited a third party from entering the primary.

On March 4 the State Supreme Court declared the emergency clause invalid and dismissed the proceedings of the primary law case. The date for the primary elections of Montana was set for August 24 rather than in April.

On March 5 former United States Senator Joseph M. Dixon announced his candidacy for the gubernatorial nomination on the Republican ticket, stating that Montanans were helplessly watching the fight between two extreme groups and that neither was worthy of their attention. His announcement was given extensive press coverage—usually in front-page priority items—throughout the state, even in the

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87 Russell, op. cit., p. 305.
88 Helena Independent Record, March 5, 1920, p. 1.
89 Miles City Star, March 6, 1920, p. 1; New Northwest, March 6, 1920, p. 1; Daily Inter-Lake, March 6, 1920, p. 1; Helena Record-Herald, March 5, 1920, p. 1; Bozeman Chronicle, March 6, 1920, p. 1; Great Falls Tribune, March 6, 1920, p. 1; Helena Independent Record, March 6, 1920, p. 8. See DeForth, op. cit., p. 4, 5.
Dixon listed several issues in his platform: roadbuilding, irrigation relief [without mention of immediate, specific relief], support of school and higher institutions of learning, simplification of primary laws, county commission type government, streamlining of state bureaucracy, and workingman's compensation laws.91

Joseph Dixon, born in North Carolina, was admitted to the bar in 1892 in Montana. He held offices in Missoula County [County Attorney] and later went to the state legislature. His rise in politics was rapid—in 1907 he was chosen Senator from Montana to succeed William A. Clark. Called quick and intelligent, young Dixon was attracted to Progressivism and found the Republican atmosphere in Washington a bit "chilly." He had worked hard on a graduated income tax and railroad regulatory legislation and that had aroused the Company, which opposed his re-election in 1912. Henry L. Myers won the 1912 senatorial race due to a stalemate between Walsh and W.G. Conrad. Dixon, then, managed Roosevelt's Bull Moose campaign in 1912, bolting the Republican Party, thus alienating the Montana conservative GOP.92 Dixon's platform carried overtones of his

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90 Ibid.
91 New Northwest, March 5, 1920, p. 1.
hatred for the Company but that would not be expressed until later in the campaign. It was known, however, that Dixon was bitterly anti-Company.

In the nation as the Red Scare cooled, Gardner Cox, governor of Ohio and a presidential nominee hopeful, urged the nation to forget the mad hysteria of Bolshevism. The majority of Montana newspapers, consequently, turned their attention to national politics, probably because the drama and sensationalism of the Scare had tapered. The growing anti-radical mood in Montana, however subtle in its expressions and difficult to trace, was becoming more and more persistent. Anti-League sentiment increased as election fever grew. By March the state eagerly awaited the League's choice for the gubernatorial nomination. W.R. Duncan, a Nonpartisan organizer, was ordered by city officials to leave Butte. Moreover, the Montana Development Association and the American Legion, hiding under a cloak of flag-hurling patriotism, prevented the Non-Partisan League from assembling in Butte. These incidents were not reported in the Company press--nor in most other newspapers in Montana. In addition, the weekly publications ignored the items. The Record-Herald and the New Northwest, however,


mentioned the incidents briefly without editorial elaboration.\textsuperscript{95} The Butte \textit{Bulletin} bitterly charged the Company with coercion\textsuperscript{96} and Richard Haste in his \textit{Scientific Farmer} angrily accused the MDA and the Loyalty League of denying citizens of their constitutional rights.\textsuperscript{97}

During April and May the miners' strikes in Butte totally dominated state activity, and political dialogue was eclipsed by the grisly disorders there. Fourteen miners and one policeman were reportedly killed and the United States Twenty-First Infantry was called by the governor to quell the riots and hostilities.\textsuperscript{98} It was evident that the situation was a crisis since Anaconda closed the mines\textsuperscript{99} and requested that the troops be kept in Butte indefinitely.\textsuperscript{100}

Press reaction to the strikes resembled the sporadic pattern of a seismograph being rocked by slight earth tremors: the local Anaconda newspapers completely ignored

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{95}Helena Record-Herald, March 12, 1920, p. 4; \textit{New Northwest}, March 12, 1920, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{96}Butte \textit{Bulletin}, March 12, 1920, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{97}Campbell's \textit{Scientific Farmer} (May, 1920), p. 140.
\item \textsuperscript{98}Helena \textit{Independent Record}, April 22, 1920, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{100}Ibid., April 24, 1920, p. 1; Helena Record-Herald April 19, 20, 1920, p. 1.
\end{itemize}
the strikes; editor Leon Shaw of the Billings Gazette called the strikes a "red strike;"\textsuperscript{101} the Great Falls Tribune, edited by William Bole, reported that the mines in Butte had been closed due to miners' disputes;\textsuperscript{102} the Butte Bulletin called the strikes a "reign of terror in Butte...unwarranted slaughter of unarmed workers by alley and A.C.M. gun thugs."\textsuperscript{103} The most abrasive attack of the strikes came from a Company newspaper, the Gazette, which said that the strikes were the work of a red conspiracy and the IWW; moreover, Dunne was trying to set up a soviet in Butte.\textsuperscript{104}

Consistent with the Company's apparent policy of presenting a placid picture of Butte midst the turmoil while other cities reported the implications was the Gazette's analysis of the strikes:

The name of Butte has been written in red once more. There has been bloodshed...thus the radicals have achieved another accomplishment, and they doubtless have brought nearer the day which they anticipate, when there shall be a

\textsuperscript{101}Billings Gazette, ibid.
\textsuperscript{102}Great Falls Tribune, April 20, 1920, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{103}Butte Bulletin, April 22, 1920, p. 1.
bloody class revolution in the United States....

To the citizens of Montana these accounts must have seemed frightening since these pictures were not incompatible with the images left by the Palmer raids and strikes of the preceding months.

Meanwhile, eager that Dunne be put away before he could do harm to the already troublesome atmosphere in Butte, the state was trying the caustic radical and R.B. Smith on charges of sedition for an editorial which allegedly defamed the Montana Council of Defense during the war. This received mild attention from the Helena Record-Herald.

In May the anti-radical tenor was quickened by the American Legion of the Pacific Northwest who were meeting in Spokane with stated aims to "ferret out Industrial Workers of the World" and anything else along that line, as well as pledging to raise money for assisting in the prosecution of cases against radicals. On May 24 the

105 Billings Gazette, loc. cit.


108 Ibid.


110 Ibid.
Legion announced that it would "support all anti-red, anti-radical movements in America."\textsuperscript{111}

Making headlines across Montana--and the nation--in mid-May was the convention of the Socialist Party which met in Chicago. The Socialists demanded the recognition of Russia by the American government and nominated Eugene Debs as the socialist candidate for president.

Aware that the Non-Partisan League and the Montana Labor League would meet in Great Falls toward the end of June, Governor Stewart warned Montanans on June 1 against what he termed "the danger of control of the state of Montana by the Nonpartisan League or by radical labor organizations."\textsuperscript{112} Taking a partisan stand, the Helena Record-Herald, edited by Dr. O. Lanstrum, Dixon's chief supporter throughout the campaign, reminded Governor Stewart--and its readers--that when the League opened in Great Falls the governor had been its principal speaker.\textsuperscript{113} About Stewart's apparent reversal, now that the League was not popular in politics, the Record-Herald had this to say:

Now he announces that he is afraid of the Nonpartisan League. He derives his fears from their original source, the Democratic political machine...who said that 'the Nonpartisan League and the labor agitators and the Socialists will

\textsuperscript{111}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{112}Helena Record-Herald, June 1, 1920, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{113}Ibid.
control the state,' another lie with which it is
desired to cheat Republicans into voting for
Democrats.114

Making front-page headlines in the daily press was
the anxiously anticipated farmer-labor convention in Great
Falls on June 22. What had been rumored for weeks in
private became public news: Burton K. Wheeler was selected
as the candidate for governor by the farmer-labor forces.
[Attorney General Ford was his nearest opponent after
dramatic convention struggles.]115 In his acceptance
speech Wheeler adopted his campaign slogan which had become
a familiar theme of his public speeches: "If elected I
will put the ACM out of politics."116 He warned that a
political defeat would destroy the Non-Partisan League and
urged the quick adoption of an appropriate label. He stated
also that he was determined to see Montana out of the hands
of the profiteers.117 Wheeler said later that he had told
Mrs. Wheeler that the gubernatorial race would be a mean,
dirty one.118 The convention ended with the adoption of

114 Ibid.

115 Helena Record-Herald, June 23, 1920, p. 1. This
newspaper stated that the sessions were stormy while
divisions in the ranks between Ford supporters and Wheeler
supporters kept the contest a stalemate. Wheeler wrote
that he won overwhelmingly, not mentioning the apparent
convention struggles. Wheeler, p. 173; Helena Independent


117 Ibid.

the Democratic label for the farmer-labor nominees.

The press went after Wheeler in full cry as he immediately began his campaign for the Democratic nomination.\textsuperscript{119} The Butte Miner called him "Butte's leading farmer,"\textsuperscript{120} and said derisively that there was no apparent obligation upon the part of a lawyer to study farming or know anything about that useful occupation in order to become the standard-bearer of those Townley tillers of the soil.\textsuperscript{121} The Helena Independent Record said that Wheeler would run on any ticket. The account appeared on page eight under "Montana State News."\textsuperscript{122} The Livingston Enterprise, edited by R.S. Phillips, gave Wheeler's victory over Ford an interesting twist: "Wheeler Nominated by NPL, Radicals Get Slate, Ford Kicked Out."\textsuperscript{123} Not all accounts by anti-Non-Partisan League newspapers were as desultory as the Miner's--the majority of daily newspapers mentioned the convention in brief objective news stories without elaboration.\textsuperscript{124} Many

\textsuperscript{119}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120}Butte, Miner, June 23, 1920, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{121}Wheeler, p. 175.
\textsuperscript{122}Helena Independent Record, June 24, 1920, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{123}Livingston Enterprise, June 23, 1920, p. 1.
weekly newspapers did not report the Wheeler nomination at all.125

Wheeler's first campaign stop after the convention forecast an ominously dark character for the primary campaign. Wheeler was met in Dillon by an angry crowd, which refused to let him speak as scheduled. He was chased out of town, narrowly escaping assault by what he called later "apparently white-collared professional fellows."126 The Butte Bulletin charged bitterly that Wheeler's constitutional rights to speak in the city limits of Dillon had been denied.127 Moreover, the Bulletin continued that the incident--what amounted to mob action--was organized by the "Interests."128 In a rare reversal of newspaper policy--and ostensibly Company press policy--the Miner issued a series of rebuttals to the charges made by the Bulletin in foot-long testimonials by Butte citizens who allegedly said:


126Wheeler, p. 173.


"...mob action was justified if that was what it took to silence Wheeler," 129

The tone of the Helena Independent Record issued in its statement of the Dillon episode would ring throughout its handling of the primary campaign:

The people of Dillon may have dealt wrongly with their problem, but the fact that Wheeler has reached down to levels so low that any number of people...could be prevailed to run him out of town like a cheap mountebank and dangerous citizen shows what people all over the state think of Wheeler. 130

The Dillon Examiner commented that farmers and Montana had been tricked and betrayed into putting up their money for the Socialist Party. 131

By the time the last candidate had filed in July there were six gubernatorial contenders in the Republican primary, three in the Democratic.

Sam C. Ford of Helena entered the GOP primary in July. He had served as United States District Attorney from 1908 to 1914. In 1916 he was elected Attorney General of Montana. As State Attorney General he broke from the regular GOP party line and supported the radicals and Nonpartisans. Another GOP candidate was Robert Lee Clinton of Butte, whose connections with the Company were recognized in the "smoke

129Butte Miner, June 30, 1920, p. 2; Wheeler, p. 175.
130Helena Independent Record, quoted from Wheeler, p. 175.
131Dillon Examiner, June 30, 1920, p. 4.
case of 1908."\textsuperscript{132} Ronald Higgins of Missoula and Daniel W. Slayton, a farmer from Lavina and a member of the fifteenth and sixteenth sessions of the legislature, announced their candidacies for the gubernatorial nomination on the GOP ticket in July, also. The Montana press paid little attention to these contenders.

In mid-July Harry J. Wilson of Billings, partner in the law firm Nichols and Wilson, became an active candidate for the Republican nomination for governor. The Helena Record-Herald, Dixon's chief supporter, suggested that Wilson, who seemed a likely hope for the Republican stronghold, had entered the race at the last moment due to the influence of the "copper tinged papers."\textsuperscript{133} Wilson refuted the charges later in the campaign in explicit denial and by generally stating in his political advertisements that he was independent of political favors.\textsuperscript{134}

In the Democratic Party campaign momentum was mounting. Angered by the political maneuvering of the Non-Partisan League, the Democratic Central Committee met in July to select a single slate of candidates to "preserve the


\textsuperscript{133} DeForth, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{134} Daily Inter-Lake, August 20, 1920, p. 2; Billings Gazette, August 15, 1920, p. 1.
integrity of the party." William W. McDowell was chosen by the Committee to head the Democratic ticket. McDowell was supported overwhelmingly by the Democratic press and by several Republican newspapers since he had announced his political intentions the previous December. Moreover, he received support from the regular Democrats of the Central Committee led by former Senators William A. Clark and Thomas A. Carter, Senator T.J. Walsh, national committee-man from Montana J. Bruce Kremer, Governor Stewart, George Ramsey, Dr. O. Lanstrum, editor of the Record-Herald in Helena, and Senator Henry Myers. This action by the Democratic Committee marked a significant turning point in the primary campaign. The Great Falls Tribune, which had been hitherto politically noncommittal, joined the bandwagon of McDowell supporters. In addition, the Tribune cautiously reported that the State Central Committee urged "county Democratic committees be called immediately to unite the

135 Wheeler, p. 176.


137 Wheeler, ibid. Tom Stout of the Lewiston Democrat News and Judith Basin Farmer did not support McDowell but instead gave tacit support to Wheeler.

138 Throughout the primary Walsh stated that he was against the Non-Partisan League. (See Libby Western News, July 22, 1920, p. 1.) although he did not openly oppose Wheeler.
Further, the Tribune implied that the Committee was urging the regular Democrats to disregard fusion with other "organizations" which was, in short, a call to unite against the Non-Partisan League and Wheeler.

The Committee's action gave the Republican Party its cue to emphasize the theme of the Democratic Party's disunity which it had been quick to underscore since the farmer-labor convention in June. At this time, also, the primary race became what the MDA called a "straight fight between the reds and the Americans." The Butte Miner, carefully avoiding discussion of the real issues of the campaign, led the Company press in the injection of the Bolshevik's menace myth, stating that "no man can sit quietly and see his state virtually made an annex to Bolshevik Russia."

From mid-July until the day of the primary election on August 24, most of the Montana daily press pursued the Non-Partisan League relentlessly with the exception of the Anaconda Standard, Helena Independent Record, and the Great Falls Tribune whose coverage of the campaign was light and

139 Great Falls Tribune, July 20, 1920, p. 2.
140 Helena Record-Herald led this assault. See July 2, 1920, p. 4.
141 Wheeler, ibid.
142 Wheeler, p. 177.
sporadic until the week before the election. They charged that the League was a combination of anarchists bent upon destroying every known form of government. The attacks were bipartisan in nature, directed against Townley and Dunne rather than against Wheeler with certain exceptions, yet the associations were not opaque. Non-Company newspapers joined the Crusade which made the attacks seem less likely Company contrived propaganda.\textsuperscript{143}

Aware of the powerful prospects of a Wheeler-League victory, since reports of large, enthusiastic audiences at Wheeler's public appearances became widely accepted news despite his neglect by a majority of the press, B.B. Briscoe, President of the Retail Merchants Association of Montana, warned Montana businessmen to "get into politics and drive the red radicals and political profiteers out of business."\textsuperscript{144} The MDA continued its indictment of the League by stressing that the situation in Montana was the most critical in its history, alerting Montanans that there were interests [not to be confused with "Interests"] at work which would "destroy the credit of the state, of the indi-

\textsuperscript{143}The New Northwest and the Butte Bulletin were the only two pro-League dailies. At that, the New Northwest was more pro-Wheeler than he was pro-League. The Great Falls Tribune shifted its League approval to harsh criticism and open denial in August.

\textsuperscript{144}Helena Record-Herald, July 12, 1920, p. 1.
vidual, of the corporation and of the state absolutely."\textsuperscript{145}
The Anaconda \textit{Standard}, edited by Richard R. Kilroy, echoed these same sentiments and placed Wheeler's name in the anti-League rhetoric:

The qualifications of Wheeler as a messenger boy have been carefully examined and can be found to be satisfactory. As Frazier will be on the same long-distance line, Townley figures that a good deal of money may be saved by calling Helena and Bismarck and giving his orders for one toll. Also, if Wheeler is elected, there will be a state-owned airplane which can be used at half-way points. If North Dakota can be governed from an office-building in St. Paul, why not Montana.\textsuperscript{146}

The \textit{Record-Herald}, which had hitherto neither actively campaigned against Dixon's party rivals nor openly criticized Wheeler, projected that the primary election was clearly a struggle to keep the radicals out of office rather than a struggle between Company and non-Company office seekers. Moreover, the Democratic ticket presented a conflict, a problem which lent itself to polemical discussion, generating interest, which the GOP lacked. Thus, the \textit{Record-Herald} appeared more interested in the Democratic primary than the Republican. It summarized the problems facing the Democrats since these problems could serve the interests of the Republicans in the election. In an editorial that news-

\textsuperscript{145}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{146}Anaconda \textit{Standard}, July 13, 1920, p. 4. This editorial appeared in the \textit{Daily Missoulian}, July 13, 1920, also.
The radicalism which Mr. Wheeler represents would injure the state of Montana...There is a vast difference between the Wheeler ticket and the McDowell ticket...the Wheeler ticket stands for extremely radical theories of government, for radical theories of economics...it is supported by the Butte Bulletin which frankly avows itself to be a supporter of the Soviet government.147

On July 25 Wheeler left Butte for a month's campaigning. Wheeler was more cautious after the Dillon episode, yet the animosity that was building up toward him was manifested in Choteau where he addressed a crowd during the last week of July. Someone supposedly shouted from the audience that Wheeler deserved to be hanged and only by the pugnacity of Dr. Harry McGregor of Great Falls, a staunch supporter of Wheeler, was Wheeler saved from harm.148 Press reports of the crowds Wheeler attracted were carried by the opposition press spasmodically.149 Wheeler, realizing the power of his opposition--and the power of the press and their policies of deliberate silence over his campaign efforts--hammered away at his target in speeches in opera houses, theatres, and community halls throughout the state. The Bulletin reported that Wheeler was being received

147 Helena Record-Herald, ibid.
148 Wheeler, ibid.
149 Wheeler, p. 176.
enthusiastically throughout the state but that newspaper did not systematically cover Wheeler's schedule nor report of his speeches, crowd sizes, and realistic public response. Instead, the non-Wheeler publications were quick to point out that the Non-Partisan League members were not true Democrats and that they were "riding under the guise of Democrats." This cry became the overriding tone of Democratic newspapers as they feared the split in the Democratic vote. Their response, consequently, was primarily a strong editorial stand against Townley and Dunne and Wheeler's association with them, rather than in open criticism of Wheeler's political philosophies.

Emerging as a staunch Wheeler supporter in western Montana was Miles Romney of the Hamilton Western News, who had been lukewarm in his support of the determined gubernatorial candidacy. 

150 Butte Bulletin, August 2, 1920, p. 1. Typical of Dunne's support of Wheeler came in his anti-Company attacks, which grew more rapacious as the campaign reached its end.


152 Anaconda Standard, July 25, 1920, p. 4; Daily Missoulian, July 13, 1920, p. 4; Dillon Examiner, July 30, 1920, p. 1; Forsyth Democrat, July 1, 1920, p. 1; Hill County Democrat, July 29, 1920, p. 1; Red Lodge Picket-Journal, July 28, 1920, p. 6; Libby Western News, July 16, 1920, p. 6; Yellowstone Monitor, July 29, 1920, p. 2. The Dillon Examiner actively supported Robert Clinton in the campaign. The Examiner vindicated Ryan who was accused by Wheeler forces as having planned the "Scalping Party," which makes that newspaper's position dubious.
torial candidate until the last month before the primary election. Romney reported Wheeler's anti-Company theme objectively and in a rational, undramatic manner. Moreover, Wheeler's speeches were given front-page coverage, which suggested their importance to that newspaper's editor. The Western News emphasized another aspect of Wheeler's campaign which other pro-Wheeler newspapers failed to stress. Romney emphasized Wheeler, the strong-man, the intrepid leader of the forces against corporated domination. He printed this front-page account of a speech Wheeler gave in the Bitterroot Valley on August 5:

When I am elected governor no legitimate business interest in Montana will suffer in the slightest degree but you can rest assured of one thing, and that is that I will drive the Anaconda Copper Mining Company out of politics... Too much credit is given Mr. Townley for organizing the Non-Partisan League idea. It really originated in Montana with the A.C.M. Company. Year after year they have nominated the candidates of both the Republican and Democratic parties in this state and then let the people take their choice....153

Other Wheeler supporters were the Miles City American, Producers' News, and the Scobey Sentinel.

While Wheeler was canvassing the state, a man from Seattle, Washington, E.B. Fish, was reported to have been touring Montana lecturing about the "cause and cure of industrial unrest"154 in the Pacific Northwest. Fish said

154Ibid., p. 7.
that the spread of radicalism threatened labor conditions in the Northwest and that all "reds" should be ousted. Fish proudly pointed to the fact that he had resigned his job as a highly paid machinist to tell the Northwest about the dangers of radicalism.155

Campbell's *Scientific Farmer*, which was edited and published in Billings, printed a list of the Non-Partisan candidates and their platform throughout July and August. That journal stated that mob violence could not be tolerated. Richard Haste, the *Farmer's* editor, a member of the Non-Partisan League and candidate for secretary of state on the Non-Partisan ticket, charged the "business interests with being organized for the purposes of stirring up and fanning violence against the farmers and the workers."156 He pointed out that the lines were drawn and that there were no politics involved--on both sides it was a nonpartisan fight.

However, the Gazette in Billings continued its support of Wilson. The Gazette joined the anti-League forces with the same charges that the NPL was un-American, Bolshevist, and Red.157 The Gazette did say, however, that the Non-Partisan League started out with good intentions but that

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155Ibid.
157Billings Gazette, July 19, 1920, p. 4.
By August, then, the tone of the primary election was pitched in a wild, frenetic manner. The race was clearly a fight against the Nonpartisans and against the liberals in both parties. Romney predicted that in the primary Dixon would receive the Progressive vote, Wilson the eastern and conservative vote; and Ford, the farm vote on the Republican ticket. He did not comment on Wheeler's possible strength. No one predicted the outcome of the race with any authority but it seemed that Wheeler and Dixon were standing in front of the contenders throughout the August stretch of the race.

In Butte the Miner and the Bulletin were engaged in out and out war as they exchanged hostilities day after day. The Bulletin tirelessly reminded its readers of the struggle between "corporate greed" and honest opposition:

Wheeler set his face firmly against the rape of the constitutional liberties instituted by the Anaconda Mining Company and its press, and by the press he has been maligned and vilified as few men have been.

At the same time the Miner attempted to split the Nonpartisans' vote, charging that many of the farmers felt that they were

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158 *ibid.*, July 25, 1920, p. 4.


"jobbed" by the Great Falls convention and that they would not support the ticket headed by Wheeler. The Miner's criticisms were confined to its editorial pages unlike the Bulletin's.

Reflecting the anxiety of the Company as the campaign drew into its last month was Company president Cornelius F. Kelly who addressed his workers on August 2. The speech, carried in front-page news columns, outlined in no uncertain terms what the Company precisely felt about the Nonpartisans:

...enemies of the government, who are sowing seeds of discontent, sedition, and violence, are jeopardizing Montana's prosperity and every form of commercial and industrial endeavor. Unless the radical menace is stamped out of Montana's civilization, it will be retarded and the achievement of the empire builders will have been in vain.162

Moreover, the Miner extended Kelly's address into its editorial pages endorsing his stand:

Paid propagandists and unscrupulous politicians, to further their own ends, have done their utmost to poison the minds of the people and to misrepresent the concern of which Mr. Kelly is president.163

Typical of a Bulletin rebuttal à la Dunne is the following diatribe which well illustrates the kind of myopic view of the real political situation presented to the Butte citizens.

161Butte Miner, August 3, 1920, p. 4.
163Ibid., p. 4.
while they watched the campaign:

The menace to America consists in the fact that a handful of individuals, into whose hands has passed the natural wealth of America, whose power has enormously increased because of the war, they stole and plundered without fear of retribution, by reason of high positions held in the government of this nation, have resolved to not only retain their blood-stained dollars--relinquishing not even a dime for a bonus of the men who fought their battles--but to entrench themselves by threats, bribery and the use of force to whip the masses of this nation into industrial slavery.164

Adding more drama to the sensational Butte political thunderstorm was the *Bulletin*'s charges that Wheeler supporters were to have been called to the offices of the Company on the sixth floor of the Hennessy Building and told to "lay off."165 In addition, they were reminded of past favors and threatened with future punishment if they did not abandon Wheeler.166 Writing the fury of a fantastic summer hailstorm, Dunne levied other plausible charges against the Company. On the front page of a newspaper headlined "FRAUD!" in bold, banner style Dunne seemed to be literally screaming his soul on the page.167 He stated that Butte citizens had been issued false affidavits, that

absentee voters with fictitious names would be voting, suggesting that the Company was dragging in its cemetery vote, which it had been known to do in the past.

The Anaconda Standard finally joined the Wheeler assault wholeheartedly, calling Wheeler on its front pages an anarchist, a red nihilist, a pretender of political reform. In all cases well-defined alternatives were never given after the accusations nor were the other candidates given mention.

Dixon, whose campaign was well-organized and low-keyed, carried his message to Montanans in a serious, statesman-like manner, explaining the real issues--taxation reform, irrigation needs, reasons why the primary law should be kept, etc.--from town to town across the state, excoriating the Non-Partisan League as dangerously radical, Socialistic, appealing to the moderate, average citizen. Most accounts of his speeches were one-paragraph Associated Press stories featuring one quotable statement about the Non-Partisan League threat. On the whole Dixon received wide coverage from the Montana press. He relied heavily on the strength of his paid-political advertisement publicity which was ex-


169DeForth, p. 21.
tensive. A series of scholarly, well-written scientific articles appeared written by Dixon in the Montana Farmer from January through August. The Montana Farmer, a non-political agricultural monthly journal, had wide circulation in both western and eastern Montana. The articles described methods of profitable dairying, profitable ensilage, and new techniques in dry farming--items which would attract wide interest in the agrarian community.

Moreover, the articles reflected a subdued, undramatic but sophisticated quality in Dixon's campaign, which gave a marked contrast to the virulent Democratic Party campaign which was dominated by anti-League propaganda.

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170 Ibid., pp. 21-22. See also Great Falls Tribune, August 22, 1920, p. 11; Chinook Opinion, August 12, 1920, p. 2; Yellowstone Monitor, August 5, 1920, p. 4; Red Lodge Picket-Journal, August 11, 1920, p. 8; Montana Farmer, August 15, 1920, p. 23; Sidney Herald, August 20, 1920, p. 2; Libby Western News, August 5, 12, 1920, p. 5.

171 Dixon addressed the Montana State Dairyman's convention in Missoula on December 19, 1919 where he advocated the state's support of irrigation. See Rocky Mountain Husbandman, January 1, 1920, p. 1, for entire speech. The articles in the Montana Farmer and the convention speeches would indicate Dixon's interest in the farm vote. The following agricultural articles, written by Dixon for the Montana Farmer, appeared throughout the campaign: "The Dairy Outlook in Montana," Montana Farmer, January 15, 1920, p. 1 and February 15, 1920, p. 5; "The Best Type of Silo for Montana," July 15, 1920, p. 25 (this article was accompanied by a two-column by eight-inch photograph of Dixon.); "A Summer Silo Will Help Out the Drying Pasture," August 15, 1920, p. 5. There were no articles appearing before January--nor after the election.
Wilson on the other hand drew bipartisan support from the press, which was expected by Wheeler and Dixon forces. The Company press, eastern Montana independent newspapers, and Democratic newspapers who were anti-Wheeler and anti-League endorsed Wilson. Strong support for Wilson came from the Daily Missoulian, edited by M. J. Hutchens, and the Billings Gazette which said that Wilson's talents would be given impartially to advancing the interests of the people of Montana. Wilson's campaign, consisting of what amounted to a paid-political deluge in both weekly and daily newspapers of both parties, seemed carefully timed and purposefully low-keyed. Wilson advertisements, largely two-column by ten-inch blocks accompanied by a three-by-six inch picture of the candidate were titled "What's the Matter With Wilson?" which was followed by his personal history that

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explained that Wilson had taken political favors from no one and that he was an honest, conscientious man.175

Throughout the primary campaign the Craighead-Dixon feud in Missoula probably attracted more statewide attention than any other campaign happening. And surely its importance to Wheeler's campaign could not be denied since the affair detracted from Wheeler's publicity. The New Northwest, one of Wheeler's most important daily newspaper allies—if not his single most important backer—spent so much time pursuing Dixon that Wheeler did not receive the close attention he needed. (Almost totally ignored by the majority of Montana newspapers Wheeler's campaign trail was untraceable.)

During August Craighead bitterly assailed Dixon, calling him a charlatan, neither a Democrat nor a Republican.176 Their feud stemmed from 1915 when Dixon was editor of the Daily Missoulian and Craighead was president of the state university in Missoula. Craighead blamed Dixon for being instrumental in getting him removed from the presidency and, thus, Craighead reacted venomously to Dixon's candidacy. Craighead accused him of accepting bribes from the

175Daily Inter-Lake, August 20, 1920, p. 2; Helena Independent Record, August 22, 1920, p. 9.

Moreover, he charged that Dixon would lose sight of the interests of the state to better his own fortunes.  

Part of the conflict concerned Sam Ford and Edward Donlan: a full-page advertisement appeared on August 19 in the *New Northwest* written and paid for by E. Donlan who refuted alleged Dixon charges that Sam Ford had taken $5000 from the Anaconda Copper Mining Company. Donlan criticized Dixon for dragging Ford into "this slandering." In addition, Craighead wrote the following day that Dixon had mismanaged campaign funds in the 1912 Bull Moose presidential campaign. Dixon denied the charges in a Billings speech and said that Craighead was fired for misappropriation of university funds. Further, Dixon called Craighead a liar and went on to repudiate new charges that told of Dixon's owning property in Missoula's "red-light" district.

Culminating the battle Dixon proposed a public confrontation with Craighead in the Missoula Ball Park on the day before the election. Handbills were distributed: publicity

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181 DeForth, pp. 24-27.
began a week in advance in large two-column by eight-inch advertisements carried by the New Northwest. Harry Wilson was scheduled to speak in Missoula that same evening in the Liberty Theatre. By some subtle contrivance Dixon was told that the speech would be re-scheduled and that he was to appear at the Liberty Theatre. Meanwhile, Craighead and Donlan went ahead and spoke at the Ball Park, stating later that they did not receive invitations to speak at the Theatre. In the famous Ball Park speech Craighead continued his charges against Dixon, stating that Dixon did not come to speak because he was afraid to tell the truth. Craighead elaborated on the charge that accused Dixon of owning the Oxford Saloon Corner in Missoula. The Ball Park speech was carried by the Daily Missoulian, the Butte Miner, the Anaconda Standard, the Helena Independent Record, and the Billings Gazette, in addition to the account in the New Northwest.

On August 5 the New Northwest appeared with the following banner headline which ran on its masthead until the November election: "B.K. Wheeler: If elected I will not


put the A.C.M. out of business. But I will put them out of politics."\textsuperscript{185} [The Butte Bulletin printed the same Wheeler hallmark from June 23 until the November election also.]

Two days before the primary Craighead wrote for the front page of his newspaper: "Admit Wheeler Nomination--Fight Is Now Between Ford and Wilson."\textsuperscript{186}

The other opposition levied at Republican Party candidates came from Dunne who accused Ford of being an Anaconda Copper Mining Company radical which the Company, according to Dunne, hoped would draw enough farmer and labor votes from B.K. Wheeler to assure McDowell of the nomination.\textsuperscript{187} No other newspaper sought to perpetuate this accusation, nor did Ford deny the charges specifically. Donlan had denounced Dixon for making these charges, mentioned earlier, but throughout his campaign, Ford used two slogans which categorically repudiated the charges: "Beware of Campaign Falsehoods" and "I Have Not Entered Into Combinations With Anyone."\textsuperscript{188}

Ford's campaign, generally, was given slight publicity

\textsuperscript{185}New Northwest, August 23, 1920, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{186}Ibid., August 22, 1920, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{187}Red Lodge Picket-Journal, August 11, 1920, pp. 4, 6, and August 18, 1920, p. 4; Chinook Opinion, August 12, 1920, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{188}Butte Bulletin, August 17, 1920, p. 1.
by the Montana press. He had announced a general program similar to Dixon's: elimination of unnecessary state boards; impartial enforcement of all laws as in the past, encouragement of every legitimate business and industry; efficient, business-like administration of state affairs; recognition, appreciation and assistance for former servicemen; more and better schools; generous state aid for irrigation; better laws for farmers and stockgrowers; and encouragement and protection of honest, earnest labor.\(^{189}\) Ford relied on paid-political advertisements for publicity but even that was negligible.\(^{190}\)

The Great Falls Tribune reacted cautiously to the primary campaign, presenting a facade of indifference. Its pages were filled with national and international news with an occasional editorial describing the dilemma of the state Democratic Party. By mid-August, however, the Tribune carried Wilson advertisements, news stories about his speech there on August 16, and openly supported that candidate. On August 17 the Tribune began listing the standard Democratic

\(^{189}\)Great Falls Tribune, August 23, 1920, p. 10; Helena Independent Record, August 21, 1920, p. 7.

\(^{190}\)Ibid.; New Northwest, August 22, 1920, p. 5; Red Lodge Picket-Journal, loc. cit.; Hill County Democrat, August 12, 1920, p. 8; Daily Inter-Lake, August 21, 1920, p. 3; Chinook Opinion, op. cit.; Montana Farmer, August 13, 1920, p. 22; Helena Independent Record, August 21, 1920, p. 7.
Party's ticket regularly on the editorial page, however, the newspaper did not comment editorially on the slate nor did it support McDowell with enthusiasm. Instead, it published Wilson's repudiation of the charges that his candidacy was inspired by the Company and emphasized Wilson's need for bipartisan support to win the Republican primary. Moreover, the Tribune carried Wilson's discussion of Wheeler's candidacy. Wilson said in the Great Falls speech that the possibility of his becoming a candidate would have remained a closed incident if it had not been for the endorsement of Mr. Wheeler by the Non-Partisan League. At this time the Tribune outlined Wilson's platform which called for a governor advisory board, fair taxation of corporations, good roads, revision of the state constitution, help for the farmer, and preservation of American ideals. In his Helena speech on election eve, Wilson outlined his platform and refuted charges against him that he was a "Company man."

It was significant that the Tribune did not take an offensive against Wheeler. The only criticism that that

191Great Falls Tribune, August 17, 1920, p. 4.
192Ibid., p. 8, August 18, 1920, p. 1.
193Ibid., August 17, 1920, p. 8.
newspaper issued on Wheeler appeared in a brief editorial five days before the primary election which read that "some farmers would not follow Mr. Dunne and his convention of '58" and that Wheeler hoped to turn the ground where the mines were located in Butte into agriculture. During the week preceding the primary the Tribune carried advertisements for Higgins, Ford, Wilson, and Dixon without news comment. No campaign news appeared on the day before the primary.

It was surprising the Helena Independent Record, whose record of condemning Wheeler during the past three years was not exactly innocuous, paid such little attention to the primary campaign. The paper was not actively supporting McDowell, nor was it actively opposing Wheeler. Moreover, it did not attack Dixon. Campbell's position seemed enigmatic. About the strongest language Campbell had for either candidate came during the last week of the campaign, and even that was not abusive:

Certainly Wheeler and Dixon are not inspiring confidence in themselves by their loose-tongued methods.

On the Democratic ticket having the support of the Democratic Central Committee and a majority of Montana

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195Ibid., August 19, 1920, p. 4.
196Helena Independent Record, August 18, 1920, pp. 1, 4.
Democratic newspapers, W.W. McDowell staged a sober campaign.\(^{197}\) Noteworthy in his bid for the Democratic nomination was support by William Jennings Bryan who spoke in the eastern part of Montana for McDowell. The Livingston Enterprise called McDowell a "gentleman midst one of the most bitter political campaigns in the history of Montana."\(^{198}\) Wheeler did not mention McDowell's name in his campaign since he was worried about the Irish vote in Butte, knowing that McDowell had been popular with the Irish vote there.\(^{199}\) The Miner, more concerned with reproaching Wheeler and Dunne than with praising McDowell, did accent McDowell's opposition to the alleged Bolshevists in Montana, stating that McDowell presented a sound voice of confidence and Americanism to Montana.\(^{200}\) Moreover, Democratic newspapers

\(^{197}\)Anaconda Standard, August 22, 1920, p. 4; Livingston Enterprise, August 12, 1920, p. 2; Butte Miner, August 20, 1920, p. 1; Great Falls Tribune, loc. cit.; Dillon Examiner, August 4, 1920, p. 1; Hill County Democrat, August 19, 1920, p. 4; Red Lodge Picket-Journal, August 4, 1920, p. 4. An important Democratic newspaper the Lewistown Democrat News did not support McDowell but rather endorsed Wilson. Tom Stout reputedly "hated" McDowell, according to a source who did not wish to be named. Stout's political record in the Judith Basin Farmer bears out this statement. The Bozeman Chronicle and the Helena Independent Record did not participate actively in the primary campaign.

\(^{198}\)Livingston Enterprise, loc. cit.

\(^{199}\)Wheeler, p. 176.

\(^{200}\)Butte Miner, August 21, 1920, p. 4.
warned their readers that if Wheeler were elected the state credit would be injured, the grain elevators and mines would close, and the farmers would be ruined.201

As the primary election day approached the most lurid newspaper campaigning centered on Butte where the Bulletin, the Miner, and the Anaconda Standard competed vehemently for the voters' attention. The Standard carried its campaign to its front page with full-page editorials warning the voters that "nine-tenths of the grievances heralded in the poison press and from the mouths of these breeders of anarchy and riot do not exist."202 In addition, the Standard attempted to enlarge the threat of radicalism and anarchy should Wheeler and the Nonpartisans win the primary. Typical of the Standard rhetoric was the following statement published the day before the election:

There is no hope of peace or progress in Montana at the hands of an organization the rank and file of which is composed of ex-socialists, I.W.W.'s, aliens and anarchists, who, having to tear down the old parties from the outside, are now boring from within.203

The Bulletin responded with impassioned epithets: "Keep your eyes on the crooks!" and similar oratory flowed from its press.204

201 Karlin, op. cit., p. 264.
204 Butte Bulletin, August 23, 1920, pp. 1, 8.
Meanwhile, Wheeler ended his campaign in Butte with a speech from the balcony of the Butte Hotel, promising that if the citizens voted straight labor ticket, the lynchings, murders, and crimes against the workers would be stopped. The crowd was enthusiastic, according to Wheeler and the Bulletin.

On August 25 every daily newspaper and weekly newspaper published carried the dramatic news in banner, two-inch bold headlines: "FARMER-LABOR TICKET SWEEPS STATE," "COMPLETE LEAGUE TICKET IS NAMED." Election returns trickled into Helena throughout the week but the final results were consistent with the first announcements: Burton K. Wheeler and Joseph M. Dixon were nominated as candidates for governor on the Democratic and Republican tickets respectively. When the final results were complete the votes cast went as follows--Democrats: Wheeler, 35,228; McDowell, 17,798; Carey, 4,418--Republicans: Dixon, 18,718; Wilson, 15,765; Ford, 12,271; Clinton, 2,604; Slayton, 2,029; and Ronald Higgins, 1,481.

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206Ibid.
CHAPTER III

PRIMARY POST MORTEM

Wheeler's victory in the primary demonstrated what practical politicians had feared but had reluctantly accepted: the Democratic Party machinery was effete and the hard-working Non-Partisan League was well-organized and politically influential on a grass roots level in its campaign. The Great Falls Tribune charged the Democratic Party with "apathy" and said that it had been "summer vacationing."\(^1\) It was apparent that the mining and lumber camps had united with the dissident farmers in protest of Montana's political system. Cascade County voted overwhelmingly for Wheeler and Dixon; Silver Bow, Missoula, and Deer Lodge Counties rejected the Company candidates, which was a significant occurrence\(^2\) since Company newspapers in those counties were powerful.

The Independent Record blamed the Montana Development Association for the Wheeler nomination since its 4,000 members voted for Dixon, thus withdrawing support from

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\(^1\)Great Falls Tribune, August 26, 1920, p. 6. (This statement forecast the position the Tribune will take in the election campaign.)

Several Company newspapers did not comment editorially on the election returns. The Miner, however, expressed succinctly the apparent dilemma facing the Company as a result of the Wheeler and Dixon nominations:

...usually it is possible to choose the lesser of two evils...as far as the Miner has investigated, the situation is unable to satisfy itself that there is any lesser evil offered in this particular case.

The Dixon victory was celebrated by the Record-Herald which applauded its candidate enthusiastically. That newspaper did not comment editorially on the Wheeler nomination.

On August 31 the Great Falls Tribune gave Senator Walsh's support for Wheeler front-page coverage and reported Walsh's announcement, released from Livingston, that Wheeler would get support from the Democratic organization. Other Montana Democrats were not so optimistic. C.B. Nolan, secretary of the Montana State Central Committee, wrote to Walsh that he had opened election campaign headquarters for the party without a dollar in his pocket and said that he hoped that the national organization could help. Walsh replied

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3Helena Independent Record, August 27, 1920, p. 4.
4Butte Miner, August 29, 1920, p. 4. The Miner said that the Democrats had received political shell-shock and might not recover.
5Great Falls Tribune, August 31, 1920, p. 1.
with "humiliation and regret" that the prospects of finding financial help for the Democratic Party in Montana now were not good, and later was said to have sent a check to Nolan for fifty dollars for "the boys, wishing them success."\(^7\)

He also said that he would not be able to help out much in the Montana campaign since his work in Washington demanded his being there.\(^8\)

The weekly press reported the election returns but did not comment on the results except for the pro-Wheeler papers and the exceptional disgruntled Democratic publication here and there. The Hill County Democrat in Havre said precisely what had happened in the primary election voting:

> The defeat of the regular Democratic ticket was entirely due to lack of interest and lack of organization. The Non-partisans were organized and organized to win.\(^9\)

The pro-Wheeler newspapers of the daily press, the Butte Bulletin and the New Northwest were jubilant. The New Northwest called the Democratic vote a protest against the Stewart administration, stating that Wheeler's vote was the largest vote cast for a candidate for state office in primary elections. Furthermore, the New Northwest said

\(^7\)Ibid.

\(^8\)Ibid.

\(^9\)Hill County Democrat, August 26, 1920, p. 1; Scobey Sentinel, September 3, 1920, p. 1.
that Wheeler had received a large segment of the conservative vote because people knew Wheeler was "on the square." The invective which the Bulletin employed to describe the results did contain an element of truth although the rapacity of that journalistic onslaught rendered much of it oblique. Yet what Dunne said after the primary seemed fitting:

> Never in the history of Montana has there been a more blatant repudiation of the sinister policies of the copper interests and their prostitute press...the final analysis of the recent election is the simple fact that the people of Montana have risen in their might and smote hip and thigh the great industrial autocracy that has been throttling the state and the people for so many years.

The Wheeler-Dixon victories in both parties indicated undeniably that the people of Montana were cognizant of the political machinations of the state, of the implications of a McDowell or a Wilson victory, and that they clearly wanted a change from the existing political order. And, the results indicated a curious negation of press attitudes which pointed to the fact that the press did not hold full sway over men's minds. Public opinion was created by the campaign speech, the flurry of attention caused by the politicians' wake, and by an elusive kind of "grapevine" dialogue, in addition to the

press. For in this case the Company was not able to place a freeze on the activities of its opposition. Nor was it able to enhance the qualifications of its candidates by patronizing news coverage. Furthermore, the attempts by anti-Wheeler forces to make the Bolshevik menace a potent threat in the primary was unsuccessful.

The results of the primary campaign demonstrated that the Progressive spirit was still alive in Montana and that spirit was daring to make a clear-cut choice between Company and non-Company men for the nominations. For the first time since statehood the Company did not have a candidate for the race for governor in 1920. In the end while paid-political advertising was certainly an important factor in bringing the name and faces of candidates before the public, it did not create a total image or create a myth in the public consciousness. Clearly, the Montana voters chose the two men they knew best expressed their attitudes--Burton K. Wheeler and Joseph M. Dixon.
CHAPTER IV

THE 1920 ELECTION: WHEELER VS. DIXON

Before the reverberations of the primary had cleared, it was obvious that the November election would be a contest between radicalism and conservatism in Montana--between the Non-Partisan League and the reactionary forces of both political parties. The Montana press, reacting impassionately to the League's victory, began dropping traditional party lines early in September as the Wheeler and Dixon campaigns opened. The Libby Western News situated in the heart of the lumber camps of Montana, summarized the campaign adroitly:

We believe the issue is...between radicalism on the one hand and conservatism on the other and we see no use in dodging that issue by trying to make it a question between the two national parties on national lines.¹

The most rational synthesis of the importance of the campaign for governor came from the Daily Inter-Lake in Kalispell which predicted that the campaign's complexion would be that one side wanted state socialism by immediate mandate from the people through the executive branch of state government and the other side wanted change through

¹Libby Western News, September 10, 1920, p. 5.
existing democratic forms of government.\footnote{Daily Inter-Lake, September 30, 1920, p. 4.} As the campaigns moved along it was apparent that the achievements of both Wheeler and Dixon were brushed aside as emotionalism replaced rationalism in the discussions of the candidates. Dixon's reform platform did little to encourage the conservative-reactionary elements of the Republican Party--whose support was essential in any election. On the other hand the militant radicalism which Wheeler represented not only alienated the old-guard members of the Democratic Party, but it posed a threat to non-radical Democrats who wanted change in the status quo. Both parties then were in a quandary. The Republican newspapers, with the exception of the Helena Record-Herald, Dixon's ardent supporter, gave weak response to the Dixon candidacy. At the same time, almost all Democratic newspapers, shaken and vacillating, were visibly displeased with both Wheeler's and Ford's showing as their total vote (thought to represent the radical vote which was 42.8 per cent of the total vote) could mean a Nonpartisan victory in the general election. A Nonpartisan victory in the November election could sound the death knell for the Democratic Party in Montana. With McDowell off the ticket the party was split and the old-guard Democrats in Montana searched in September for solutions to their problems. What
the regular Democrats feared most was that the Nonpartisans and Democrats on the entire ticket would be mixed on the November ballot and the average voter would not recognize the distinctions between Leaguers and regulars. Adding to the dilemma facing the Montana Democrats was the potential impact of the national election. Wilson's League of Nations was about as popular in Montana as the Non-Partisan League.

Disgruntled, Democrats naturally turned to their party's leaders. Senator Walsh, no longer able to comfortably ignore Wheeler, urged Democrats from his headquarters in Washington to support Wheeler in the campaign, emphasizing the fact that Wheeler had won the nomination by perfectly legal means. Will Campbell wrote to Walsh, realizing that the press had carried the Wheeler endorsement, that the "Nonpartisans were socialistic" and that Walsh should "think it over." Walsh returned the letter by saying publicly that "no Democrat could justify himself in refusing to support Wheeler." Walsh stated again, however, that he would be unable to come to Montana to help out in the election.

The New Northwest began its campaign immediately after the primary, throwing its support enthusiastically to Wheeler. Craighead reported the Walsh endorsement of

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4Bates, p. 163.
5Ibid., p. 165.
Wheeler in bold, two-inch banner headlines on its front page on September 1: "WE'LL WIN WITH WHEELER / SENATOR WALSH DECLARES." That newspaper assured its readers again of Wheeler's lawful and decisive vote and that it was perfectly idle to assert that Wheeler had only the support of the ultra-radicals.7

Compounding the Democrat's predicament was the tactic employed by the Republican press. GOP editors pushed the Democrat's dilemma to its fullest and used that problem to their most effective advantage. The Democrats were reminded by the Republicans that the Non-Partisan League members were not loyal party members—a fact which grew as a persistent thorn in the Democratic ranks. The Daily Missoulian wrote that a Republican victory offered the only assurance that Montana would not suffer the fate of North Dakota and become a state to be shunned by investors, businessmen and the thousands who were looking for homes in the Northwest.8 The Missoulian's statement could be termed as the Company press's attitude toward the election. The Company press, in general, reacted slowly and cautiously.

6New Northwest, ibid.
7Ibid.
8Daily Missoulian, September 1, 1920, p. 4.
Will Campbell of the **Independent Record** predicted a "hard fight" between the two candidates and said that he could not accept the Dunne-Townley ticket. Campbell urged a fusion of Democrats and Republicans to elect Dixon, setting a precedent which other Democratic newspapers would soon follow. Campbell did not comment on Wheeler.

The Great Falls **Tribune** took a "wait and see" position after the primary, yet reported that the Hill County Republicans were making overtures to the Democratic Party to form an independent voters league to defeat the Non-Partisan League candidates. Wheeler's comments to this were unavailable. Finally, the **Tribune** straightened its posture, calling Townley's leadership of the League "unfortunate;" however, the **Tribune** continued that "the rank-and-file of the Non-Partisan League were not Socialists, or anarchists, or disloyal men, or crazy theorists." Furthermore, the **Tribune** said, those members were attracted to the organization by the profound conviction that the farmers were not getting a fair share in the social and economic rewards of industry, "a conviction that the 1920 census bears out."

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10 **Great Falls Tribune**, September 2, 1920, p. 4.
At the same time the Tribune said that it refused to join in the indiscriminate abuse of the Non-Partisan League which many of the newspapers in the state had conducted.\textsuperscript{13} However, the Tribune could not go so far to endorse the League's political alliance with the IWW and Dunne, stating that the League "went the limit"\textsuperscript{14} in putting up a ticket at the Great Falls farmer-labor convention in June. Continuing its ambiguous position, certain to confuse its readers, the Tribune pointed out that the farmer was a capitalist:

It is for his interest that his capital [referring to the farmer] brings him in adequate returns in higher prices for food products...\textsuperscript{15}

This position thwarted the anti-capitalist harangue by the radicals in Butte and inadvertently stated the Tribune's position. The discussion, which continued for two days, did not mention either Wheeler or Dixon.

Finally, the Tribune summarized the political troubles of Montana in an editorial on September 7 in view of the forthcoming meetings of the State Central Committees of both Democratic and Republican parties respectively: "Joseph Dixon, can he be trusted?"\textsuperscript{16} The editorial described

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., September 7, 1920, p. 6.
Dixon's dumping of the GOP in 1912, accusing him of double crossing party members. The Tribune continued its elaboration of Dixon by saying that Senator J.E. Edwards and Harry Wilson were opposed to him. On the other hand, the Tribune added, B.K. Wheeler was nominated by 50 per cent extremists and radicals, not by farmers, supported by William F. Dunne and associates, not by regular Democrats. The Tribune's position was clouded further by the conclusion of that editorial:

This newspaper will not join with any candidate to drive the Anaconda Company, or any other industrial enterprise or commercial business out of Montana. Decidedly not.

On September 10 the Missoulian reprinted a Tribune editorial which emphasized the general mood of both Republican and Democratic editors, stating that no editor could support either Wheeler or Dixon because they both double crossed their parties. The claims had some justification.

Reflecting the Company's curious dilemma, the Missoulian pointed out that it had little use for either man but had no alternatives than to choose the lesser of two evils. That newspaper wrote:

17 Ibid. There are no proofs that the Tribune was "paid off."
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
Joe Dixon or B.K. Wheeler--yes, we are between the devil and the deep, deep blue sea--and we do not know which is which.\(^{20}\)

What the Company did realize, however, was that neither candidate was on its side.

Campaign activity stirred in Great Falls as Gardner Cox, Democratic candidate for the presidency, arrived in Montana on September 9 to address Montanans on national issues. Governor Stewart introduced Cox in Great Falls as "our next President"\(^{21}\) but did not mention Wheeler or the state Democratic race. Wheeler drove to Great Falls by automobile to meet Cox and accompanied him to Helena where Cox was scheduled to address the State Central Committee. No record of their conversation was mentioned by the press or otherwise.

By the time the Central Committee's meeting in Helena began, the state Democratic Party was faced with an uncomfortable situation--it was a party without money, weakened by the Non-Partisan League victory and deserted by many of its old reliable. The press throughout the state reported the Democratic Convention of both days, September 9 and 10, in front-page, major news items accounts as the committee met to adopt platforms and plan campaign strategy. The

\(^{20}\)Daily Missoulian, September 10, 1920, p. 4.

\(^{21}\)Great Falls Tribune, September 9, 1920, p. 1.
old-guard Democrats, led by C.B. Nolan, met in closed door sessions to discuss the real issue: what should the Democratic Party do with Wheeler? After a reputedly stormy session, the Democratic State Central Committee, led by Judge J.P. Jones of Rosebud, swallowed their pride and endorsed the entire slate of Non-Partisan primary victors, placing the party squarely behind national and state tickets. It adopted the San Francisco platform of the national convention and endorsed the Wilson administration.

Cox responded to the Central Committee's action in Helena on the day following the convention. Meeting with Democratic leaders, Cox said: "You Montana Democrats have in this young man Wheeler a splendid and courageous man." The Democrats did not acknowledge Cox's statement.

Press reaction to the convention was mixed. The majority of Democratic newspapers blatantly objected to the

22Ibid., September 10, 1920, p. 1; Billings Gazette, September 11, 1920, p. 1. The ubiquitous J. Bruce Kremer, still angered over the Wheeler nomination, was reported to have been black as a thunder cloud and wholly and thoroughly dissatisfied but his friends kept him quiet. A.E. Spriggs to Walsh, September 11, 1920, Walsh Papers, as quoted in Bates, p. 166.

convention endorsement. Some Democratic papers printed the endorsement but did not comment editorially on the Committee's action--this was important publicity for Wheeler, nevertheless. Republican newspapers were quick to jump at the occasion to levy fresh charges that the Democratic Central Committee was not acting in harmony with its previous political activity. The Record-Herald led the offensive against the Democrats:

Can it be possible, that while Senator Walsh, Spriggs, Ed Norris, Colonel Nolan, Sam Stewart, and the rest of the Bourbon "old guard" were taking B.K. Wheeler back into the machine they overlooked that sterling Democrat, William F. Dunne of Butte?...Bill Dunne used to be a son-of-a-gun. B.K. Wheeler was a nomination stealer. But, now, "now," we are all good "Democrats?"

The convention clearly marked a significant event in the campaign and signaled the intensification of Wheeler criticism. Moreover, Cox's glowing endorsement of Wheeler marked the first attention given Wheeler by a major national figure. Walsh's support had not been quite so explicit.

The Record-Herald, the Tribune, the Helena Independent


25 Red Lodge Picket-Journal, September 15, 1920, p. 8; Livingston Enterprise, September 11, 1920, p. 1; Billings Gazette, September 10, 1920, p. 4. The Butte newspapers were strangely quiet except for the Bulletin naturally.

Record, the Butte Bulletin, and the New Northwest printed detailed accounts of the convention, carrying Wheeler's acceptance speech which represented another important political victory—and indeed a press triumph—for Wheeler.27 The Tribune's and the Independent's coverage were particularly significant since Wheeler had never received thorough press publicity in eastern Montana nor in Helena. Moreover, both the Record-Herald and the Tribune were known for their journalistic integrity.

Wheeler's acceptance speech was an important political fete for him and he used the event with urgency. His speech theme was the same as his primary campaign one, spoken with persistence: "If elected governor, I will be governor,"28 and he pledged to drive the Company out of politics. He added that he was a Jeffersonian Democrat, born under the shadow of Bunker Hill, and pledged himself unequivocably to Cox and Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was then Cox's running mate. Wheeler said then that he had always been a Democrat and that he expected to stay one.29 Quick to attempt to soften the hard-line Democrats Wheeler appealed to humanity


28 Great Falls Tribune, op. cit., p. 8.

29 Ibid., Wheeler, p. 178.
above materialism:

Gentlemen, we stand only to place humanity above the dollar. I challenge anyone to point out one act of mine that does not square with Jeffersonian principles. 30

In addition, Wheeler pointed out that he did not solicit the endorsement of the Non-Partisan League but received it and asked his audience if the convention would support a candidate who solicited the endorsement of the League but failed to get it. 31 Wheeler continued that the Montana Development Association was the "profiteers' league" 32 and he hit hard on the Company domination of Montana politics theme. In conclusion Wheeler said the following:

I'm going to be elected, gentlemen, without the assistance of the big interests or the profiteers league. 33

For the Democrats who were convinced that Wheeler had committed an odious thing by taking a Non-Partisan label, his speech must have been encouraging. Support for the Democratic maverick increased some with Nolan, Tom Stout, Harry B. Mitchell, Democratic State Central Committeemen,

30 Helena Record-Herald, September 12, 1920, p. 16.

31 Ibid. Wheeler referred to Dixon and Ford's soliciting of the NPL and their failure to receive the bid. Wheeler would show affidavits which pointed to Dixon's overture to the NPL.


33 Ibid.
endorsing him. Joseph Kirschwing led the committee's endorsement.

Old-guard Democrats, however, were uncompromising. Former Senator William A. Clark wrote to Walsh that "he had no sympathy for the candidate as Walsh could readily understand and would not contribute as much as usual to the campaign."\(^{34}\)

The Tribune, following the convention, came out with the strongest opposition to Wheeler used thus far in the campaign, calling him the Dunne-Townley candidate for governor and said it would not support him.\(^{35}\) The Tribune, consequently, turned its attention to national issues, devoting its front pages and editorials almost wholly to the Cox-Harding national contest until Election Day.

Meanwhile, the Montana Republicans met on the 11th of September, unanimously endorsed Dixon, and declared war on the League,\(^{36}\) calling for the Democrats of the state to help in the fight. Dixon's endorsement acceptance speech also marked an important point in the campaign for it was here that he first charged the Non-Partisan League with

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\(^{34}\)A.E. Spriggs to Walsh, Walsh Papers, September 28, 1920, as quoted in Bates, p. 166.

\(^{35}\)Great Falls Tribune, loc. cit.

\(^{36}\)Helena Record-Herald, September 12, 1920, p. 1; Great Falls Tribune, September 12, 1920, pp. 1, 7.
Sovietism. The following excerpt from his speech reflects the harsh language he now aimed toward the League:

Gentlemen, call it what you will, temporize with it as you may, this is the beginning of revolutionary government in America. It is only the kindergarten course in the full program that Lenin and Trotsky have put into full force and effect in Russia.

The Record-Herald carried the Dixon speech and printed the following quotation from it on its masthead from then until the election:

"Government in a republic must not be dictated by plutocracy, nor must it be ruled by the mob."
--Joseph M. Dixon

The Democratic weeklies hailed the conventions as their signal to repudiate the Nonpartisans and Wheeler and wholeheartedly threw their support to Dixon except for the pro-Wheeler hard core: the Miles City American, Producers' News, Hamilton Western News, and the Kalispell Bee, (a weekly with a small circulation) which had been previously hesitant to support Wheeler. The Libby Western News led the Democratic opposition forces, which would grow more vociferous as the campaign progressed.


38 Ibid.

In his acceptance speech Dixon pledged to promote allegiance to the "fundamental spirit of Americanism." Moreover, he appealed to the conscientious, hard-working citizen who doubted the virtues of state socialism and feared the implications of a Nonpartisan victory in November. Dixon accused the League of misrepresenting the tax rates issue, stating that tax assessments in North Dakota had tripled while inflation was crippling the general economy there. Dixon attributed the strong Non-Partisan League vote in the Democratic primary to a protest against the invisible government which had controlled Montana in the past, calling upon the mining companies to divorce themselves from their attempt at political control of the state and to stop resisting equitable taxation. In short, Dixon's appeal was sane, rational, and without political rhetoric and it penetrated to the heart of the real ills of Montana society.

Fred Sanden, head of the Montana Retail Merchants Association and a director of the MDA backed Dixon, which provoked the Bulletin to charge that Dixon was "bought and

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40 Billings Gazette, September 10, 1920, p. 4; Helena Independent Record, September 12, 1920, pp. 1, 3, 4.

41 DeForth, p. 39.

42 Butte Bulletin, September 13, 1920, p. 2.
paid for by the Anaconda Company and the MDA, "a charge which lacked substantial proof. At the same time pro-Wheeler newspapers used the Republican convention reporting as a sounding board for their grievances against Dixon, chiefly to accuse the GOP candidate of having sought Nonpartisan support earlier in the year. 

Craighead also resumed his personal attack of Dixon, stating that Dixon had made overtures to Mr. Alfred Budden, manager of the Non-Partisan League in Montana, in hopes for the League's support. These accusations would grow in proportion as the campaign advanced.

Elsewhere in the state, editors were busy refueling for the gubernatorial campaign battles. The Billings Gazette condemned Walsh for supporting Wheeler, and lashed out at Wheeler with charges that he was a usurper of the Democratic Party." Meanwhile, aware of the threat of a Nonpartisan victory, the Company without viable alternatives reluctantly and half-heartedly supported Dixon. The Company press, reflecting the dilemma of the "Interests," was vehement in its anti-League crusade than it was enthu-

43 Ibid.
44 Miles City American, September 16, 1920, p. 1.
46 Billings Gazette, loc. cit., 1920, p. 4.
siastic in its support for the GOP standard bearer. However, by mid-September the tone of the campaign was set; the Non-Partisan League must be defeated. Moreover, effective election tactics had to be employed at whatever cost to do so by anti-League forces. The history of the contest between Wheeler and Dixon, consequently, became a story of the urgent drive to stamp out the Nonpartisans and radicals in Montana rather than a campaign to seat the man best qualified to fill the executive chair of the state, who would make the best necessary changes to correct the economic and political and social ills which had eaten away at the soul of the state for so long.

An important national event, then, timely and sensational, gave the anti-League forces the impetus and scare tactic posture they had been unable to create from local happenings to stir Montanans emotionally—that was the bombing of the Morgan Guaranty and Trust Company building on Wall Street on September 13. For a week the headlines of the major daily newspapers throughout the state blazed with spectacular accounts with bold, thick headlines of the dramatic incident where 31 persons were reported to have been killed and 200 were said to have been wounded.47

47Anaconda Standard, September 14, 1920, p. 1; Billings Gazette, September 15, 1920, p. 1; Bozeman Chronicle, September 17, 1920, p. 1; Butte Miner, September 14, 1920, p. 1; Daily Inter-Lake, September 17, 1920, p. 1;
The state and the nation seemed paralyzed by the bizarre event. Typical front-page headlines were the following:

"HANDS OF REDS IN N.Y. BOMB OUTRAGE."48
"CENTER OF U. S. FINANCIAL DISTRICT IS MADE TARGET FOR INFERNAL MACHINE"49

The Great Falls Tribune called the action a "Radical Plot Destruction."50 News stories continued throughout the following week after the incident containing innuendoes which recalled the bomb plots of the previous year. The Tribune pointed out ominously that organized labor favored the expulsion of radicals. Rumors were circulated that a Russian newspaper editor in the Wall Street vicinity was arrested after the bombing and hints of a Soviet conspiracy were woven into the drama.

While the front pages burned with the bombing stories, newspaper editorials became more violent. A new bomb plot series was predicted and attributed to the work of the Reds.

The Billings Gazette, reflecting the omnipresent Company

48 Livingston Enterprise, loc. cit.
49 Ibid.
50 Great Falls Tribune, September 17, 1920, p. 1.
attitude, said that the bombing was an IWW plot and that another plot to dynamite banks throughout the nation was reported in Seattle. The Independent Record echoed the same sentiments.51

Senator Henry L. Myers' timely return from Europe on September 21 coincided with the excited reactions to the bombings in New York, giving frustrated old-guard Democrats and lukewarm Republican supporters of Dixon the jolt they needed to support the GOP candidate. Myers first reported from Washington before he came to Montana that the Bolshevik menace threatened all of Europe.52 Montana newspapers, both Company and non-Company publications, carried the accounts of Myers' reports.53 Accompanying Myers' return from Europe were news stories in the Montana press that the Bolsheviks were planning a worldwide campaign to push the Third International outside the territories of Europe and into the United States.54 Other stories linked the

53 Ibid., Dillon Examiner, September 27, 1920, p. 1.
Wall Street bombing and the steel strikes from the previous year with the activity of the Third International. The implications of such movements were clearly etched in the minds of the readers of these accounts as Myers warned Montanans that Bolshevism would spread to Montana and destroy the state.

Adding to the drama of the alleged Bolshevik conspiracy in Montana was Myers' bolting of the Democratic Party because he felt that the Nonpartisans and the Bolsheviks were related. He urged Democrats to vote Republican, telling Montana Democrats that they would doom the state should they vote for Wheeler. The Montana press reported Myers' action with noticeable enthusiasm—front-page headlines were carried in every major Montana daily newspaper except the Butte Bulletin berating the Bolsheviks with attempts to Sovietize Montana government.

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55 Dillon Examiner, September 29, 1920, p. 4; Great Falls Tribune, loc. cit.; Bozeman Chronicle, loc. cit.

56 Helena Independent Record, September 27, 1920, p. 1.

57 Great Falls Tribune, loc. cit.; Helena Independent Record, September 27, 1920, p. 6.

58 Dillon Examiner, loc. cit. It is interesting to note that Company newspapers and "friends" of the Company such as the Dillon Examiner emphasize the Myers' position on the Bolshevik "menace."
Moreover, Myers blamed the state primary system for the predicament facing the Democratic Party and told Montanans in no uncertain terms how he felt on the issue:

This is the result of the rotten primary law in Montana which permits people who are not democrats to vote in a democratic primary...it permits political pirates to capture a party and control its selections...the law is worse than a farce and should be repealed. All republicans who believe in good government should vote for Senator Dixon, whether they like him or not. 59

Montana Democrats responded to Myers' political action and justified their own reluctance to accept the Nonpartisan candidates as a true Democrat and repeated their charge that Wheeler was not a true Democrat.

Myers, however, did not go so far to malign Wheeler, perhaps cautious to protect his own image which in the state had some dark history--it was suggested that the state legislature censure him in 1917. Myers stated that "he had no personal grudge against Wheeler,"60 who he felt was a "pleasant gentleman,"61 but it was Wheeler's backers that he could not accept.62

Wheeler, on the other hand, condemned Myers' rejection of the Democratic Party and accused him of "corporate

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
servility." Walsh, at the same time, fearing that Myers' conduct might lose the state for Cox, wired Senator Pat Harrison of New York to keep Myers in the east. Walsh wrote: "Please...send him to Missouri where he was reared, or elsewhere, but keep him out of Montana." Democratic Chairman in Montana, George White, was also requested to restrain Myers but nothing could keep the senator from making a triumphant return to Montana. Riding on the crest of sensational news accounts of his reports of the European situation and Bolshevist scare there, Myers made a spectacular return to Montana, denouncing the Non-Partisan League, Dunne, and Townley with fury. His assault became stronger as he went from town to town in southern Montana relating his views of the Wheeler backers. In the following report Myers described the Nonpartisans:

...many of them represent the very worst elements of society and are bent on ruination, class warfare, destruction of American principles, assault on vested rights, confiscation of property, and some of them even on bolshevism, with its terrors. The time has come when all good people in Montana should get together and vote together for the welfare of their state.

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63 Helena Record-Herald, September 23, 1920, p. 4.
64 Walsh to Pat Harrison, Walsh Papers, September 29, 1920, as quoted in Bates, p. 184.
Myers added cautiously that he was doing this campaigning on his own volition without consultation with anyone.\textsuperscript{66}

At the same time, Wheeler, refusing to be intimidated by Myers' position nor by a reasonably hostile press, planned his campaign strategy carefully. Realizing the potential power of official press silence, he hammered on the theme of driving the ACM out of politics hopefully attracting Montana editors with the drama of this appeal. The Democratic candidate started his campaign with what he called a "slam-bang"\textsuperscript{67} campaign, speaking three or four times a day in towns across Montana, insisting that the real issue of the campaign was whether the farmers and laborers were going to get a square deal [a phrase carrying conspicuous Square Deal jargon in hopes of attracting the Theodore Roosevelt Progressives in the state] against the profiteers.\textsuperscript{68} He called for the public ownership of grain elevators and flour mills, which he said later was no more socialistic than public ownership of schools.\textsuperscript{69}

The effect of Wheeler's speeches and even his campaign trail were practically invisible since local newspapers

\textsuperscript{66}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67}Wheeler, p. 179.
\textsuperscript{68}Ibid., Great Falls Tribune, October 12, 1920, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{69}Wheeler, loc. cit.
most often did not print announcements of Wheeler's campaign schedule nor did they report of his speeches. The New Northwest did not print news stories of Wheeler's speeches, in general, nor did the Butte Bulletin, thus, Wheeler's tour publicity amounted to little more than the occasional advertisement which announced his speeches in various cities and towns. Wheeler's campaign activity in Butte, Missoula, Helena, and in the Bitterroot Valley did receive attention, on the other hand, since Wheeler had sympathetic presses in those areas. The Billings Gazette mentioned in a brief news article, one-column by three inches, that Wheeler had said that the courts of Montana were no longer grounds for justice and that the state constitution was rotten. The article did not elaborate on the content of the speech in which the remarks were contained. The Gazette did not mention Wheeler again until the week before the election.

While Myers was denouncing the League as a crowd of Bolshevists, Wheeler began charges that Dixon had flirted with the Non-Partisan League—
a charge which might attract the vote of old-guard Democrats and anti-League Dixon supporters since Wheeler was careful to point out that he had not solicited their support but had received it. The Bulletin applauded Wheeler's attacks, printing entire pages

70Billings Gazette, October 1, 1920, p. 1.
of the alleged affidavits which told of Dixon's seeking Nonpartisan backing. The New Northwest, Miles City American, and the Scobey Sentinel printed these charges also. Finally, the accusations attracted the attention of the Helena Independent and the Butte Miner, whose support of Dixon had been anything but enthusiastic.

At first the Independent, which had readily adopted the Non-Partisan League charges against Dixon during the primary, was reluctant to accept this information now and said that it would not believe that "Joseph M. Dixon, with his wide experience in politics, would go about seeking the endorsement of the Non-Partisan League by writing letters to Mr. Townley." Campbell, of the Independent, continued that the New Northwest was accusing Dixon of seeking the endorsement of the Non-Partisan League because Craighead wanted the chancellorship of the university again and that if Dixon were elected, he would not offer it to him. The Independent later carried Dixon's

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72 New Northwest, September 29, 1920, p. 1; October 2, 1920, p. 1; Miles City American, September 23, 1920, p. 1; Scobey Sentinel, October 20, 1920, p. 1.

73 Helena Independent Record, September 17, 1920, p. 4.

74 New Northwest, September 17, 1920, p. 2; Helena Independent Record, loc. cit.
refutation of the charges in a letter that Dixon wrote to the Harlowton Press which denied Dixon's associations with the League's leaders before the primary.75

The Butte Miner joined the forces which were trying to expose Dixon's alleged overtures to the Non-Partisan League by printing the affidavits and the stories dealing with them although the Miner stated that it needed more information before it would accuse Dixon outrightly.76

Dixon's loyal supporter, the Record-Herald, concerned about the publicity given the affidavits, published Dixon's denial of having sought Non-Partisan League support in a series of front-page editorials and stories during September. Finally, the Record-Herald secured a statement allegedly from Alfred Budden, state manager for the Non-Partisan League, saying that Dixon had never had anything to do with the League and had not sought membership in it nor had he sought its endorsement.77 At the same time the Record-Herald refuted the charges made on Dixon by the Women's Christian Temperance Union which had asserted that Dixon owned a Missoula saloon.

75Ibid.
76Butte Miner, September 19, 1920, p. 4.
77Helena Record-Herald, September 15 to September 22, 1920, p. 1.
Meanwhile, there were stories in the Montana press stating that Non-Partisan League school teachers would be teaching Montanans' children the doctrines of socialism if Wheeler were elected and that a democratic vote meant a vote for the socialist-soviet government "which is anxious to overthrow Montana democracy." Furthermore, Butte women organized themselves into what Wheeler termed the "Home Guards" to defend their homes and their churches from the sinister influence of the NPL-Democratic leader. Stories were also circulated which stated that if Wheeler were elected Montanans' children would be taken away from them and raised in institutions in Russia. Combined with these rumors was Wheeler's statement: "If I am elected governor, I will put the Nonpartisan program into effect from top to bottom, and that goes." Pro-Wheeler newspapers did not print that statement and Wheeler later issued the following statement, which clarified the rumors and told anxious Montanans that he would not let anyone else hold the reins of government in Montana if he were elected:

79 Helena Record-Herald, loc. cit.  
80 Wheeler, loc. cit.  
81 Ibid.  
82 Helena Record-Herald, loc. cit.
The big interests of Butte are not going to run Montana; Townley is not going to run Montana; Dunne is not going to run Montana; The Profitable's League is not going to run Montana; Because if I am elected, I am going to run the state of Montana and be Governor.83

Careful not to alienate the farmer-labor interests nor to leave implications of ambiguities in his statement that he would run the state and Dunne and Townley would not, Wheeler pledged his support to aid the agrarian, mining, and lumber interests by seeking irrigation laws, workingman's compensation laws, and a more equitable system of taxation of the mines.84

During the last week of September die-hard Democrats succumbed to the Myers movement and turned their support to Dixon. Wheeler said later that the charges that Dunne and Townley would run the state provided the last signals to the Democrats who were reluctant to dump him and accept Dixon. Thereafter, Wheeler said, there was no more hesitation by the Democratic press to pursue him.85 All but two Democratic newspapers, according to Wheeler, took up the cry against him, calling him a "red socialist" and tried to associate him with the radicalism connected to the

83Miles City American, September 27, 1920, p. 4.
84Ibid.
1919 bomb plots. Furthermore, the opposition tried to inject into his campaign stories of Russian labor camps, nationalization of American children, calling this the aftermath of the Communist Revolution. Posters were splashed across highway billboards in southern Montana showing a huge red hand dripping blood.

Craighead's call for Democrats to maintain party loyalty and support Wheeler's campaign financially went unheard. Wheeler received little, if any, financial aid from the State Central Committee for paid-political advertising.

As the political storm broke in October, the campaign took on frenzied proportions. Walsh's late endorsement of Wheeler was scorned by the regulars who pointed out sardonically that Walsh had dumped Wheeler in 1918 and had sought Company support in his bid to return to the Senate.

Meanwhile, Wheeler was denying charges that he would popularize free love in Montana and that he would not prosecute Catholics. Wheeler commented in his autobiography that the campaign became so nasty that even the

86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
89 Wheeler, p. 181.
religious issue was raised against him—from both ends.  

A story was circulated among Lutherans that he was a Catholic, and another rumor was planted among the Catholics that he was a member of the violently anti-Catholic American Protective Association.

On October 6 the old-guard Democrats, refusing to accept Wheeler even at Walsh's urging, formed a group called the Independent Democratic Club in Helena, headed by Senator Myers to undermine Wheeler more effectively. It unified all dissatisfied Democrats from the state who were united in their hatred for the Non-Partisan League. Governor Stewart joined the group.

Two weeks before the election Myers and two associates began a speaking tour of the state. While Myers covered the southern and western parts of Montana, which included Harlowton, Lewistown, Miles City, Billings, Big Timber, Bozeman, Dillon, Missoula, Polson, Hamilton, and the northwestern city of Kalispell, Judge Arthur Jones took the stump in eastern Montana, speaking at Great Falls, Judith Gap, Ingomar, Ekalaka, Terry, and Forsyth, finishing the day before the election. A.C. McConnell, secretary of the Montana Independent Democratic Club, spoke in the

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90 Ibid.  
91 Ibid.
northern and northwestern sections of Montana on Dixon's behalf in Plentywood, Scobey, Glasgow, Havre, Shelby, and Cut Bank. Myers, Jones, and McConnell repeated the same anti-Wheeler, and anti-Non-Partisan League themes.

Throughout the state Myers denounced the Nonpartisans, hybrids of the Democratic Party, who were trying to sovietize the Montana government. The Great Falls Tribune, taking the most partisan stand hitherto in the campaign, called Myers "Montana's foremost statesman." His speeches were reported by the daily newspapers with front-page coverage. Accounts said that crowds were so large at Myers' speeches that many persons had to be turned away. The Livingston Enterprise reported the tour with important headlines: "Montana Must Be Saved." In Kalispell he was reported to have captured the audience with the statement, "I love, honor, and respect the people of my state." The Gazette followed the entire Myers tour systematically reporting his schedule, reporting on the size of the crowds, and including one important phrase from his speech, usually the "save

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92Great Falls Tribune, October 27, 1920, p. 6.
95Daily Inter-Lake, October 20, 1920, p. 4.
Montana by voting for Dixon' theme. The Great Falls Tribune, in an unprecedented move, summarized the Myers speaking tour in the following way, stating that Myers

in a fearless and convincing appeal, is giving honest, loyal, American reasons for his refusal to support a set of hybrid politicians who have stolen the name of Democracy in Montana.

Myers' action provided indirect but certainly effective campaign support for Dixon. His action was given more press publicity than any other person or candidate in the entire campaign. The fact that Myers felt it necessary to visit each city and town, virtually combing the state with his colleagues, illustrated Wheeler's potential political thrust. That Wheeler and the Nonpartisans were considered a major political force in Montana was indicated by the way in which the opposition moved and maneuvered to defeat them.

At the same time Myers was traveling in Montana, Dixon and Nelson Story, Jr., the Republican candidate for lieutenant governor, combed Montana thoroughly, speaking two or three times a day in a month-long campaign. Well-organized and orderly, the speeches followed a set pattern throughout the tour and newspaper stories were similar. According to newspaper accounts, Dixon discussed the issues in a

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96 Billings Gazette, October 30, 1920, p. 4.
97 Great Falls Tribune, loc. cit.
98 DeForth, p. 42.
direct, open way, describing the history of the development of socialism, its European beginnings and its growth in Montana. He then discussed the Non-Partisan League, showing its relationship to Marxism, its ill-fated socialist program in North Dakota, emphasizing the superficiality of the tax cuts there by showing tax receipts from disgruntled persons from North Dakota who testified that they were paying more taxes than they had in previous years. Dixon consistently called the League program the first step in the dissolution of the American ideals of government.

Appearing in the weekly press and covering the state in a carefully planned geographic distribution were impressive advertisements paid for by the Dixon-for-Governor Club. Beginning in mid-October and running until the election, these advertisements, introduced with bold, thick letters: "FARMERS! WORKERS! READ THE RECORD!", were directed to the dissident farmer and worker blocs with intent to offset

99 Helena Record-Herald, October 23, 1920, p. 1; Miles City Star, October 7, 1920, p. 1; October 8, 1920, p. 2.
100 Ibid.
Wheeler's popularity with them. The advertisements were two-column by sixteen inches, containing Dixon's photograph and his political history, followed by a serious discussion of his national record. Several weekly newspapers printed the GOP candidate's family photograph on society news pages.

To the farmers Dixon spoke on the issues which would relate to them—he spoke against Argentine beef and corn imports, which would seem particularly pertinent to the economically depressed cattlemen who had been experiencing difficulties in getting their produce to markets. Moreover, the grain farmer and the cattlemen had been receiving poor prices for their produce. Wheeler did not speak specifically of protective tariffs.

During the last two weeks of the campaign Dixon advertisements were printed in the Hamilton Western News, and in the New Northwest. On October 14 the Western News, who had called Dixon a "bolshevist" in the preceding edition\textsuperscript{102} published a Dixon "FARMERS! WORKERS! READ THE RECORD!" paid-political advertisement.\textsuperscript{103} Wheeler's photograph, two-column by twelve-inches, appeared on the front page of the same newspaper accompanied by a brief history of him.\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{102}\textit{Hamilton Western News, October 7, 1920, p. 4.}
\textsuperscript{103}\textit{Ibid.}, October 14, 1920, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{104}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1.
days before the campaign ended the same advertisement appeared in the *New Northwest* yet occupying three-fourths of the page since more endorsement statements were added to the text. This advertisement contained, in addition, former President Theodore Roosevelt's endorsement of Dixon:

> He is one of the best men with whom I ever was brought into contact. He is as straight and game and clean as any public servant we have had.\(^{105}\)

E.B. Craighead's sudden death on October 16 offers an explanation for the *New Northwest*'s acceptance of the Dixon advertisement. Craighead had worked strenuously against Dixon since that candidate had announced his political intentions in March and Craighead's personal hatred for Dixon would not allow him to give the GOP candidate the kind of attention that might suggest the softening of his position since paid-political advertisements implied to some a kind of editorial recognition of the candidate. In the probable confusion and bewilderment in the newspaper's office following the editor's death, the advertisement could have been placed unobtrusively by Dixon forces who could have capitalized on the fact that the newspaper leadership might not be firmly established yet. Whatever the real explanation, the fact remained that a Dixon adver-

tisement in a Craighead newspaper seemed doubly ironical. [It was not uncommon for newspapers then--nor today--to accept advertisements from all political candidates.]

The appearance of the Dixon advertisement in the New Northwest and in the Western News, while it did not render the anti-Dixon publicity immune, must have had some influence on the voters in those regions.

During the last week of the campaign came two significant series of political advertisements in weekly newspapers. The first were half-page, and in some cases quarter-page, advertisements paid for by the Montana Independent Democratic Club which accused Wheeler of repudiating the Democratic Party. Each ad, titled "Can the Leopard Change His Spots," was followed by a discussion of Wheeler's alleged repudiation of the Democratic Party.106 Appealing to the Democrats, who might be reluctant to cross traditional party lines and vote a split ticket, the ads said that Wheeler's position was untrustworthy and the following statement, allegedly spoken by Wheeler, possibly when he was nominated by the Nonpartisans and was asked which party he would run on, accompanied the narrative of the ad:

If you ask me to run on the Democratic ticket,
I will run on the Democratic ticket; if you desire that I should run on the Republican

ticket, I will run on the Republican ticket; and if you decide in favor of a third ticket, I will run on that third ticket, whatever it may be.  

While the Western News in Hamilton was telling its readers (the only paper to do so) that "church people defend Wheeler," and that the Trinity Methodist Church and Episcopal Church publicly supported Wheeler, defending the candidate against what they called "detrimental attacks on his character." the Republican Central Committee launched a spectacular series of full-page denunciations of Wheeler and his radical associates in major daily newspapers. Sensationally presented and carefully worded, they gave the appearance of major news story items rather than an advertisement. Centered on the top of the page with thick, black two-inch letters, the advertisement began:

CLERGYMEN DENOUNCE RED MOVEMENT

The Church Fight

State Sovietism---

A RIGHTEOUS BATTLE THAT MUST BE WON!  

107Ibid.

108Hamilton Western News, October 28, 1920, p. 3.

109Ibid.

110Anaconda Standard, October 31, 1920, p. 6; Billings Gazette, October 31, 1920, p. 9; Butte Miner, October 31, 1920, p. 8; Daily Inter-Lake, Helena Independent Record, October 31, 1920, p. 5; Livingston Enterprise, October 31, 1920, p. 5; Miles City Star, October 31, 1920, p. 8.
Below the headlines read: "Sacred Institutions of Nation are in Peril; AMERICANS VS. RED SOCIALISM--There the Battle Lies." The advertisement continued that "LEAGUE LEADERS BRAG OF ATHEISM," and went on to say that "Everywhere the red tide is rising, The fight, men, is between Jesus Christ and Karl Marx!" Throughout the page every superlative with the connotation of evil was employed to debase the Nonpartisans, the IWW, the Bolsheviks, and Socialists. Testimonials from church leaders in Bismarck, North Dakota, Minneapolis, Spokane, and from one New England, North Dakota, told of the dangers the Nonpartisans presented to religion in America and in Montana. It is interesting to point out that in the ad was the addition of New England, "N.D." as a place from which emanated repudiation of the Nonpartisans. North Dakota was abbreviated "N.D." here—only once on the page with over twenty-five references to that state. The readers' chance of not reading the N.D.—clearly the style change was a deliberate intention to thwart any political strength Wheeler's New England ancestry might bring him.

Throughout October Dixon read from the editorials of

111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
the Butte Bulletin pointing out the "ugly lengths" which that newspaper went in attempting to win the election.\textsuperscript{114} The press gave Dixon enthusiastic coverage wherever he went and recorded enthusiastic receptions to his speeches. Each region reported particular interest group appeals by the candidate, how he had helped the Indian in Montana, how he would bring irrigation to the drought-ridden areas, etc. Wilson joined the Dixon campaign forces and campaigned in the Flathead Valley for Dixon, urging voters to reject the Nonpartisans.\textsuperscript{115} Senator Hiram Johnson's endorsement for Dixon received wide publicity in the Company press.\textsuperscript{116}

During the week preceding the election, the campaign rhetoric and anti-radical abuses became even stronger. Wheeler was called "crooked, untrustworthy, and deceitful."\textsuperscript{117} The Daily Inter-Lake predicted that a vote for the NPL meant the Russianization of America and the Billings Gazette told its readers that a red flag would "fly above the stars and stripes if Wheeler is elected."\textsuperscript{118} At the

\textsuperscript{114}Miles City Star, October 8, 1920, p. 1.  
\textsuperscript{115}Helena Record-Herald, October 27, 1920, p. 1.  
\textsuperscript{116}Livingston Enterprise, October 27, 1920, p. 4.  
\textsuperscript{117}Helena Record-Herald, October 30, 1920, p. 4.  
\textsuperscript{118}Daily Inter-Lake, October 29, 1920, p. 4; Billings Gazette, October 30, 1920, p. 1.
same time every editorial of the Record-Herald from October first until the November election contained derisive accounts of the Wheeler-Townley-Dunne team [as the opposition termed the Wheeler forces.]

Too obvious to be accidental and too numerous to be ignored or considered unimportant in the campaign was a series of nine full-page Montana Power Company advertisements which appeared through Number Five between the last week of September and Election Day in all Montana newspapers except the Butte Bulletin.119 The advertisements began with a twist of irony: "More Light and Less Heat."120 They talked about the state's water power industry, lauding the power company's building of dams, plants, power lines, and their expenses in building them.121 Supposedly detached from the political campaign, the implications were blatantly clear: the corporations were resisting all accusations of state control, attempting to penetrate the grass roots of Montana in well-documented, scholarly, statistically supported explanations of their role in Montana. In short, the "Interests" were saying that they were essential to

119Helena Record-Herald, November 24, 1920, p. 5. The Montana Power Company stated that the series was appearing in 220 Montana publications.

120Billings Gazette, September 30, 1920, p. 8.

121Ibid.
Montana's development and well-being, being the state's largest taxpayer, source for power, heat and light, important to both business and private consumption. The ads emphasized the many services and opportunities for employment that the Montana Power Company provided in the state.122

The timing of the advertisements coincided with the Non-Partisan League's charges that the "Interests" did not pay their fair share of the taxes and certainly these advertisements refuted Wheeler's campaign theme that the "Interests" were strangling the wage earners, were not paying their fair share of the taxes, and that the utility company was a monopoly. Wheeler's own condemnation for what he called malignant corporate influence in the state judiciary and legislature had begun in earnest in 1918 when he was forced to resign as District Attorney. Consequently, the "Interests" were using the positive aspects of the Montana Power Company for self-vindication in a sophisticated, confident manner.123 Wheeler did not allude

122 Ibid.

123 For examples of each advertisement see the following: #2 "Is it a Monopoly?" Helena Independent Record, October 8, 1920, p. 8; #3 "The Big Customer," Great Falls Tribune, October 14, 1920, p. 9; #4 "Rates," Libby Western News, October 15, 1920, p. 3; #5 "Taxes," Great Falls Tribune, October 27, 1920, p. 9. This topic was particularly timed well since it discussed the laws, sixty-six in all, benefiting the farmer, stockgrower, and horticulturist, stated the advertisement.
to the advertisements nor did Dixon—in the campaign. Nor
did any editor. It can be assumed, however, that the
material was widely discussed privately since the appearance
of the ads was so widespread.

In mid-October an important price recession was noted
in Montana by the Great Falls Tribune. Prices for food,
cars, silks, and textiles, and other luxury items were
lowered, yet marked advances in railway prices were ob-
served.124 The Montana Development Association attributed
the recession to the Stewart administration.125 At the same
time the MDA emphasized its 4,000 member pledge to fight the
League.126

Predictions of the outcome of the gubernatorial cam-
paign were widely scattered. Wheeler supporters, namely
the Miles City American and the New Northwest said that
Wheeler would carry the Nonpartisan slate to victory.127
Craighead expressed similar optimism saying that Wheeler
would win easily. Moreover, the New Northwest appeared
on October 13 with pictures of Mrs. Wheeler and the five
Wheeler children at home titled "our next first lady."128

124Great Falls Tribune, October 10, 1920, p. 2.
125Red Lodge Picket-Journal, October 6, 1920, p. 1;
126Ibid.
127Miles City American, October 21, 1920, p. 1.
128New Northwest, October 13, 1920, p. 2.
Walsh privately shared the belief with John D. Tansil, secretary of the Democratic County Committee in Billings, that Wheeler's election as governor would give new birth to the Democratic Party by attracting young and enterprising men who recognized that grievances and abuses needed to be removed. He had stated earlier in the month, however, that the outlook for the party was not exactly rosy. A week before the election Walsh strongly defended Wheeler at a Helena Wheeler rally. He said to a reportedly enthusiastic audience of 3,000 persons:

I am not half-hearted in my support of Mr. Wheeler. He has been tried by fire. He risked his future, politically and professionally, rather than compromise with wrong and injustice when he was a member of the state legislature ten years ago, and has been hounded ever since with an impossible fury and rancor that knew no bounds.

The Helena Independent Record, in a surprising move, printed a full-page report of Walsh's support of Wheeler. The account told of Walsh's support of the Non-Partisan League, explaining the Senator's position. Walsh stated that there were two sides to the controversy—two accounts

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129 Walsh to John D. Tansil, Walsh Papers, October 29, 1920 as quoted in Bates, p. 186.

130 Ibid.

131 Helena Independent Record, November 2, 1920, pp. 1, 5.

132 Ibid.
to consider. He said that the ideas of a state-owned bank and the improvement of local elevators and facilities were sound.

Still, opposition to Wheeler continued. The Anaconda Standard called the Nonpartisans marauders who were waging a campaign of terrorism and destruction and that newspaper turned its front pages into political fighting, with derisory editorials condemning the Nonpartisans and Wheeler until Election Day. Frenzied in its assault on Wheeler the Standard told its readers that Wheeler and the Nonpartisans had called the laborers "culls" and asked with thick one-inch banner headlines, "Is Butte to Remain an American City?" On October 27 Richard Kilroy, editor of the Standard, accused the IWW for the strikes that year, for sowing the seeds of hatred, for destroying "the foundations of legitimate trade unionism" and that the IWW had caused the shutdown in 1917. Moreover, Kilroy implied that if Wheeler were elected, the violence would continue.

133 Ibid.
134 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
The Butte Miner added to the political war in Silver Bow County with an unsigned editorial "DON'T LET THE RED HAND STRANGLE BUTTE / VOTE THE REPUBLICAN TICKET"\textsuperscript{139} which ran until Election Day. As that day approached, the Butte Bulletin charged that the Anaconda Company had intimidated its employees to vote for the Republican candidate.\textsuperscript{140} On its front page on October 30 the Bulletin published a cartoon of a giant Anaconda snake coiled around the state map of Montana entitled "In the Coils of the Anaconda."\textsuperscript{141} William Dunne seemed to scream his campaign fury with predictions that miners would be "baptized with shrapnel, machine-gun bullets, and riot-gun slugs" if Wheeler was not elected.\textsuperscript{142}

It was apparent by the response in the daily press during the last days of the campaign that Wheeler's political activities could no longer be ignored without drawing attention from the public. The Helena Independent Record carried an advertisement for a Wheeler rally scheduled for October 25 and printed the American Federation of Labor's endorsement of Wheeler with the statement "He dared to

\textsuperscript{139} Butte Miner, October 2 to November 2, 1920, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{140} Butte Bulletin, October 30, 1920, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
fight for the people's rights."¹⁴³ In that newspaper were photographs of both Wheeler's and Dixon's families. After Wheeler's political rally in Helena, the Independent Record reported his speech with impressive boldness and alacrity: "WHEELER LASHES OUT AT BIG INTERESTS,"¹⁴⁴ was followed by excerpts of the candidate's speech which stated that Wheeler promised good prices and fight of the profiteers if elected.¹⁴⁵ In the same issue a Dixon advertisement and a discussion of that candidate's campaign activity appeared which gave the effect that the newspaper was expressing all sides and opinions without partisan bias.¹⁴⁶

As the Tribune pointed out the chief interest in the election was the political activity in Butte since the miners' vote was crucial to any candidate. That newspaper said that Mr. Wheeler's vote in that county would largely determine the result of the election.¹⁴⁷ A heavy turnout in voting was predicted by the Tribune since voter registration was listed at 261,258.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³Helena Independent Record, October 24, 1920, p. 4.
¹⁴⁴Ibid., October 26, 1920, p. 1.
¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 4.
¹⁴⁶Ibid.
¹⁴⁷Great Falls Tribune, October 30, 1920, p. 13.
¹⁴⁸Ibid.
Elsewhere voters were urged to vote to save Montana from total anarchy—to vote Republican. A good example of the pre-election anti-Wheeler propaganda Election Day, [a striking contrast to the mild charges against him early in the primary] was the following item from the Hill County

Democrat in Havre which obviously supported Dixon:

Vote to preserve the financial integrity of Montana.
Vote against Townleyism and save Montana.
Vote against state socialism, Bolshevism, anarchy.
Vote for the religion of your mother, vote for the purity in the home, the school, the state, the nation.
Vote against the confiscation of your property.
Vote in the interests of your home. Vote the republican and county ticket.¹⁴⁹

On November 1 the Bozeman Chronicle reported the Election Eve Wheeler rally in Butte, which illustrates the excitement generated by the campaign in the mining city:

Never in the history of Silver Bow County or Butte has there been so much interest in any election as that of tomorrow. Tonight at least twelve different parades are marching through the city streets. Those include a torchlight parade over fifteen blocks in length composed of high school and school of mines students who are marching on behalf of state education measures 18 and 19. B.K. Wheeler, democratic nominee for governor addressed an open air mass meeting which was attended by over 10,000. It was said to have been the largest political gathering in the history of that city. Indications point to an enormous ballot. All factions are predicting a sweeping victory.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Hill County Democrat, October 28, 1920, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ Bozeman Chronicle, November 1, 1920, p. 1. This account must have been an eye-witness account rushed back to Bozeman for the late evening edition of this newspaper.
"Vote tomorrow," the Standard urged on its front page on the day before the election, "but watch for the eleventh hour canard and lies of the Wobbly press." A half-page advertisement appeared in that newspaper on the same day saying that there was no Republican Wheeler-for-Governor Club.

Ironically, on Election Day the Standard carried the following story on its front page, which ominously predicted the results of the election:

The fight against the Wobblies in Butte is already won. If every voter who resents the selection of Butte by the reds for their headquarters will mark his ballot in protest against the enemies of the government, the reds will be snowed under so deep that Butte will be able to enter an era of prosperity....

Thus, the campaign ended in Butte where it had so clangorously began. On Election Eve Wheeler admitted stealing the Democratic Party but asserted [in Wheeler's

152 Ibid.
153 Ibid., p. 8.
words,] "I stole it from the Standard Oil Company and intend giving it back to the people." 155

155Wheeler, p. 182. The Standard Oil Company organized and controlled Amalgamated Copper Company which, in turn, controlled Anaconda for many years, according to Wheeler.
CHAPTER V

ELECTION RETURNS, "A CASE OF JITTERS"

Joseph M. Dixon was elected governor of Montana in 1920 in an unprecedented landslide. Receiving 111,113 votes, the largest vote ever gathered by a political candidate in the history of Montana, Dixon won over 60 per cent of the total vote compared to Burton K. Wheeler's 40 per cent of the total vote, or 74,875 votes.\(^1\) The Republican vote is even more striking when compared with the 1916 vote of the gubernatorial contest when Sam Stewart received 85,683 votes (53 per cent) compared to Frank J. Edwards who received 76,547 votes (47 per cent).\(^2\) On the national level Harding collected 109,430 Montana votes and Cox won 57,375, figures considerably lower than the state major candidates, particularly that of Cox compared to Wheeler. Women voted in the general election of 1920, not in the primary, which may account for the fact that roughly five per cent more persons voted in 1920 than in 1916 in the major elections.

The Montana press was jubilant with the election results.

\(^1\)Waldron, op. cit., p. 177.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 174.
"DIXON SWEEPS MONTANA IN G.O.P. SLIDE"\(^3\) headlined the Great Falls Tribune after the election counts seemed official in the capital. The Nonpartisans were engulfed by tidal waves,\(^4\) the Tribune reported. Similar sentiments were echoed throughout the Montana press as editors wrote the League's eulogy with elation.

The Anaconda Standard wrote that "BUTTE KICKS OUT THE REDS AND ELECTS AMERICANS TO OFFICE,"\(^5\) although Butte had overwhelmingly voted for Wheeler in the election. The Standard was not content to merely win the election but continued its harangue of Wheeler with an epitaph called the "Eclipse of Wheeler" typical of its abusive style of journalism:

A candidate cannot expect to climb into power by attacking one of its leading industries. Mr. Wheeler, an accident in politics, chewing the end of bitter reflection today, found this lesson an expensive one...Butte spat him out of her mouth with all the noisome crew of red [sic] and wobbled who followed him...no door-nail was ever more dead than Townleyism.\(^6\)

The state weeklies said little about the results of the election. The Judith Basin Farmer called the outcome

\(^3\)Great Falls Tribune, November 3, 1920, p. 1.
\(^4\)Ibid.
\(^5\)Ibid.
\(^6\)Ibid., November 4, 1920, p. 1.
"the defeat of radicalism". 7 Tom Stout of that newspaper wrote that the Non-Partisan League was dead and that the agrarian political movement contained too many radicals, which was the reason Wheeler was defeated in the election. 8 Stout felt that Wheeler was not an issue. On the other hand, the Miles City American commented on the campaign saying that "Outside of having a lot of bunk peddled to them about being good 'Americans,' the 'Democrats' who voted for the Republican reactionary ticket will get absolutely nothing for their treachery." 9

The Butte Bulletin was more venomous in its remarks about the election than any other pro-Wheeler newspaper. Its indictment of the Standard was particularly bitter. Dunne wrote about the Standard that:

much has been published by the editorial leper who manages the Anaconda Standard...he speaks of the "reds" or radicals...he congratulated the people of Montana on being saved from the "blight" which is on North Dakota...the editor of the Anaconda Standard is like any street-walker--yellow. 10

Dunne ended his contemptuous assessment of the Standard and of the Company influence with pledges to continue his

8 Ibid.
9 Miles City American, November 4, 1920, p. 4.
harassment of them in the most inflammatory remarks of the campaign:

The cuttle-fish of privilege has been spreading its dirty black ink upon the political seas. The Anaconda Standard with its prostitute editor has become utterly discredited. It lied when the truth would have served better. Like the skunk, the fumes of its stinking lies rise to high heaven...from now on, the Bulletin will renew its efforts to smoke out the skunks and badgers of the tin-horn type of politicians who have made Butte their breeding place.11

The Helena Record-Herald, expressing what a majority of Montanans had done silently with their vote, said that the Dixon victory was a "return to sanity,"12 hopeful for the "back to normalcy" reminiscent of Wilson's post-war desires. Other daily newspapers were unanimous in their beliefs that the farmer-labor party was dead and that Townley and Dunne would have no influence in the future.13 The Helena Independent praised the Loyalty League for its attempts to expose Dunne, Townley, and the Non-Partisan League for the past thirty months. Moreover, the Independent continued that the League deserved a vote of thanks from the people of Montana.14 The Independent indicated

11Ibid.
13Great Falls Tribune, November 6, 1920, p. 6; Butte Miner, November 4, 1920, p. 4.
14Helena Independent Record, November 4, 1920, p. 4.
that Dixon had received the woman vote.  

Campbell's summary of the election was, indeed, a paradox. For an editor who had literally tortured Wheeler for the preceding three years, it seemed peculiar that Campbell had not used these accusations during the campaign. Why should he bother to comment now?

His story is revealing:

Without reservation The Independent congratulates Senator Joseph M. Dixon on being the fortunate candidate selected by republicans and democrats alike, to defeat the most pernicious flock of political cuckoos ever infesting the state of Montana.

It congratulates Senator Henry L. Myers and those democrats who followed him on his victory over Senator T.J. Walsh, who sought to pay a political debt to B.K. Wheeler, and was willing to take chances of turning the state over to Townley, if he could...The Independent has fought Townley, Dunn [sic] and Wheeler for four years. It condemned them at a time when it was not so popular to fight a movement which was misbranded "a farmers' movement." It was not a personal matter between Wheeler and The Independent--it was because Wheeler sought bad company and apparently reveled in such associates as Dunn [sic] and his outfit.

Eight years ago B.K. Wheeler and his associates started out to control the democratic party in Montana. How much Senator Walsh had to do with his plan, the senator himself knows. The whole idea was to embarrass Governor Stewart, the newly elected executive, and make the democratic party a "Walsh-Wheeler" party under the guise of "driving the Anaconda Copper Company out of

\[15\] Ibid.
politics" or out of Montana....Not succeeding at once by fair means, B.K. Wheeler used his office as United States district attorney to further the political ends designed by his associates and himself. 16

Wheeler commented on his defeat saying that his vote made him the worst-defeated gubernatorial candidate in Montana history. 17 Wheeler said that he was convinced that he could have won if the labor vote had stayed with him strongly in Butte, Great Falls, and Helena. 18 Summarizing his loss, Wheeler said:

The fear campaign had its effect. Montana voters apparently were afraid my election would end the prosperity the state had been enjoying. 19 They were swept away by the same yearning for "normalcy" when they put Warren G. Harding in the White House by a landslide. Also, I believe the Democratic plea for participation in the League of Nations found little appeal in Montana...But of course I had no basic political machine to fall back on, and the labor vote was subject to the same influences as other elements. 20

Montana should have provided a favorable field for socialistic propaganda and party growth, 21 since the economic relations were typically capitalistic. Although

16 Ibid., p. 1.
17 Wheeler, op. cit., p. 183.
18 Ibid.
19 Statistics from the Department of Agriculture of Montana do not bear this out. The economic conditions were discussed in this paper and would not be called "prosperous."
20 Ibid.
21 Helen Fitzgerald Sanders, A History of Montana (New
the population of Butte was predominantly wage earning, "blue collar workers," the revolt against the Company was not in the Marxian tradition, and certainly not comparable with the proletarian upheaval in Russia. America had no traditional aristocracy, and although the economic oligarchy of the nation's business dominated society, the immigrants who made up a large share of the working classes in the United States and in Montana, enjoyed far greater freedoms and economic well-being than they did in the old world. The wage earners and laborers, farmer and rural worker, might be disenchanted but it must be pointed out that they were still patriotic Americans. Thus, Wobbly propaganda had little appeal for the majority of the working classes since the Western Federation of Miners had opened some avenues of dialogue between management and labor by 1920 [although the history of unionism in Montana could not be described as successful in its progress].

The consensus of journalistic opinion after the election was that Montanans rejected the radicals and Non-partisans and that Wheeler's loss was incidental. Dixon's win may be explained by his powerful conservative, reactionary support, by Wheeler's failure to carry all the radical vote against Dixon, whose platform, it must be remembered,

presented the stability and reform Montanans wanted. Wheeler on the other hand, although he earned the admiration of the public as a "man of the people," a reformer, was surrounded by too many radicals—and that frightened the electorate. In short, he was thought to be more "radical" than "reformer." The League's members were essentially conservative farmers who were disenchanted by drought conditions and declining prices in market prices for wheat and cattle, Montana's two important cash crops. The "radical" leadership of the League, i.e., Townley and Dunne, frightened them. What the voters chose was a man who represented reform and change within the democratic process as opposed to the threat that Wheeler represented violent and sudden change with force.

In the primary vote Montanans were willing to vote for the man—in the general election they voted against an issue—the Nonpartisans. In any case, the Non-Partisan League was finished in Montana and the spirit of reform died, also, with the exception of Dixon and his few supporters.

What was significant in the election returns was Wheeler's winning in Silver Bow and Missoula Counties, perhaps the two most important cities in the state then, and representative of the voting population—the mining and lumber camps, farm and cattlemen's vote to some degree,
and the academic community were represented. And, moreover, those regions had competitive newspapers which gave thorough press coverage of the candidates. Wheeler's vote in those two areas indicated that had he had a more favorable press throughout the state, the election results might have been different. The press had created the Bolshevist phantoms and paraded them throughout their columns with impunity and their effect on the Montana psychology was real. The voters saw in Dixon an answer to their problems, an ending to their fears of radicalism. To say, however, that the opposition press was solely responsible for Wheeler's loss would be over-generalizing a complicated situation which had roots in 1917, 1918, 1919, and before. It would describe the Montanan, furthermore, as a naive, easily influenced apathetic tool for clever propagandists and cunning newspaper editors and the Montana character defied that. The election returns indicated that the Montanan was not apathetic.

Wheeler carried seven counties, compared with Dixon's forty-six. Counties voting for Wheeler were: Sheridan, Daniels, Sanders, McConne, Mineral, Missoula, and Silver Bow. More significant in the voting pattern, however, was Wheeler's poor showing in the non-industrial communities, namely in Great Falls, Havre, Billings, Miles City,
Livingston, and Bozeman. The voting indicated that Dixon won even many of the Non-Partisan League districts and most of the eastern Montana vote. It seemed that the Montana psychology could not trust the democratic process with its checks and balances since it had no history to support that trust. The Montanan could not embrace "radicalism" despite the economic and political chaos the radicals sought to change, because of the "foreign influence" it carried suggested by the "soviet scare" campaign.

Why neither Wheeler nor Dixon alluded to the Levine affair is puzzling. This had attracted wide-spread public attention and Dixon published stories and editorials on Levine's behalf for several months. It presented an effective anti-Company issue and even recalling the issue could have given the public confidence that the Company could be challenged successfully. The issue had important political ramifications in the tax issue, also, and could have been helpful to Wheeler and Dixon in their anti-Company theme. Order No. 4 or other such Company "devices" was not mentioned by Wheeler--nor was it mentioned by Dixon. It, too, symbolized important gains made by progressive "enlightened" Montanans who fought the Levinathan's grip

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22 Stearns, p. 74. John K. Hutchens, Martin J. Hutchens' son, worked for the Missoulian in the early twenties. He recalled that the newspaper enjoyed a distinct degree of autonomy, even while it was regarded as a Company paper. It
and seemed to be valuable anti-Company ammunition.

Montanans might be vulnerable to capitalistic economics but they were not vulnerable to foreign ideologies. Socialism, radicalism, and Bolshevism were "foreign" ideologies to the Montanan and presented a threat to the American way of life, to the Montanan's way of life and as the Montana voter faced the ballot on November 2, 1920, it seemed that he had a good case of "election jitters;" for no matter how much Wheeler might have promised, nor how right his accusations and exposures were of the ills in Montana, he could not completely escape the charges which the mining industry, the conservative-reactionary press leveled at him. Too many would be inclined to believe that there must be some truth in the charges levied by the majority of the newspapers, by the public officials of Montana—all of which was an overwhelming majority against Wheeler. Too many Montanans suspected that although it seemed a fantastic thought, a Soviet regime could be clamped over Montana. Too many Montanans believed that the radicals were, indeed, sinister. In the end the rank-and-file rejected an ideology--radical, socialism was simply "too hot to handle."

was the only Company paper to present Dr. Levine's side of the story in 1919. The Company fired Hutchens in 1927.
Some questions remain. Why did Wheeler choose to wait for the Non-Partisan League to place him in the primary election when it is likely that he could have kept their support, held the conservative moderate wing of his party which would have strengthened his showing in the general election? Perhaps Wheeler feared Ford's aggressive courtship of the NPL would destroy his former strength with the League. Did Wheeler overestimate the power of the Non-Partisan League? Did he underestimate the effects of the Red Scare on the average voter and the strength of Company opposition? It appears so. Did Dixon make overtures to the Non-Partisan League as his opponents charged? What direct role did the MDA play in the election, particularly in the communities? One sees the nebulous hand of the Company everywhere--but nowhere directly demonstrable. Why did neither candidate allude to the Montana Power Company advertisements? The answers to these significant questions--lamentably--remain obscure.
CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE

If this thesis has at times seemed contradictory and the electorate of Montana quixotic, it may be said that all politics and politicians are occasionally contradictory and all electorates quixotic. I have done very little in this thesis with paradox. It is there: it seemed to me to be obvious.

Montana almost since its inception has had a perverse proclivity for sending "liberals" and Democrats to Washington and defeating them for local office. Not much has changed in that respect. This is what Montana did with Walsh and Wheeler--and Dixon. Dixon's election as governor in 1920 is a paradox I have endeavored to explain. The explanation lay in party structure (Democratic) so fractured that it nominated Wheeler. However "liberal" Dixon may have been in the past, he now played to the conservatives without making overtures to them and let Wheeler fall into the pattern which so often defeated the "liberal" on home grounds. Perhaps, if Wheeler had been running for the Senate in 1920, he might have won. Let it be said that Dixon as governor returned to his abiding liberalism swiftly.
The fascination of the election still lingers. Perhaps it always will. Remote and sparsely populated and small states rarely produced political giants. Perhaps, with so few people, with only two Congressmen and two Senators, or whatever the particular state population allows, four delegates in the Electoral College and with no great urban conglomerates, it is not surprising that Montana makes such a meager mark on the American political scene.

Yet there they were in 1920--all Senators, ex-Senators, and one tall, reform governor; all of them powerful, nationally known, all tough, honest and (whatever politics they played) reformers down to the roots. In a way, they were all old populists. Even in defeat in 1946, the country having passed him by, Wheeler remained an essential populist. Walsh was a sophisticated man, and he, too, at root was a populist. So was Dixon. All three men had their roots deep in an old anger of the lot of the man who worked the land and worked underground but saw his status slipping and income continually dropping.

They have been commonly called Progressives. And, indeed, Walsh may be thus labeled most accurately. But somehow Wheeler and Dixon, time, circumstance, and labels

notwithstanding, seem more comfortable under the populist labels--misplaced as they may seem in time and circumstances. They shared the same penchant for recognizing injustice in the "old order"; they fought courageously in the bitterest of times for what they believed to be right.

In 1946 in response to an analysis of his defeat by a reporter who wrote that Wheeler had changed his spots, Wheeler remarked that he had put principle above party, that true liberalism was really only basic democracy.² Wheeler said, "I am proud of the record I have made and I am confident that time will vindicate that record..."³

Wheeler, Walsh, and Dixon were whatever historians choose to call them, three most unusual men. And many an old time Montanan wonders if we will see their like again.

²Malone and Roeder, op. cit., p. 272.
³Ibid., p. 285.
APPENDIX
# APPENDIX

## Montana Gubernatorial Vote in 1916 and 1920

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<th>Counties</th>
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\(^1\)Under the political party of each county the 1916 vote is listed first and the 1920 vote beneath that.
### Montana Gubernatorial Vote (Continued)

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<td>523</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>73&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>399</td>
<td>626</td>
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<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>85,683</td>
<td>76,547</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74,875</td>
<td>111,113</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<sup>2</sup>All population statistics come from Resources of Montana, published by the Department of Agriculture and Publicity, Chas. D. Greenfield, Commissioner, Helena, Montana, 1920, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup>All political statistics were taken from Waldron, op. cit., pp. 172-78.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Connolly, Christopher P. The Devil Learns to Vote. New York: Covici, Friede, 1938.


Howard, while he is emotionally involved with his subject, does present both sides to the important issues when he has information about both sides. He is passionately anti-Company. Howard was first a journalist, concerned with the sociological and psychological impact of Montanans on what he called the exploitation of them by the industrialists. Although his narrative reflects his abiding hatred for the "exploiters," his analysis of the Montana picture is penetrating and astute. Howard did acknowledge that the 1920 election did much to educate Wheeler and possibly it shaped his political career. Howard states that both candidates promised to seek tax revision.


Stout, Tom. *Montana, Its Story and Biography*. Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1921. Stout's history deals with Montana history before 1920. His discussions include important sections on the powerful cattle and mining interests which furnish important background to the election.


Toole, K. Ross. *Montana: An Uncommon Land*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959. Toole deals with the 1920 election briefly although he does provide a more thorough analysis of the economical and political conditions between 1916 and 1920 which have important implications in 1920. Toole deals with Montana history with more objectivity and with less emotionalism than does Howard.


Wheeler, Burton K. and Paul F. Healy. *Yankee From the West*. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1962. Wheeler's accounts, while they are interesting and amusing, do not answer the significant questions raised by circumstances in the election, such as, What was Wheeler's campaign trail precisely? What was the MDA's association with the Company? How much influence did the Montana Power Company ads have in the election? What was Jeannette Rankin's role in the election? Did Joseph M. Dixon seek Nonpartisan League support?
Why did Wheeler wait until June to enter the race since he could have entered the Democratic Primary, kept the support of the Nonpartisan League and Labor League. This account represents all Wheeler papers which were available to this writer at the time of this study. Wheeler's book does contribute, however, invaluable references to minor events, minor characters, events and persons who had direct or indirect roles in the election.


Periodicals

"Anaconda Sells 12 Montana Newspapers to Lee Group," Editor & Publisher. Vol. 92 (June 6, 1959), 11, 56.


A penetrating, scholarly study of the Levine affair in which the author includes a revealing discussion of J. Bruce Kremer, Butte attorney, and member of the State Board of Education and the Montana Council of Defense and one of Wheeler's tormenters during the Council of Defense trials. Gutfeld establishes the basis for Kremer's affiliation with the Company. ("Thought not an employee of the Anaconda Company, Kremer had on numerous occasions demonstrated his sympathy for ACM policies.") p. 25.
Gutfeld's study of the Frank Little murder offers an analysis of the reign of hysteria which prevailed in Butte during World War I. This account deals with the IWW in Butte and Wheeler's sympathy with them. Important background for the April-May strikes in Butte during the 1920 primary, as well as illustrating an example of the animosity which was rising toward radicalism. The IWW was never popular in Butte.

Ves Hall furnishes a striking example of the hysteria prevailing in Montana during the war. This was the first case to attract national attention and to be tried under the Sedition Act of 1917. Wheeler's role as federal district attorney in the case is important.


Time, XXIV (June 24, 1946), 15-17.


Reports


Correspondence

Moore, Dr. Thomas B. August, 1970 discussed his early years in Butte, Montana, and specifically prepared questions and aspects of the 1920 election. Dr. Moore, a long-time resident of Kalispell and general practitioner of medicine, had known Wheeler in Butte and often visited him at his summer home at Lake MacDonald. He now resides in Kalispell.

Personal Interviews

Bell, Harry O., b. 1885. Personal Interview, July 13, 1971, in Missoula, Montana. Bell, successful businessman and rancher, was instrumental in organizing the Montana Highway Commission, and Montana Highway Patrol. Bell knew Dixon well, and said the latter was a "great man;" he knew Wheeler personally also. Bell pointed proudly to his distinguished record in civic affairs and offered valuable insights into the period. Bell lives on his hereford cattle ranch near Ronan.

Toole, K. Ross, b. 1920. Personal Interview, June 21, 1971. Professor Toole discussed Montana history and his impressions of the Montana political scene as a historian and native Montanan.
Public Documents

Congressional Record. 65th Congress. 25th Session. (May 2, 1918) 5933, (May 6, 1918) 6082-6083.


Montana. Laws, Resolutions and Memorials...Eleventh (through) Twenty-first Session(s) (1911-1920), Helena.

Montana Laws 1913, 570-571.


Unpublished Sources

Bates, James Leonard. "Senator Walsh of Montana, 1918-1924, A Liberal Under Pressure," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1952. Bates' dissertation provided a judicious account in detail of Senator Walsh's relationship with Wheeler; his use of the Walsh papers were invaluable to this study and his analysis of Walsh and Wheeler and other principals in the era between 1918 and 1924 was particularly adroit and astute.
Bates did not discuss the results of the election or how they affected Wheeler's national career.


Shirley DeForth discusses the 1920 election with more depth than any other writer, published or unpublished. However, as one might expect, her attention is given primarily to Dixon and Wheeler's activity is not discussed. Her paper furnishes the best account of Dixon that has yet been written and for that was invaluable to this paper. She does not interpret the results of the election other than to conclude that the press was responsible for Dixon's victory.


Gutfeld's thesis offers a well-documented study of the Butte strikes during World War I. Gutfeld maintains that the maintenance of "open shop" was the goal of the mining companies, and that the "status quo" was kept in Butte. Wheeler's role as United States District Attorney during the strikes has revealing information. It was here that Campbell began his four-year torment of him. Wheeler's involvement in the strikes is important since Wheeler does not discuss the subject
at any great length nor depth in his memoirs. The paper contains a chapter on the Levine affair. The paper is written from the viewpoint of a miner.


Halverson's thesis offers background information on Dunne but it does not deal with Dunne's role in the 1920 election. This writer questions Halverson's calling the newspaper a "case study of Montana Progressivism."


Harris's thesis offers excellent background biographical information on Craighead, who was one of Wheeler's principal supporters in the 1920 election. The thesis carries a chapter on the 1920 election, however, there is no description of Wheeler's campaign, per se, and the discussion deals primarily with Craighead's relationship with Dixon. This does illustrate, however, that had Craighead pursued Dixon less vociferously and campaigned more actively for Wheeler, it might have made some difference.


Ruetten's thesis contains valuable background information about Wheeler and about the period. Ruetten does not, however, discuss the 1920 election in great detail. His material was based on the "Wheeler Papers," according to Ruetten; the authenticity of the "Wheeler Papers" has been disputed by scholars--and by Wheeler--who have claimed there were no "Wheeler Papers" for Ruetten's study.
This study provided important information about Wheeler's character. Ruetten dismisses the 1920 election summarily, stating that the press was responsible for his defeat.


Stearns discusses the 1920 election in two paragraphs. She does say that "the intense patriotism of the period, coupled with a deep fear of revolution aroused by the Russian Revolution in 1917, prompted incredible acts of intolerance in the state. The state legislature established the Montana Council of Defense to expose slackers and seditionists. The Council investigated citizens and officials with abandon in its short existence. It even censured United States District Attorney B.K. Wheeler in 1918 for insufficient reign in the prosecution of war slacker cases. The war fever that inspired this chauvinism had not entirely abated by 1920...." p. 12, 13.


Toole's dissertation offers a thorough, comprehensive study of the Anaconda Company, its practices, its subtle influences, and offers important background material for any study of Montana political history. It offers keen insights into the volatile labor situation in Butte.


Wetzel's thesis is a penetrating psychological study of Dunne and the circumstances which shaped his becoming a radical. His analysis of the Butte Bulletin is good—and he does not lose focus on his subject—a difficult task since the evidence he used for the study was often exaggerated. Wetzel's definition of "radical" contained revealing insights into Dunne's character and ambitions. He stated that the radical demands total, cataclysmic and often violent change, that ends justify means, that truth has no intrinsic value in gaining one's avowed goals and that the radical was a militant, a political activist. Dunne qualified as a "radical."

Manuscript Collections


Senator Thomas James Walsh. (185901933). Newspaper references, daybooks, ledgers, etc.

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Bozeman Chronicle [Democrat], 1920
Butte Bulletin [labor], 1919-20
Butte Daily Post [Company - Republican], 1920
Butte Miner [Company - Democrat], 1920
Daily Missoulian [Company - Republican], 1920
Great Falls Tribune [Democrat], 1919-20
Helena Independent Record [Company - Democratic], 1917-20
Helena Record-Herald [Republican], 1920
Kalispell Daily Inter-Lake [Republican], 1920
Livingston Enterprise [Company - Democrat], 1920
Miles City Star [Republican], 1920
New Northwest [Democrat], 1918-20

Monthly and Weekly Newspapers

Campbell's Scientific Farmer (monthly), 1920
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Forsyth Democrat, 1920
Hamilton Western News [Independent Democrat], 1919-20
Hill County Democrat, 1920
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Judith Gap Journal [Independent], 1920
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Montana Farmer (monthly), 1919-20
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Red Lodge Picket-Journal [Democrat], 1920
Rocky Mountain Husbandman [Democrat], 1919-20
Sidney Herald [Independent], 1920
Scobey Sentinel [Independent - Democrat], 1920
Western News (Libby) [Democrat], 1920
Yellowstone Monitor [Democrat], 1920