WHAT IT COSTS TO BECOME PRESIDENT - -

By Jay Lovestone

THE presidency of the United States is a most expensive commodity. The chance to be president of the greatest democracy on God's green earth is sold on the market and commands a price running into millions of dollars.

Few workingmen have any notion whatsoever regarding the expenses entailed in winning the presidential nomination on either the Democratic or Republican party. The business of becoming president of the United States begins long before the convention of the party. Most presidential aspirants begin their campaigns a year or eighteen months prior to the national conclaves.

Costly Preliminaries.

The preliminary preparations are very costly. Publicity is the first item on the budget. Special articles must be written about the life, character and Christian habit, and modesty of the white hope that is being groomed for the White House. Publicity bureaus and special agents, political drummers and humbuggers, traveling all over the country must be financed and financed rather lavishly. Then the machine must be very well oiled. Golden grease must be applied profusely in order to win the primaries.

Soon the convention preparations actually begin. The delegates must be treated royally. Their bosses must be handled with even more care. Success at the convention is not the end of this costly game. It is only the beginning of another phase of the affair—and a mighty expensive one at that, too. Between nomination day at the convention hall and election day in the fall, huge sums pass over the political counters in the cities and in the rural communities.

Enter—The Rich Friends.

Where is all this to come from? Sometime the presidential aspirant is himself a member of a multimillionaire family. In that case he has a tremendous advantage over his competitors who are less fortunate. While the latter have to chase around the country rounding up "angels" and birds of rich plumage perching on the financial posts, the millionaire candidate is on the job building his fences for the stormy days ahead.

Rich friends play a decisive part in the presidential market. Mr. Frank R. Kent, one of the leading Washington correspondents, now serving with the Baltimore Sun, views the situation in the following light:

"There is scarcely any man of presidential calibre who has served in any sort of public office, who has not made a friend or two among the men of millions, who can be counted upon for financial support, of the kind, for instance, given General Leonard Wood by Colonel Procter in the Wood campaign for the Republican presidential nomination of 1920.

"Not a few of our presidents have really been 'made' a year and a half ahead of the convention, by means of a confidential contribution of $5,000 or $10,000 to some state boss with a fight on his hands."

Cellar Stuff.

Most of this campaigning is done very quietly. There is more truth than poetry in saying that it is almost all "sub-cellar" stuff. Under these circumstances it is extremely difficult to find out the exact sums expended in the average presidential campaign. All estimates recorded are incomplete and afford knowledge of only a fraction of what was spent in the venture. It is very seldom that the country is treated even to a partial acquaintance with the money-flow in these political contests. It is only when someone is caught spending huge funds promiscuously that the searchlight is turned on the campaign costs, even then we are not told all. Yet, an examination of the incomplete and admitted records reveals the expenditure of vast sums of money in the presidential races.

McKinley No Slouch.

The last vestige of the efficacy of the ballot, of popular suffrage as a decisive force in the making of America's presidents was buried when the United States entered the arena of capitalism as a full-fledged imperialist power.

"Hell-and-Maria" Dawes, working under the boss, Mark Hanna, sold William McKinley to the American masses at the paltry sum of a little over $6,000,000. This was the day of rising monopolies. Industry was developing at a very rapid pace. At least the same amount of money was invested by the millionaire capitalists in 1900 in the re-election of McKinley.

Roosevelt Expensive.

The "trust-busting Theodore Roosevelt won the presidency at the cost of more than $11,000,000 in 1904. This is a rather surprisingly large sum when one considers the special circumstances at hand. Roosevelt was president for three and a half years after McKinley's death. During this time Teddy succeeded in boosting his own stock with the masses to dizzying heights. Yet so huge a sum was sunk into his campaign to succeed himself. It is especially instructive to observe that, according to the testimony uncovered before the Clapp investigating committee in the Congress of 1911, the greatest contributors to the Roosevelt campaign funds were the most powerful monopolists, the biggest capitalists whose interests were protected so effectively during the first Roosevelt term. Apparently the gigantic trusts could see no harm in rewarding their friend Teddy the Trustbuster.

Teddy's Angels.

George W. Perkins, then a member of the firm of J. P. Morgan & Co., and a director of the Harvester and Steel Trusts, invested $480,000 in this campaign. E. H. Harriman acted as the clearing house for several contributions totalling $400,000. J. P. Morgan & Co. gave $150,000 outright; the Standard Oil Company, $125,000; Chauncey M. Depew, representing the Vanderbilts, George J. Gould and Henry C. Frick presented 100,000 a piece; E. T. Stotesbury, Philadelphia agent of J. P. Morgan & Co., gave $130,000; George V. L. Meyer, $125,000 in the capacity of Boston clearing house; B. T. Wainwright acting as the Pittsburgh clearing house, $120,000; and James Stillman, Jacob H. Schiff, Charles S. Mellen, Andrew Carnegie, Henry H. Rogers, M. Guggenheim & Son, the Clark Manufacturing Co., the International Harvester Co., and the American Can Co., were among other contributors whose gifts ranged from ten to seventy thousand dollars a piece.

The cordial relations between the White House and the Stock Exchange were best evidenced by the fact that after being sent for by Roosevelt, Harriman contributed an additional quarter of a million dollars besides his first $150,000, to "save New York State to the Republicans." Frick's campaign contribution was sound investment from the business point of view because the president permitted his Steel Corporation to violate the anti-trust law by absorbing the Tennessee Coal and Iron Co.

During this election the Democrats were financed very heavily, tho not as lavishly as the Republicans. Thomas F. Ryan, one of the leading stockholders in the rubber and tobacco trusts and a director in numerous industrial, traction and public utility corporations, was the leading Democratic "angel" at this time.

In the campaign of 1908, resulting in the election of Taft, the contributors were practically the same ones as in 1904.

When Dollar Meets Dollar.

In the sharp struggle between Taft and Roosevelt in 1912 there was a terrific expenditure of money. The Roosevelt pre-convention expenses alone attained the sum of $835,000. Taft spent more than $500,000 for similar work. This year George W. Perkins admitted having donated $122,000 to Roosevelt's campaign. Dan Hanna, son of the notorious Mark Hanna, who made McKinley, confessed having given $175,000 to this fund. William Flinn and Frank A. Munsey spent $144,000 and $118,000, respectively, on the Progressive party standard bearer.

Among the leading contributors to the campaign of Taft were to be found John D. Rockefeller, J. P. Morgan, Pierre Du Pont, Henry C. Frick, E. T. Stotesbury, Payne Whitney, Daniel G. Reid and George F. Baker.

The successful candidate, Woodrow Wilson, according to the available records, was supported by Cleveland R. Dodge, Cyrus H. McCormick, Thomas and David B. Jones of the Harvester and Zinc trusts, Charles R. Crane, Samuel Untermyer and Henry Morgenthau.

Extensive Political Bootlegging.

Charles E. Hughes, tho defeated by the Democratic party in 1916, admitted an expenditure of more than $3,000,000 on his campaign. The same coterie of money sharks that supported Taft backed Hughes. Among the leading investors in the bad stock of Hughes one will find the infamous Harry F. Sincliar, Vincent Astor, Eugene Myer, Jr., B. N. Duke, A. W. and R. B. Mellon, Payne Whitney and E. B. Aldrich. Particularly heavy sums were spent in the New York gubernatorial elections to put Governor Whitman over in preparation for the 1916 campaign. No less than half a million dollars was squandered in this fashion. John D. Rockefeller, J. P. Morgan, William B. Thompson, T. W. Lamont and George W. Perkins gave away sums ranging from $44,000 to $5,000.

The Democratic party spent, according to its own admission, nearly a million and a half dollars to put over Wilson in 1916. Cleveland H. Dodge is on record as having donated $79,000; Edward L. Doheny of McAdoo fame, and Bernard Baruch, who was allowed to clean up millions on an advance armistice notice from Woodrow Wilson, $25,000 apiece, and several others of whom the following are the most prominent capitalists: Nicholas F. Brady, R. J. Reynolds, J. D. Ryan and Alvin Untermyer, gave away at least $10,000 each.

The seven million Harding majority was bought at an exorbitant price. The reactionaries began their preparations for their great victory by investing more than $2,000,000 in the 1918 congressional campaign. No less than $700,000 were expended on the purchase of the senate seat for Truman H. Newberry from Michigan. DuPont, Spreckels, Colt of the Rubber trust, Deering of the Harvester trust made their full and heavy financial hands felt and feared at this time.

Buying 1920 Presidency.

In the presidential campaign of 1920 there was a banner year for spending money. General Wood alone spent nearly two million dollars—$1,773,000—to win the Republican nomination. William C. Procter, the soap king; William Wrigley, Ambrose Monell of the Nickel trust and the oil thief, E. L. Doheny, were among Wood's staunchest supporters.

Lowden, who married a daughter of the late George M. Pullman and inherited $20,000,000 in this fashion, spent nearly half a million dollars on his campaign.

Adding to the deficit of $1,300,000 after the victorious campaign, one will find that the Republican party spent all in all about $5,300,000 on the nomination of Harding. The Democrats acknowledged having spent $1,300,000. The Republicans are reported to have collected more than seven millions of the fifteen million-dollar goal they had set for themselves. Felix Warburg, Otto H. Kahn, Edward J. Berwind, Edward S. Harkness, Simon Guggenheim and Thomas Cochran of J. P. Morgan & Co. were in the front ranks of the donors.

Bernard Baruch, E. L. Doheny, Cleveland H. Dodge, Allan A. Ryan, August Belmont and James W. Gerard were among the leading contributors to the national Democratic fund in 1920.

More than $3,000,000 were spent on state campaigns in 1920. On the election of congressmen there were expended $800,000, and $3,000,000 on the various presidential aspirants. All in all, according to the public records, a minimum of $13,400,000 was spent in the last presidential year on political purposes.

The big business interests began their preparation for the presidential campaign of 1924 in the last congressional elections. It has been talked of for some time in Washington circles that the reactionaries are prepared to spend as much as $250,000,000 in order to have Coolidge succeed himself. The huge gifts of R. B. Mellon, John D. Rockefeller, George Eastman, William Wrigley, Herbert Hoover, Henry L. Doherty and others to the Republican party campaign fund of two years ago are a sample of what they are ready to invest today in "Silent Cal."

Business Is Business.

There is nothing mysterious or generous about the big capitalists investing so much in presidential timber. The principles of campaign contributions are based on the firmest foundations, on the very bedrock of sound and profitable business. We need cite but a few of the outstanding and typical instances where the soundness of such investments was illustrated.

The Standard Oil company was ordered dissolved and a fine of $29,000,000 imposed on it. The trust was never dissolved. It never paid one cent of this fine.

Woodrow Wilson sent Cyrus H. McCormick to Russia as a member of the Root mission. Mr. McCormick, head of the Harvester trust, had huge interests in Russia.

Penfield, who gave $10,000 to the Wilson campaign in 1916 and contributed heavily to the 1912 campaign, was made an ambassador.

For similar reasons Morganthau was made American ambassador to Turkey.

The Phelps, Dodge & Co. perpetrated its outrageous deportation of workingmen and was not punished for the crime, tho indictments were procured. The $79,000 given by Cleveland H. Dodge to the Wilson campaign of 1916 were evidently not forgotten.

And today American capitalists who invested close to $2,000,000 in the 1920 presidential primaries of General Wood are utilizing the latter's governor generalship of the Philippines in a campaign to strip the islands bare of all its natural resources.

The principles of capitalist politics are as sordid as the principles of capitalist industry.