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A G.O.P. DILEMMA: THE
REPUBLICAN CONVENTION OF 1952

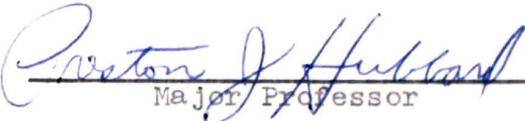
A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in Education

by
John Atwood Fisher
August 1968

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Research Paper written by John Atwood Fisher entitled "A G.O.P. Dilemma: The Republican Convention of 1952." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education, with a major in History.


Major Professor

Accepted for the Council:

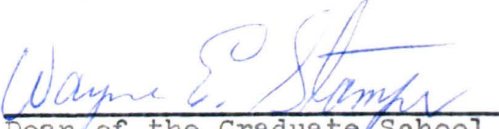

Dean of the Graduate School

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PREFACE

The author had chosen to write on this topic because he felt that it was one of considerable interest and so far as the author could determine one that has not been fully covered by any other writer. At the time this work was begun there appeared to be no particular parallel with the present day Republican party. During the time elapsed while writing this paper, however, the political scene has greatly changed. The Republican party is in a similar situation to the one that the author has written about. They have been out of power for eight years (since Eisenhower retired) and they have two main candidates running for the presidential nomination. One, Richard Nixon, tends to appeal to the traditional or Old Guard Republicans and appears to be in much the same position that Senator Robert Taft was in during the 1952 race. The other candidate, Nelson Rockefeller, represents, as did Dwight Eisenhower, the liberal wing of the party. While Rockefeller is not as much of a national hero as Eisenhower had been, he does have Eisenhower's broad appeal to the independent and Democratic voters of the nation and has never been defeated in an election. The present fight for the Republican nomination is not identical with the one discussed in this paper. However, there is sufficient similarity to justify some comparison between the Republican Party of 1952 and that of 1968.

The author would like to thank Dr. Preston Hubbard of the Department of History, Austin Peay State University for his counsel and advice. The author would also like to thank his wife Holly for her help in ways too numerous to mention. Without her continuous assistance this paper would not have been possible.

INTRODUCTION

As the 1952 presidential election loomed on the political horizon, the Republican party found itself in a dilemma. A Republican had not occupied the White House for twenty years. During this sojourn in the wilderness two factions of Republicans had emerged. The conservative, old guard wing of the party, which had its center of strength in the Midwest, was headed by Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio. Taft was known as "Mr. Republican." The eastern liberal wing of the party was controlled by the New York state governor and twice presidential candidate, Thomas E. Dewey. The liberal eastern Republicans were seen as a "me too" party by the Taftites, and not true Republicans.

In the upcoming 1952 election, the Republicans felt fairly certain to win because of Truman's unpopularity due to the Korean War, the firing of General MacArthur, and domestic problems. Taft's followers felt that the "true" Republicans should carry the party standard. The eastern liberals on the other hand argued that Taft, or a man of his beliefs, would not have a broad enough base of support to win the election. They further argued that after twenty years out of office the Republicans should run someone certain to win even if his stand on party issues did not exactly match the traditional party image. Dwight David Eisenhower seemed to be the

perfect man for the job. That he was not strongly identified as a Republican mattered not. He had a broad personal appeal and this is what mattered to the liberal wing of the party. Eisenhower's lack of strong identification with the Republican party is shown by the fact that the Democrats also wanted him as a candidate.

One of the major points of interest in the 1952 Republican convention was the fight over the disputed delegates. This item will be examined in detail later. At this time one of the most vital questions confronting Republican party leaders was--who is a true Republican? Many of Taft's backers felt that the Eisenhower supporters in states such as Texas had emerged merely for the purpose of stabbing Taft's candidacy in the back. The Taftites felt that most of the Eisenhower Republicans had been Democrats before and would be Democrats again after Eisenhower's election. In the minds of the Taftites a Republican was one who had been so identified for some time. The point raised above was one that was to be of great importance to both of the candidates in the outcome of the convention. For one it would provide a stepping stone to victory. For the other it would be an insurmountable obstacle on the path of victory.

CHAPTER II

SENATOR TAFT: DECISION TO RUN

It is necessary to go back to a period two or three years prior to the 1952 convention to establish when and why the two men decided to run. First, let us consider Senator Taft. After his defeat in the 1948 convention at the hands of the liberal eastern wing of the party led by Thomas Dewey, Taft was a beaten man. This was the second time he had tried for the nomination and failed. He did not plan to run again. He told a friend at the beginning of the 1950 Senate race that, one more six year term would use up about all that was in him. He also added, "I'll be pretty old by 1952."¹

He began to believe that he could not win, that he did not have that national appeal that was necessary to capture the White House. It was with this feeling that Taft was to have to face the most serious challenge of his Senatorial career in the 1950 Ohio race. In this campaign the Democrats, with the support of organized labor, went all out against Taft. No holds were barred. Defamation and slander of Taft and his work was the order of the day. Taft was at first bewildered by this attack on him, but grimly decided to make a fight of

¹William S. White, The Taft Story (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 93.

the race. He went everywhere, forcing himself to get out and meet the people which was difficult because of his basic shyness. The Democratic candidate, Joseph Ferguson, was such a poor candidate, and labor's tactics were so crude, that public sympathy was aroused for Taft. Ohio's Democratic governor, Frank Lausche, pointedly refrained from endorsing Taft's opponent although he had ample opportunities. The end result of this 1950 Senatorial race was an overwhelming victory for Taft.²

Taft was amazed and given renewed heart by his victory. Unfortunately, he placed the wrong interpretation on his victory. He assumed that everyone who had voted for him had also voted for his record and his brand of Republicanism. Taft could not understand that people might have voted for him because of his stature, or because his opponent was of such poor quality. As a result of this victory and Taft's interpretation of it, he decided to run again for the presidency in 1952. He had come to the conclusion that a campaign such as he had just conducted in Ohio, if conducted on a national scale, would have similar results. His faith in himself was renewed and he was again ready to save the country from the Democrats.

²Ibid., pp. 93-101.

CHAPTER III

THE GENERAL ANSWERS THE CALL

Dwight D. Eisenhower, Taft's opponent for the 1952 Republican nomination, had a background almost antipodal to Taft's. General Eisenhower had spent his life as a professional soldier and had no political ties. He had been mentioned as a possible candidate in 1948 but this possibility had been ended by a public statement issued by Eisenhower. In this statement Eisenhower stated the belief that

. . . the necessary and wise subordination of military to civil power will be best sustained . . . when life-long professional soldiers, in the absence of some obvious and overriding reasons, abstain from seeking high political office. . . .³

In the spring of 1948 General Eisenhower began a terminal leave. He then went to Columbia University as its president. Apparently many of the public felt that since the General was no longer on active duty that his former reasons for not running were no longer valid. Many requests urging Eisenhower to run began coming by mail. These requests reached impossible proportions after radio commentator, Walter Winchell asked each of his listeners to send the World War II hero a card urging him to seek the presidential nomination.

³Dwight D. Eisenhower, Mandate for Change (Garden City; New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963), p. 7.

Eisenhower solved the problem of the mail by going on vacation and turning the letters over to the Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research--which was interested in the study of the psychological reactions of the mass.⁴

When the Republican convention met in Philadelphia in June of 1948 it appeared that Governor Thomas Dewey of New York would win the nomination. In spite of this, Eisenhower had numerous prominent Republicans try to reach him by phone, mail, and personally dispatched messages to convince him to enter the political fight to prevent the nomination of a man who, they said, "could not be elected."⁵ The General refused to see anyone (except one personal friend) and would take no calls or answer any letters or telegrams from Philadelphia. He asserted that his New Hampshire letter of January 23 spoke for itself.

After the Republican convention was over the bombardment of Eisenhower took an unexpected turn. Many Democrats apparently felt that the war hero's previous statement referred only to the Republican party and that in their case the answer would be different. Eisenhower solved this problem by having his public relations director from Columbia, Robert Harron,

⁴Ibid., p. 9.

⁵Ibid.

issue a statement that the General was determined to remain as President of Columbia University.⁶

This last step solved the problem through the 1948 election but almost immediately after Dewey lost to Truman the process began again with pleas for Eisenhower to run in 1952. This time the matter of what to do was taken out of Eisenhower's hands by President Truman. Truman and the Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal, requested that the General return to Washington intermittently to serve as an informal chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This assignment apparently served the purpose of diminishing political interest in Eisenhower's future.

The part-time General's peaceful life as college president was changed by a request from President Truman in 1950. The nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization had unanimously expressed their preference for General Eisenhower as military commander. In less than three weeks the hero of the European theater of the war was involved in his new position although he expressed regret at having to leave his post at Columbia.

During this period while the General served as N.A.T.O. head, he received a steady stream of visitors almost all with politics on their minds. For all but personal friends he answered, "I'm not interested." To personal friends he

⁶Ibid., pp. 9, 10.

elaborated the points made in his public statement, mentioned before. A significant event, however, took place on September 4, 1951. On that day Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, an old friend and associate of Eisenhower's, came for a visit.⁷ From this point on the General was in the battle for the Republican nomination even though he had not as yet made up his own mind. One of the factors that helped to bring Eisenhower to his decision to run was a visit by Jacqueline Cochran who brought a film of a mass meeting of people wanting the General to become a candidate. The fact that fifteen thousand people had showed up at midnight, after the completion of a fight in New York's Madison Square Garden, greatly impressed Eisenhower. The final decision to run, however, did not come until a meeting with General Lucius Clay and some other friends of the General in London. It was at this meeting that Eisenhower tentatively agreed to return home to the United States as soon as he could complete his duties in Europe. As he says in his autobiography of these years, "I was committed in my own mind to run if nominated, but not to seek the nomination."⁸

The reaction here in the states to Eisenhower's decision to run was varied. Senator Hugh Butler of Nebraska wrote to the General telling him that it was his duty to withdraw his name from the race. On February 22, 1952,

⁷Ibid., pp. 11-19.

⁸Ibid., p. 21.

nineteen congressmen wrote a letter on behalf of their constituents urging Eisenhower to come home and seek the Republican presidential nomination.⁹

Another interesting reaction also took place at this time. Apparently some Republican leaders, prior to the announcement of the General's political affiliation, feared that if the Republicans did not nominate Eisenhower the Democrats would. Once this possibility had been disposed of they felt free to express their preference for Taft. The Senator's supporters, however, received a setback in the New Hampshire and Minnesota primaries. In New Hampshire, despite icy roads, cold rain, and some snow, a record turnout gave Eisenhower a sizeable plurality in a three way race. Both Taft and Harold Stassen had campaigned vigorously while the General remained in Europe. This fact made the victory even more impressive. Following close on the heels of the New Hampshire victory came an unprecedented accumulation of one hundred thousand write-in votes in the Minnesota primary. Senator Taft, however, was able to recover with victories in Wisconsin and Nebraska. These victories gave Taft a head start that could not be overcome by a passive candidate in Europe.¹⁰

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰George H. Mayer, The Republican Party 1854-1966 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 487.

CHAPTER IV

EISENHOWER'S HOMECOMING

During the entire period of Eisenhower's early candidacy from his announcement that he was a Republican in January of 1952, until Sunday, June 1, 1952, when his plane touched down at Washington National Airport he had not set foot in the country. This was an unusual way to conduct a campaign. It posed for the N.A.T.O. Commander certain advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantages are fairly obvious. The General had not really been able to do his best in the primaries because he had not been able to get out and talk to the people.¹¹ Many people were not familiar with the man who was running against Taft. In a day and time when personal appearance and personalities meant a lot to the voter, Eisenhower had been definitely handicapped. Not only did he not appear before the public, but because of his still active military status, he was unable even to comment on items and issues of a political nature.

The advantages to Eisenhower's position may not at first be apparent. By some readers they may be held to be nonexistent. It appears, however, that paradoxically enough Eisenhower's inability to present himself to the public (his

¹¹"Taft Ike Seesaw," Newsweek, XXXIX (May 26, 1952), p. 26.

biggest disadvantage) was at the same time his biggest advantage. By not presenting himself and his opinions to the public the General stood no chance of taking an unpopular stand on any issue. Instead, his prestige as a popular war hero remained intact. If a person has not taken a stand on the issues while his opponent has, it is much easier for the person when he finally takes a stand to know where to take it. By waiting for his opponent to take a stand, the silent candidate may then profit by the public's reaction to his opponent's stand. This position was the one that General Eisenhower found himself in when he arrived from Europe to begin the active part of his campaign.

During the period following Eisenhower's return to the United States his conduct was strictly non-political. He continued his official status (no political activity) until Tuesday evening, June 3, when he officially went on an inactive status. Almost immediately upon his arrival in Washington, on June 1, the General met with President Truman for several hours.¹²

Eisenhower's opponent, Senator Taft, took the opportunity of the General's homecoming to make a major foreign policy speech. In the speech and in a press release put out during General Eisenhower's meeting with the President, Taft

¹²New York Times, June 2, 1952. Also see "Back to USA," Newsweek, XXXIX (June 9, 1951), pp. 25, 26.

sharply criticized his chief rival on several major points. He minimized the General's N.A.T.O. accomplishments while at the same time linking Eisenhower with most of Truman's foreign policies. Taft also claimed that our air power had declined after General Eisenhower had become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Eisenhower, however, declined to make any statement to the press except on military matters. He was officially to open his bid for the nomination in Abilene, Kansas, his boyhood home, on June 4.¹³

¹³"Taft vs. Ike," Newsweek, XXXIX (June 2, 1952), p. 25.

CHAPTER V

DIFFERENCES AND DISPUTED DELEGATES

I. DIFFERENCES

It is difficult to come up with a great number of differences between Eisenhower and Taft. During the brief period between the General's homecoming and the convention each side took a few pokes at the other. The War Hero was chided by Taft for being too general and not sufficiently well informed about domestic issues, which was Taft's strong point as the leading Republican Senator.

Eisenhower, in turn, challenged Taft for his support of McCarthy and his near isolationist foreign policy. Another item on which the Taft forces attacked Eisenhower was his use of expense paid junkets for the delegates to come and meet him. The Taftites claimed that the opposition was trying to buy delegates.¹⁴ No real issue about this developed, however.

The major issue at which both candidates and their supporters hammered away, however, was the question of disputed delegates. It was the delegate issue that held most of the space in the news, which was reasonable since this

¹⁴New York Times, June 2, 1952.

controversy was to be the determining factor in the fight for the nomination.

II. DISPUTED DELEGATES

The issue of the disputed delegates first became headline news on June 3. On that date in Washington, D.C. a group of ten Republican governors issued a statement accusing supporters of Senator Robert A. Taft of keeping the Republican party in the South "small, weak, and ineffective," by putting it in the control of small cliques. While not actually mentioning Senator Taft by name, the Governors, all supporters of General Eisenhower for the presidential nomination, made the identification of Senator Taft as the culprit unmistakable. Most of the criticism was leveled at the Texas State Republican Executive Committee which the previous week seated delegates favorable to Senator Taft and threw out delegates favorable to General Eisenhower.

The Governors also stated that this action, which they declared was "brazen" and "shameful," was being attempted in Georgia and Louisiana. They further said that this action was in "flagrant disregard of majority rule and legal practices."

A statement was distributed the morning of June 4, by Representative Norris Cotton, Republican of New Hampshire, at

the request of Governor Sherman Adams, Republican of New Hampshire whose name headed the list of the ten Governors which asserted that

The tactics practiced in the three states, defeats the purpose of the Republican party to attract new support and to make the two-party system strong in America. Such tactics unless they are repudiated by the Republican National Convention, invite disastrous consequences in November.¹⁵

The statement continued by saying that in order to achieve victory in November, the Republican party would have to go before the electorate "with complete integrity," integrity that would permit no deviation from majority rule.

"Unmistakable evidence is now on record that the rule of the majority within the Republican party has not only been ignored but openly flouted in a number of Southern states," the statement declared.

The governors concluded by urging others to protest this outrage in the name of the Republican party. The governors, in addition to Governor Adams mentioned above, were C. Elmer Anderson of Minnesota, Edward F. Arn of Kansas, Alfred E. Driscoll of New Jersey, Walter J. Kohler, Jr. of Wisconsin, John Davis Lodge of Connecticut, Douglas McKay of Oregon, Frederick G. Payne of Maine, Val Peterson of Nebraska, and Dan Thornton of Colorado.¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid., June 4, 1952. Also see "Critical Contests," Time, LX (July 7, 1952), p. 12.

¹⁶New York Times, June 4, 1952.

On the other side of the fence, however, Representative Howard Buffet, Republican of Nebraska, accused the Eisenhower supporters in Texas of having made "a brazenly dishonest proposal to Texas Democrats." He exhibited a reprint of an advertisement from a Dallas paper placed by the Eisenhower for President Club of Dallas County. He stated that the advertisement advised Texas Democrats that

you are not pledged to support the nominee of the Republican party, nor does it prohibit you from voting in the July Democratic primary.

In plain English, the Eisenhower gang was saying, 'come in Democrats, and take over the Republican convention by force of your superior number, and then go on to your own Democratic party in July and pick your own Democratic candidate.'

He called on General Eisenhower to say whether or not he approved of this "sleazy" appeal to the Democrats.¹⁷

These disputed delegates were being hotly contested for two reasons. The first and most obvious reason was that seventy delegates were involved and much of Taft's claim to an early victory was based on his claims of the disputed delegations. The second, and less obvious reason, was the moral issue--the charge by the Eisenhower forces that the Taft group had been guilty of immoral conduct in establishing claims to Texas delegates. To a professional politician like Taft the moral issue at first seemed to be unimportant. Taft felt that his opponents were grasping at straws. In the end,

¹⁷Ibid.

however, this issue was to prove to be the straw that broke the camel's back.

CHAPTER VI

FAVORITE SONS AND UNCOMMITTED DELEGATES

I. FAVORITE SONS

In addition to the two candidates previously discussed there were three other candidates with pledged delegates, Governor Earl Warren of California, Governor Harold Stassen of Minnesota and General Douglas MacArthur. Both Eisenhower and Taft were highly concerned as to how the delegates pledged to these three minor candidates would vote upon being released from their obligations.

Of the three men mentioned above, Governor Warren appeared to be the man that held one of the keys to the nomination. He had seventy votes pledged to him. The Taft forces claimed that twenty or more of the Warren votes would fall to the Ohio Senator upon being released.

Several weeks before the convention started, Taft's managers were claiming to be only a few votes shy of the 604 needed for the nomination. If Warren were to release his delegates before the first ballot this could possibly mean victory for Taft. Governor Warren was believed to be a political ally of Eisenhower, but said that if and when his delegates were released each delegate would be free to make

his own choice.¹⁸

II. UNCOMMITTED DELEGATES

The other two men, in addition to Governor Warren, who were believed to hold the keys to the nomination were Arthur E. Summerfield, head of the Michigan delegation, and Governor John S. Fine, head of the Pennsylvania delegation. These men controlled the two large blocks of uncommitted votes. How their votes would go and when they would commit them were of great concern to the two front runners, Taft and Eisenhower.

Of the 70-vote Pennsylvania delegation, Governor Fine was said to control from 25 to 32 of the votes. Publicly Fine was trying to maintain neutrality. Privately, however, the Governor liked MacArthur and was friendly to Taft.

Arthur Summerfield, Republican National Committeeman of Michigan, headed a block of 46 delegates. Twenty-six to 33 of these delegates were said to be waiting until Summerfield decided which way he was going to vote. Summerfield appeared to be most interested in the general well-being of the Republican party rather than for any one candidate. Among the Michigan delegates Eisenhower men claimed the majority and

¹⁸"People of the Week," U.S. News and World Report, XXXII (June 27, 1952), p. 36. Also see "'Ike' or Taft--Who Will Decide?" U.S. News and World Report, XXXII (June 13, 1952), pp. 15-17.

were said to be pressing for a showdown. Supposedly, some of the Michigan delegates favored Taft but felt that he could not win.

There was some speculation that Fine was seeking some sort of agreement with Summerfield and Governor Theodore McKeldin, head of the small Maryland delegation. Apparently these three delegation heads were seeking a stronger bargaining position by adding twenty-six to fifty delegates to those of the Pennsylvania delegation controlled by Governor Fine. These leaders then could and would apply pressure to their delegates to swing them into line with their choice.¹⁹

¹⁹"People of the Week," pp. 37, 38. Also see "Two Men Can Determine the G.O.P. Convention," New Republic, CXXVI (June 30, 1952), pp. 6, 7, 17.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL MANUEVERING

I. RIGGING THE CONVENTION

According to precedent established by previous convention rules, the question of the disputed delegates would be resolved by the machinery of the national convention. Because of the assumption that precedent would follow, the Taft people had not been greatly concerned about the issue of the disputed delegates. They were in full control of the convention machinery. The Taft forces had such complete control of the convention machinery that they felt they could completely disregard tradition which called for appointments to key positions to go to neutral or undecided delegates. The Taft controlled machinery appointed General Douglas MacArthur, an avowed Taft man, as keynoter. The speaker on the eve of balloting was to be Herbert Hoover, who came out for Taft. The temporary chairman, who controls matters while the disputed delegates are being judged, was Walter S. Hallahan, committeeman from West Virginia and a staunch Taft man. Finally, Joseph Martin of Massachusetts was appointed permanent chairman. He was a devout MacArthur man, but with the General all but out of the running, he would vote for Taft. As a result of these appointments there was some outcry from the Eisenhower men. The possibility of contesting Hallahan's appointment was

considered but rejected. The reasoning of Eisenhower's campaign managers was that if Hallahan were not defeated by the Eisenhower forces it might make other delegates think that the General could not muster enough votes to win. In dealing with uncommitted delegates, Eisenhower's managers decided to emphasize the complaint that the General was being treated in an unethical manner by Taft's all-powerful forces. They said that Taft's steamroller tactics would only disgust the voters and that he would lose in November.²⁰

II. ATTEMPTED COMPROMISE

On June 6, for the first time, Taft mentioned the possibility of a compromise with Eisenhower supporters. He said that he wished to avoid a bitter floor fight at the Republican National Convention which would hurt the party in the November election. At stake in this possible compromise were approximately seventy-five contested delegates from Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, and Mississippi. Taft had this to say on the issue:

So far as I'm concerned, I'd like to compromise all delegate contests where there seems to be a difference of legal opinion. . . . These cases ought to be settled on a fair basis.

Taft went on to say that he was not familiar with the facts

²⁰"Arrangements Were Made," Time, LIX (June 23, 1952), pp. 17-18. Also see "Taft: Steamroller at Work," Newsweek, (June 23, 1952), p. 23.

in each case and would not be prepared to make a final decision until he had determined them. The Ohio Senator emphasized that he was not proposing a compromise now but was not unwilling to consider such discussions.²¹

Eisenhower's reaction to Taft's statement showed his political naivete. When first informed of Taft's statement Eisenhower said that it sounded fair enough. His more professional managers, however, were quick to pick up the ball that the war hero had almost fumbled. In Washington Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, General Eisenhower's campaign manager, rejected the proposal. "It is never right to compromise with dishonesty," Senator Lodge said. The leader of the Texas delegation favoring Eisenhower, Jack Porter, also rejected the compromise offer. "The Republican party cannot afford to compromise with corruption," Mr. Porter said.²²

²¹New York Times, June 7, 1952.

²²Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII

MORE ON THE DISPUTED DELEGATE ISSUE

I. TEXAS

Perhaps at this point it would be beneficial to the reader to examine one of the disputed delegate contests more closely since this issue was to become a major controversy before the Republican National Convention would be adjourned. One of the prime examples of this particular conflict was the disputed Texas delegation since it represented more votes than any of the other disputed delegations and was fairly typical of what happened in the Louisiana and Georgia contests. The Republican party in Texas was characterized by a struggle between two factions. As in most Southern States, the Texas Republicans had been dominated for years by a small group of hard core politicians who were primarily interested in patronage and not in developing a two-party system. In Texas the Republican party machinery had been controlled for many years by Colonel R. B. Creager. In October of 1950 Creager died and the inevitable power struggle for control of the Republican party began. The leaders of the two principal factions which were dominating the conflict were Henry Zweifel, who sought control of the old federal patronage, and H. J. Porter, representing the new Republicans who desired to see a genuine two-party system in Texas. It was a struggle between these

two factions of Republicans in the South that led to the dispute over delegates.

The initial showdown between the two factions concerned the selection of a national committeeman. Porter had little chance of being elected since his support, although numbering some influential Republicans, included only a minority of the State Executive Committee. This latter body was the one that decided who would be the national committeeman. After it became apparent to Porter that he had no chance of being selected (at least 85 percent of the State Executive Committee favored Zwiefel) he withdrew in the "interest of unity and party progress."²³

Porter had withdrawn but only temporarily. When the 1952 drive for the Republican Presidential nomination got underway in Texas, Porter headed up the pro-Eisenhower faction, which, if it won, would probably unseat the State Executive Committee which was dominated by the old guard. Zwiefel and the old guard, in the mean time, came out strongly for Taft, stating that he was an organization man and deserved their support. Shortly after this announcement, the State Executive Committee under Zwiefel's leadership made an attempt to stop the rising groundswell for Eisenhower.

²³Paul Casdorff, A History of the Republican Party in Texas 1865-1965 (Austin: The Pemberton Press, 1965), p. 175.

A resolution was introduced which would require a signed pledge of party membership before one could take part in the conventions. The pledge that was adopted read as follows: "I am a Republican, and desire to participate in Republican Party activities in the year 1952." It was hoped by the old guard that Democrats, who were expected to vote for Eisenhower, would have conscience qualms and not sign the pledge. This, however, was not to be the case. Many Democrats did attend the convention and sign the pledge as "bona fide" Republicans.²⁴

The end result of all this political maneuvering in Texas was an overwhelming victory for Porter and the pro-Eisenhower supporters. Independents and Democrats turned out for the precinct canvasses in such great numbers that they literally overwhelmed the Zwiefel, pro-Taft supporters. In precincts all over the state Eisenhower delegates were selected for the State Convention. In most cases where this happened the Taft minority, sometimes as few as four people out of 476, walked out of the meeting to hold their own convention at which they selected Taft delegates.

When the State Convention met in Mineral Wells, the Taft delegations were recognized while the Eisenhower delegations were refused recognition. Zwiefel and the old guard Republicans

²⁴Ibid., pp. 178-180.

who controlled the State Convention claimed that the Eisenhower delegates were Democrats who were trying to influence the Republican nomination. When this happened Porter led the Eisenhower supporters out of the hall and they set up their own convention. The Porter led delegation was instructed to cast 33 votes for Eisenhower and 5 votes for Taft. The five votes for Taft were ones that he had legitimately won in county conventions.²⁵ The final settlement of these contests was to be one of the decisive factors in determining the Republican nomination.

II. NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Since two State Republican Conventions had been held two sets of delegates were being sent to the National Convention, each accusing the other of "rustling" delegates.

A new development in the fight over the disputed delegations came to light June 11. Eisenhower was at his home at Columbia University receiving the delegations from Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina. While speaking with the delegates, the General proposed that the hearings of the National Committee on the disputed delegations be televised. He felt that by doing this everyone could see that fair-play won out.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 182-186.

In the meantime the national committee was already meeting to determine what contests they would rule on and which would be returned to the states for settlement. On June 14 the national committee certified contests for nineteen delegates in four states. It sent eleven of the contests, those involving district delegates, back to the state central committees. The other eight, involving delegates at large, were to be heard by the national committee. The remainder of the contests were to be settled the following day. This action immediately brought a heated response from Lodge. He accused the national committee of allowing the Louisiana State Committee to sit in judgement on its own illegal action which had produced the contesting "rump" delegation in the first place. Mrs. Charles P. Howard, secretary of the national committee, in replying to this charge, cited the 1948 convention rules--district contests to be judged by the state convention or committee, and delegates at large by the national committee. Eisenhower forces then claimed that this was sending the issue back to "thieves" to judge themselves.²⁶

Taft commented on these various remarks the following day in Washington, D.C. With reference to the cases being returned to the states he said that the national committee

²⁶New York Times, June 14, 1952.

members were merely following the rule written in 1944 and reaffirmed in 1948 by supporters of Governor Dewey who at this time was a leading backer of Eisenhower. Taft went on to say that Texas might be handled either way although only six of the thirty-eight contests in Texas were at large.²⁷

Taft made another statement the following day, June 15, concerning the delegate issue. He said that he defended in "principal" the actions of his supporters in Texas but that the Texas delegate case would probably be settled on the national level. He also said that the sessions of the credentials committee should not be televised if those sessions were to be a judicial proceeding rather than a propaganda show.²⁸

During this period the national committee completed its rulings on which cases it would consider and which cases it would return to the states. The results of the committee's decision were that 72 out of 95 of the contested delegates would be judged by the national committee while the remaining 23 would be sent back to the states. Included in the 72 contests to be judged by the national committee were all 38 of the disputed Texas delegates. This decision on the part of the national committee represented a fairly liberal

²⁷Ibid., June 15, 1952.

²⁸Ibid., June 16, 1952.

interpretation of the 1948 rules, a move which was seen to favor Eisenhower.²⁹

One final development occurred during this period. For the first time Eisenhower said that he and his supporters would fight having the disputed delegates vote on their own credentials or any of the other disputed delegations. This point was brought out by Eisenhower in a speech in Texas. His forces claimed that they had the support of the independent and favorite son delegations. This would give them enough votes to swing their proposal and overturn the 1912 ruling of Elihu Root.³⁰ In the 1912 convention, Theodore Roosevelt had planned to take his case to the delegates on the floor. However, when his candidate for temporary chairmanship, Governor Francis McGovern of Wisconsin, was defeated by New York Senator Elihu Root, Roosevelt was stopped. Root's first action as temporary chairman was to rule that delegates whose titles were contested could vote in every case except their own. This ruling had stood from that time until challenged at the 1952 convention.³¹

²⁹Ibid., June 14, 1952.

³⁰Ibid., June 22, 23, 1952.

³¹Mayer, p. 238.

CHAPTER IX

THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE HEARINGS

On June 30, in Chicago, the Republican National Committee began hearings on the disputed delegates that had been determined to fall within its jurisdiction. The hearings, however, were only the first step. If the decision of the national committee were protested, then the problem would be turned over to the credentials committee of the national committee for further study. If there should be a sufficiently large dissenting opinion in the credentials committee then the issue would be taken to the delegates as a whole on the convention floor. This is what the Eisenhower backers were counting on since they had enough strength to carry the issue in a floor fight.

I. TELEVISION COVERAGE

By the time the Republican National Committee met to begin its hearings on the disputed delegates, the issue of television coverage had become a major issue. Eisenhower and his backers had been urging television coverage of the national hearings since June 11. Taft had commented the following day that he did not think that television coverage would lend itself to a judicious atmosphere. Taft, however, in the face of mounting pressure for television coverage, had changed this position. He finally came around to saying, a few days before

the hearings began, that he was agreeable to television coverage. The Taft forces' leader from Texas, Henry Zweifel, had joined Eisenhower's supporters in urging television coverage. He said he wanted the cameras there so that the real truth could be brought before the nation.³²

When the national committee first met on Monday, television cameras were already in place in the meeting hall. But the committee had not yet reached a decision regarding the use of television; hence they moved to another room in order to decide on whether the cameras would remain to cover the hearings or not. The national committee, although strongly pro-Taft, did not go along with Taft's new position on television coverage. By a vote of sixty to forty it was decided that the hearing would not be televised. The stated reason for this action was almost identical with Taft's original comment on the issue. The Committee spokesman said broadcasts would not be conducive to a judicial atmosphere.³³

II. THE HEARINGS

Along with the issue of television coverage there were two other interesting events that occurred at the beginning of the national committee hearings. First, chairman Guy

³²New York Times, June 29, p. 36.

³³Malcolm Moos, The Republicans (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 471.

Gabrielson began by reading a telegram from former President Herbert Hoover. In this telegram the former President suggested that each side select an "eminent citizen, not one of their own managers, to sit with me and see if we could find a basis of agreement."³⁴ Chairman Gabrielson then read a letter from Senator Taft that contained a detailed analysis of the Texas situation on a district-by-district basis. The Senator's letter concluded by offering to compromise the contest by splitting the delegates twenty-two for Taft, and sixteen for Eisenhower. Taft ended by saying that this proposal was "so generous that its equity cannot be questioned."³⁵

At this point, Gabrielson adjourned the meeting to await a reply from Eisenhower leaders. He soon had a tart reply to both questions. Senator Lodge, speaking as Eisenhower's manager, said: "I cannot imagine anything more undemocratic than for three men in a private meeting to arrogate unto themselves the power to disenfranchise many thousands of Americans." His reply to Taft's offer was equally blunt: "General Eisenhower is a no-deal man."³⁶

There were ninety-six delegate seats in dispute when the committee began its hearing. Twenty-eight of these seats involved local factional or frivolous contests that had little interest for either Taft or Eisenhower supporters. The legal

³⁴Ibid., p. 472. Also see "First Round to Ike," Newsweek, XL (July 14, 1968), p. 23.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

and procedural merits on most of these cases were reasonably clear. The committee dealt with them quickly. The main fight was to come over 68 seats in three southern delegations: Georgia, 17; Louisiana, 13; and Texas, 38. Georgia with its entire state delegation at stake was the first case to be heard.

For twenty years there had been two Republican parties in Georgia. Each party maintained all the official party hierarchy. One was known as the Tucker faction; the other as the Foster faction. In 1944 and 1948 the Tucker delegation had been seated by the national committee and the convention. The Tucker faction also retained membership on the national committee and official recognition from national headquarters up to the eve of the 1952 convention. In 1952, however, the national committee voted to seat the Foster delegation, a decision that would give Taft all seventeen delegates if upheld by the convention.

The contest in Louisiana involved thirteen of the state's fifteen votes; two Taft delegates were not in the contest. In this contest the "regulars" were led by national committeeman, John E. Jackson, a Taft man. The pro-Eisenhower insurgents, who were fighting to take over state leadership, were led by John Minor Wisdom. The situation in Louisiana had been much like the more widely publicized events in Texas, but had taken place among registered party members, unlike the

confused legal situation in Texas. The national committee voted to settle the contest by giving Eisenhower two delegates and allowing Taft to keep the remaining 11.³⁷

In the Texas dispute, where 38 seats were at stake, the issue presented to the national committee was whether to seat the Zweifel slate of 34 for Taft, 4 for Eisenhower, or the Porter slate of 33 for Eisenhower and 5 for Taft. After hearing all the arguments, the committee voted 60 to 41 to accept the compromise suggested by Senator Taft, which gave him 22 delegates to 16 for Eisenhower.³⁸

While the above actions had been taking place in Chicago, other events that were to have a profound effect on the outcome of the convention were shaping up in Houston, Texas. There the governors of the 48 states were holding their annual conference. Most of the 25 Republican governors were present and it was from this group that most of the action came. First, on July 1, as he was leaving the conference, Governor Dewey of New York sent a telegram to the national committee: "LET THE PEOPLE SEE AND HEAR THE EVIDENCE."³⁹ He also sent a strongly worded message along with those of Governor Adams of New Hampshire and Governor McKay of Oregon, urging that the Porter delegation from Texas be seated.

³⁷"Louisiana," Time, LX (July 7, 1952), p. 19.

³⁸Moos, pp. 471, 472.

³⁹Ibid., p. 473.

The most important action that took place in Houston, however, was the release of a manifesto signed by 23 of 25 Republican governors. This manifesto was released July 3 at a press conference held jointly by Governors Dan Thornton of Colorado and J. Bracken Lee of Utah. The manifesto urged that contested delegates not be allowed to vote in the national convention until after the contests had been settled. The manifesto was a simple proposal which with an altered form, became the basis of the Langlie Fair Play amendment. This amendment was the factor that was to finish Taft's chances.⁴⁰

Chairman Gabrielson replied to the governors' manifesto with a long argument well documented with historical precedents. He further stated that if the rule were passed

We would make it possible for ruthless, selfish men to prevent any delegate from voting in the next Republican convention--merely by filing contests in every state and territory. And we would be taking this step, not in justice, equity of fair play, but for temporary political expediency.

It is difficult for me to understand why some of those who controlled the Republican National Convention of 1944 and 1948 did not seek such a rule then, but demand it now.⁴¹

With this reply the battle lines were closely drawn, and an all out convention battle was assured.

⁴⁰"First Round to Ike," pp. 22, 23.

⁴¹Moos, p. 474.

CHAPTER X

THE FINALE

On Monday, July 7, shortly before noon, the 1206 delegates to the Republican National Convention met for the first of five explosive days. The fireworks began almost immediately after chairman Gabrielson brought the convention to order.

I. THE FAIR PLAY AMENDMENT

Senator John W. Bricker offered the usually routine motion to adopt the previous rules. Almost immediately Governor Arthur Langlie offered a substitute resolution. This resolution provided that no delegate whose seat was in contest could vote in the convention or committee until the contest had been finally resolved. Langlie's proposal would affect 60 delegates (all of the Georgia and Texas delegations and 13 of the 15 delegates from Louisiana).

The immediate result of Langlie's resolution (which came to be known as the Fair Play Amendment) was heated debate. The Taft forces based their opposition to the proposal on two contentions. First they argued that this would set a dangerous precedent. It would mean that a faction wishing to control the convention would merely have to contest enough delegations to do so. The second objection of the Taftites was that it was "sorry" business to change

the rules once the contest was under way. This second contention of the Taft supporters was not entirely unjustified. The rules that the convention would be operating on would be the rules that had been accepted traditionally. The Taftites' contention, however, was weakened by the fact that the Langlie resolution was part of the first order of business, which was to lay the ground rules for the convention.

The furor that followed Governor Langlie's resolution was heightened and further confused by an amendment offered by Congressman Clarence J. Brown, a delegate from Ohio. As a prelude to his amendment, Brown raised the point that seven of the Louisiana delegates who were included as "in contest" in the Langlie resolution had been declared legal delegates by the Republican state committee of Louisiana. He went on to point out that this action was in conformity with Rule 4, section (b) of the Republican national convention as adopted in 1948 which read as follows:

All contests arising in any State electing District Conventions, shall be decided by its State Convention, or if the State Convention shall not meet prior to the National Convention, then by its State Committee; and only contests affecting delegates at large shall be presented to the National Convention.⁴²

Brown's amendment was, in effect, to remove these seven aforesaid delegates from the sixty-eight delegates which the Langlie resolution would place before the jurisdiction of the

⁴²Ibid., p. 475.

The political and parliamentary strategy in making the Brown amendment has long been debated. It is felt by some that it was a last ditch attempt to save what appeared to be a lost cause. "It presented a narrowly legalistic issue in which the technical merits were somewhat on the Taft side of the case."⁴³ The weakness of this amendment was that the basic provision in the rules was one that many delegates were already opposed to. After the Brown amendment had been offered, most of the debate still centered on the Langlie resolution. When the vote was finally taken on the Brown amendment, the delegates, for all practical purposes, were voting on the Langlie resolution. After two hours of debate the Brown amendment was defeated 658-548. A Taft delegate then moved that the Langlie resolution be approved unanimously without a roll call and it was.

The voting on the Brown amendment was the first real test of strength between Taft and Eisenhower. This did not mean that all the delegates who voted against the amendment had decided to vote for Eisenhower, but it did show a trend. The "wiseacres" said Taft had been stopped.⁴⁴ At this point the party's choice was still in question but doubts were being expressed as to Taft's chances.

⁴³Ibid. Also see "First Round to Ike," p. 23.

⁴⁴Moos, p. 475.

II. CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

During the next two days of the convention the credentials committee was in the spotlight. This was the next court of appeal for the disputed delegates after the national committee. The final decision for the losers, however, would be the convention itself. The hearings of the credential committee, unlike the national committee hearings, were televised.⁴⁵

The first day of the hearings the question of the Georgia delegation was settled. By a vote of 30 to 21 the committee upheld the national committee and seated the pro-Taft delegation of 17.⁴⁶

On the second day of the hearings the Taft forces made an unexpected move. They proposed to give all 13 Louisiana delegates to Eisenhower rather than split them 11 for Taft and 2 for Eisenhower. Apparently the Taft managers intended this as a peace overture and as a way to remove the stigma of the Texas "steal" talk that was associated with Taft's candidacy. The proposal was quickly rebuffed, however, by the Eisenhower forces. Lodge, spokesman for the General's forces, stated that both contests--Georgia and Texas--would

⁴⁵New York Times, July 9, 1952.

⁴⁶The author wishes to remind the reader that as a result of the Langlie amendment any members of the disputed delegations that would have normally voted with the credential committee were barred from doing so.

still be brought to the floor, since they

are stains on the integrity of our party that we must erase if we are to go to the people with clean hands and ask them to have faith in our party to lead the nation in the years that lie ahead.⁴⁷

A unanimous vote to seat the 13 pro-Eisenhower Louisiana delegates followed. For the final hearing on the Texas contest the Taft supporters returned to the mold and voted to seat the compromise delegation of 22 for Taft and 16 for Eisenhower. The vote on this was 27 to 24, the closest of the credentials committee hearings.

III. ON THE FLOOR

The report of the credentials committee to the convention was made by the committee's chairman, Ross Rizley of Oklahoma. He then moved that the Georgia delegates on the temporary roll be seated. Immediately following this motion, state Senator Donald W. Eastvold of Washington presented the minority report of the credentials committee. The resulting discussion was highlighted by the oratory of Senator Everett Dirksen, who took the opportunity to publicly "damn" Dewey for leading the party down to defeat. In spite of Dirksen's brilliant effort, when the vote came on the Georgia case, the Eisenhower forces were victorious for

⁴⁷Moos, p. 476. Also see "First Round to Ike," p. 23.

the second time. By a vote of 607 to 531 the minority report was accepted and the pro-Eisenhower, Tucker delegation was seated.

The other disputed delegation, Texas, was never actually voted on by the convention. A surprise motion made by a Taft delegate that the convention unanimously support the minority report, put an end to the issue that had started in Texas the previous May. Most observers felt that the reason the Taft forces yielded on the Texas issue was that they feared another roll call defeat. The presidential nomination began to appear beyond Taft's grasp.⁴⁸

⁴⁸Moos, pp. 477-78.

CHAPTER XI

VICTORY AND DEFEAT

Although Taft's chances for a victory appeared slim, Taft, himself, had not given up hope. Although the majorities of the Pennsylvania and Michigan delegations had come out for Eisenhower just before the convention, there was still a sizeable number of favorite son votes that might come his way if the voting went beyond the first ballot. This, however, was not to be the case. At the end of the first ballot Eisenhower had 595 votes (9 short of victory), Taft had 500, and Warren had 81. Suddenly Senator Edward Thye, head of the Minnesota delegation, jumped to his feet and demanded the floor. Earlier he had cast 19 votes for his state's favorite son, Harold Stassen. He now said, "Minnesota wishes to change its vote to Eisenhower."⁴⁹ The fight was over. A motion was made to make the nomination of Eisenhower unanimous but this was anticlimatic. So was the following day when Richard Nixon was chosen as the vice presidential candidate.

As soon as Eisenhower saw that he had won, he made his way across the street to Taft's headquarters to try and heal the breach in the party caused by Taft's defeat. Taft was friendly but reserved. It was not until later that he

⁴⁹Eisenhower, p. 44.

threw himself whole-heartedly into Eisenhower's campaign. Some of Taft's followers found their leader's defeat harder to accept. Their bitterness was to crop up later to haunt the Republican Party.

(1952).

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