

TEA TIME TALK

(BY WILMA J. MARCH)

In Florida one must pay two dollars poll tax to enable them to vote. In some cases this is paid by the candidate or a group of his backers, if the voter prefers to keep his own money instead of the right to cast his ballot. This is technically illegal but why point a finger at that particular step, when there are so many technicalities which are outside the law, if it came down to the fine thing?

The ballot at the recent primary was 14 by 24 inches divided into sections containing candidates for no less than thirty-nine offices. The first office to be marked was that of President of United States, with the names of Joseph A. Coutremarsh and Franklin D. Roosevelt. This of course was just a sort of straw vote as the presidential election does not come till November. Then followed seven groups of Presidential electors; representatives for Congress for this congressional district; then groups for national democratic committee and committeewoman; also for delegates for the national democratic convention for the state at large; then two delegates for the same convention from each district; then for county commissioner, one for each of five districts. Other offices voted upon were as follows: Supt. of Public School Instruction; a County Supt. of Public Schools; Attorney-General; Commissioner of Agriculture; Comptroller; Adjutant-General; County Representative in the State Legislature; County Prosecuting Attorney; Sheriff; Tax Collector; Tax Assessor; Supt. of Registration; County Surveyor; three groups of candidates for member Board of Public Instruction; two groups for Constable according to districts; Justice of the Peace; three groups for Member of Democratic Executive, both men and women. The group which caused the most excitement and which this year had the largest list of candidates for many years, was the office of Governor. Fourteen men lined up for that office. One of that number had decided to run but changed his mind; later but his name had been placed on record and considerable publicity had been given in general. He did not wish to stand and to eliminate the possibility of anyone planning to vote for him he put up signs reading "Do not vote for me" with his name beneath. There were six candidates of whom I heard absolutely nothing. The best known of the fourteen was Senator W. C. Hodges, known throughout the State as "Homestead Bill" as he favored a bill for homestead exemption of taxes. It was fully expected by the populace that this gray-haired Senator would either be in the lead or runner-up, but, as in many elections, there was a dark horse which spurted ahead at the very eve of the race. The present Governor, Dave Sholtz, the Brooklynite, was the dark horse in the governor's race of a few years ago.

The primaries are held periodically according to the laws of each State. The size of the state legislature depends upon the population, thus thickly populated states of the east, though smaller in square mileage, have more representation. Years ago gerrymandering, a form of political sharp practice, was begun, whereby electoral districts were so laid out that the party in power possessed a majority of votes in as many of them as possible. The practice produced districts of very eccentric appearance, one of which, attributed to Governor Gerry of Massachusetts in 1812, being likened to a salamander. It was wittily dubbed "gerrymandering". Just how much of this remains to-day it is hard to say.

The term of the representatives and senators in the state legislature varies, the term for the former being mostly two years and the latter either four or two with the exception of New Jersey, which is three. The frequency of sessions of this legislature is generally biennial, with six exceptions: South Carolina, New York; Rhode Island, New Jersey and Massachusetts, these meeting annually, and then Alabama which meets four times a year. Then too in some states the limit of duration of each session varies from 40 to 90 days with Maryland and Minnesota having the longest time limit. But of the 48 states 21 have no limit.

The salaries of the legislative members also varies according to states. Rhode Island is the only state which has no limit to the length of session but which pays its members for sixty days only, no matter how long the session may last, and her legislature meets but once a year, paying \$5.00 per day to her members.

Most of the states which have no limit to the duration of session pay their members an allotted sum for the session instead of so much per head per day. Sixteen out of the above mentioned 21 do this. The others pay by the day, with the exception of California, which pays \$100 monthly during each biennial term of unlimited duration. Illinois rates highest, paying \$3500 for each biennial session; then Pennsylvania \$3000; Wisconsin \$2400; New York \$1250; Ohio, Mississippi, Minnesota, Iowa, Colorado and Arkansas \$100.00 each. Massachusetts meets but annually paying \$2000 per member and \$4000 to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House. The others pay considerably less or pay by the day per member. Some few states allow an additional fee for expenses and mileage going to and from sessions.

In the case of Governor, half of the states elect him for a term of two years; the other half elects him for twice that period, with the exception of New Jersey, calling for a change every three years. Only one of the states with a two-year term governorship does not allow him to succeed himself. That state is New Mexico. Oregon stands alone with a four-year term governorship allowing him to be re-elected once. Thirteen of the 23 four-term states do not allow him to succeed himself. North Carolina alone allows the Governor travelling expenses above his salary of \$10,500. New York pays its Governor \$25000; New Jersey \$20000; Penna. \$18000; Illinois \$12000; and five states \$10000 each, with the rest paying less, the lowest of which is South Dakota with \$3000. The average salary of Governor is around \$7500 to \$8000. Some day there may be a two-party primary in Florida.

I have learned that the negro would have the right to vote here if there was a two-party election. As it is with only the Democratic primary, they are not allowed to use their franchise, as the Democratic party will not allow them to have any part in their affairs. In the federal election this coming November the negro will vote but he most always votes Republican, not that they cater to him, but because the Democrats push him aside entirely.

Another thing which may not be known to most Canadians is the fact that people living in the District of Columbia are not allowed the franchise, as this is not a state but a district created for governmental purposes and its location was made on the Mason Dixon line, showing no partiality to either the north or south; then because it contains the seat of national government and is therefore the boiling-pot of seething politics, it is deemed wise to withhold the franchise from residents of the district, which is just as fair to one party as another.

So the Governor's race goes on at white heat. Out of fourteen candidates the race dwindled down to three in the lead when the reports had been fairly well turned in. The Senator, Bill Hodges, was thought to be in second place when a recount in one district was called for. Then another recount over that one was called for by the opponent with the result that Hodges was out. So the race narrowed down to two men of unimpeachable character and it has been a fine, clean challenge all the way through for the runoff, which is being held to-day (June 23rd). What the tide of affairs will be is most difficult to say. This I know, it will be nip and tuck, as close a race as Florida has ever known for Governor.

Judge Raleigh W. Petteway of Tampa, the leading man in the first primary, is one of the finest men any state could produce. He is level-headed, broadminded, fair and square. Of Fred. P. Cone, I think one could say the same. Petteway has plowed ahead diligently presenting his views and platforms, heeding little any criticism headed his way, and he has handed out none

towards his opponent. On the other hand Mr. Cone, a banker from Lake City, has stated strongly that a judge could not have the general financial experience which he deems necessary to be Governor. Yet beyond any doubt the experience which a judge would have would serve him well in many instances and that some experience would be unknown to a banker. On the stand of the Florida ship canal which has been under construction these past six or seven months across state from Jacksonville to the Gulf of Mexico, stopping a bit southward near Ocala, these men would both take different places. The northern section of the state is almost unanimously in favor of the canal as it would bring much business to that region, which would be divided elsewhere or escape the state entirely by the ships going around the tip of the peninsula. The only folks in the canal zone who have opposed the project have been the gardeners who believed the incoming salt water would seep into the soil and ruin their produce. This question has been argued time and again by scientists and engineers. The southern portion of the state have hoped that the canal never would be finished. According to this reasoning it is natural to believe that if the two candidates took issue over the canal prospect Cone would stand by his northern dreams and Petteway would be a true Tampan, hoping that its completion would not be slated in Congress. Still it is quite possible that neither men are firmly set on this point one way or the other. Cone has stated that a man who was sectional was too small for Governor, this statement of course being fired at his opponent.

There are many, many things which will have influenced the votes to-day. Just what percentage of the ballots cast for fourteen candidates in the last primary three weeks ago each of the two will get would be impossible to determine. There are so many irons in the fire which would sway votes either way. Politics is as deep as the sea and just as unfathomable. There are so many swirling undercurrents that they run into each other causing a general upheaval and indecision of direction.

After the first primary many conferences were held by the various factions with a view to just how the votes that fell by the political wayside could be angled for. Three candidates who drew thousands and thousands of votes had no chance in the run-off but where those votes will be divided is impossible to say. Undoubtedly it will be those thousands of liberated votes that will turn the tide for one of the two candidates in the run-off. The strange part of it is that a few months ago few people thought the run-off would include either of these men.

The "cracker" vote of the state, meaning the State-born folks who are so named from the old habit of cracking their corn with rocks, will be with Fred. Cone, the banker. Both men are in favor of old-age pensions, thus possibly leaning favorably towards the Townsend Plan. And speaking of the Townsend followers, their candidate in the first primary was Jerry Carter but Jerry had bad luck. Garbage collectors, fished rolls of his uncounted ballots from sewers in Jacksonville, the district which double-crossed one other candidate and swung on the eve of election to Cone. It is said that the clarion call of the higher-ups made this change. So this, that and the other thing, be they sectional, legal, fair, corrupt, or what have you, will play the game of politics to-day. The cards are in the hands of the voter but behind him, in many cases, is the other person's mind directing the play. And the joker is in the deck, over popping up to aid this one and fool another. To-night will tell the tale.

And its all over and Fred. P. Cone is the next Governor of Florida. He was the dark horse who spurted ahead in the first primary to the amazement of thousands. He again had fortune with him yesterday, polling 50,000 of a majority over Raleigh Petteway. Tampa Judge. This is certain, there was influential political machinery which laid pressure in his direction. The mud-slinging was withheld till the radio talks on the eve of election. This was done as a last resort, fearing that had it happened all through the campaign the finer thinking people



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would change their support to cleaner channels. Sectionalism crept in to win the day, even though the winner had said that any man who was sectional was too small for Governor. Even so, Fred. P. Cone has the stuff in him of which fine leaders are made. He has experience and ability. If only he will not be swayed and ruled by the political machinery which undoubtedly won him the day. His opponent, Raleigh Petteway, is one of the grandest losers, one of the nation's finest citizens and he took his defeat like a soldier, wiring his congratulations and best wishes to his victor.

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