

6-1-1932

Comment

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Recommended Citation

Briggs, John E. "Comment." *The Palimpsest* 13 (1932), 259-260.

Available at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/palimpsest/vol13/iss6/4>

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Comment by the Editor

IN REALITY

That the Republicans would nominate President Harrison for a second term was a justifiable assumption in March, 1892. Partisan inertia, contented postmasters, and well-established custom lent support to that opinion. Though the Zetagathians might have been aware of the President's unpopularity, there was no particular reason to suppose that he should be blamed for the effects of McKinley's tariff, the war in Chile, the dearth of silver dollars, or the dispute with Great Britain over some irresponsible seals in the Pacific Ocean. His brusque manner, as impersonal as a March wind, was scarcely a disqualification for the office of chief executive, however offensive it might be to ambitious politicians. The sum of untoward circumstances did not seem to constitute a sufficient reason for a party split. None of the potential rivals — McKinley, Allison, Reed, or Alger — was especially preëminent.

Yet as early as March, influential Republicans were quietly trying to enlist dissatisfied factions under the glamorous banner of James G. Blaine. Senator Quay was disgruntled because the President had accepted his resignation as Chairman of

the Republican National Committee; Senator Platt wanted the cabinet position he had bargained for; and "Ret" Clarkson of Iowa, who had resigned as Assistant Postmaster General after Harrisonizing the mail service, reverted to his former allegiance to the "Plumed Knight". Though Blaine wrote to Clarkson on February 6th that he was "not a candidate for the presidency", his friends persisted and finally, three days before the convention, he resigned as Secretary of State to assume the pose of a willing recipient.

The incongruity of the Chairman of the National Committee being hostile to the President must have been as obvious as it was remarkable. Depew would indeed have been a more representative keynote speaker than J. S. Fassett. Despite the skilful maneuvers of Blaine's ardent satellites, however, the stubborn Harrison delegates refused to be stampeded. Neither the eloquence of a Colorado Senator, the persuasive enthusiasm of a beautiful lady with a white parasol, nor a scheme to make a dark horse of McKinley were effective, and Harrison was nominated on the first ballot.

The Zetagathians were also right in predicting that Whitelaw Reid would be the vice-presidential candidate.

J. E. B.