The independent candidacy of George Norris in the 1936 Nebraska senatorial contest

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THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDACY OF GEORGE NORRIS
IN THE 1936 NEBRASKA SENATORIAL CONTEST

by
Fredric L. Splittgerber

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty of the Department of History
University of Omaha

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

June 1963

Good
More Detail
Please see me
Fred
THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDACY OF GEORGE NORRIS
IN THE 1936 NEBRASKA SENATORIAL CONTEST

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PREFACE

Originally, a biographical study of George Norris and some particular segment of his career was planned. After careful investigation of available resource materials, however, the topic was narrowed down in order to utilize more fully materials available locally. At the suggestion of the Nebraska State Historical Society, which is a depository for the Nebraska newspapers, a study of the 1936 election was selected.

This election was unusual in that it was one of the rare instances when an independent candidate was elected to the United States Senate. In chronological presentation an attempt has been made to examine the various aspects of this campaign from November, 1935, to January, 1937. Primary source materials included newspapers from all ninety-three Nebraska counties, the James Lawrence Collection available at Nebraska State Historical Society, the autobiography of George Norris, and personal interviews. The writer would have liked to have been able to state that to his knowledge there were no primary resource materials lacking, but, unfortunately, that was impossible. Nebraska Chief Justice Robert Simmons refused to give permission for a personal interview. Indicating no reason for refusal may have led to some possible misconceptions regarding Simmons' personal opinions on the election under review here.
The purpose of this study was to analyze the circumstances which fostered nomination and election of an independent candidate, George Norris of Nebraska, to the United States Senate in 1936. Beginning with the political and economic background of the state of Nebraska, an attempt has been made to study progressively highlights, events, and personalities through the primaries, the state and national conventions, the summer activities of the candidates, as well as the rigorous fall campaigning, and the election in November. Cause and effect relationships in this unique election were evaluated in order to propound a theory regarding the possibilities of success for independent candidacy.

A debt of gratitude is owed to the Nebraska State Historical Society, Terry Carpenter, and Professors Thomas N. Bonner and Frederick W. Adrian for the invaluable assistance given to the researcher throughout the project.
George Norris, the controversial and unpredictable candidate in the 1936 Nebraska Senatorial election, had been both admired and criticized for his integrity and insurrection throughout his legislative career.¹ His four terms in the House of Representatives (1903-12) and his uninterrupted tenure in the United States Senate from 1912 on were characterized by insurrection and refusal to be confined to a given political party. Having become thoroughly disillusioned with political parties, particularly the Republican Party's unsuccessful attempt to unseat him from the Senate in 1930, he was identified as an insurgent Republican senator and spokesman for a group of insurgent senators fighting for major reforms on a dozen fronts including Tennessee Valley Authority and Lame Duck Amendment (Twentieth Amendment). In addition, he had vigorously refused to support the Republican Party's nominees for the presidency during the 1920's. Finding a man and a cause consistent with his convictions in Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, Norris actively

campaign for Governor Roosevelt in 1932 and again in 1936.

The electorate of Nebraska had consistently responded to the insurgency of the Senator by returning him to the Senate. The Republican Party on the other hand thoroughly disliked and distrusted George Norris for his insurgency. The party had branded him as a maverick because he had embarrassed the Republicans by following the dictates of his conscience rather than a given party platform. In his revolt he had crossed party lines the first time in the struggle to remove Speaker of the House, Joe Cannon, from the powerful Rules Committee during Taft's administration. Although he was successful, Norris alienated himself from further patronage and influence in the House of Representatives.2

In 1912, George Norris, deciding he wanted to continue in politics, campaigned and was elected as Republican to the Senate where his inconsistency became a readily identifiable trait and asset to his career. Near the end of his first term, Norris was one of six Senators out of the entire body who voted against going to war with Germany in 1917. Throughout the 1920's and again into the 1930's, the Senator continued to

2Ibid., 283 ff.
advocate the Muscle Shoals project, which was in opposition to the laissez faire attitude of the Republican Party. Finally, by supporting Robert LaFollette, an independent candidate in 1924, and Democratic candidate Alfred Smith in 1928, he further angered the Republican Party to the point of trying to unseat him in 1930.3

Although Norris had wished to retire in 1930 and devote his time to fulfilling his life-long dream of non-partisan government in Nebraska, he forgot retirement plans when the Republican Party attempted to unseat him in the Senate for his insurgency. The problem of finding a candidate powerful enough to overcome Norris presented a difficult challenge. The strongest candidate was State Treasurer W. M. Stebbins, but it was well known that he could not draw enough support to defeat the incumbent.4 Something more promising would have to be devised.

Finally, the party concocted a plot to confuse the voters of Nebraska. Searching the state, the Republican Party had found a grocer in Broken Bow, whose name was identical to the incumbent’s, even to the middle initial. In Nebraska only the name appeared on the ballot with the names rotated in the various Congressional districts;

4Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 234.
hence, the voter would not know for which George Norris he was casting his ballot. 5

The petition filing date was July 3. The petition of Grocer Norris did not reach the Secretary of State's office until July 5. Attorney General C. A. Sorensen, personal friend of Senator Norris's, ruled the petition had reached the office a day late, but Secretary of State, Frank Marsh, anti-Norris Republican, ruled that the petition postmark of July 3 met the constitutional requirement for the deadline. 6

The Senator was prepared to withdraw from the race if the Grocer Norris's petition were not discounted. He had until July 16, 1930, to withdraw. On July 17, Frank Marsh reviewed the case and declared the petition valid. The case was quickly brought to the Nebraska Supreme Court for review. The Senator had made plans to decline the nomination and run as an independent if the case were not decided before midnight on July 18. Refusal of the nomination, however, was not necessary because the Nebraska Supreme Court ruled that the petition had reached Lincoln too late to be valid. 7

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., p. 235.
7 Norris, op. cit., pp. 296-97.
Later a Senate Campaign Fund Committee Investigation headed by Senator Nye of North Dakota exposed the whole plot. The principal characters were Walter Head, Chairman of the Board of Nebraska Power Company and also Chairman of Omaha National Bank; Robert Lucas, Executive Director of the Republican National Committee; and Victor Seymour, Manager of the Republican's Western Congressional Campaign. 8

Victor Seymour first denied he had any connection with Grocer Norris, but his stenographer identified Grocer Norris as having been in her employer's office prior to the filing of the petition. It was proved that Seymour was the contact man for the Republican Party and he eventually served six months in prison for perjury. 9

The Senate Committee found that Robert Lucas had violated the Corrupt Practices Act by circulating erroneous and malicious literature about Senator Norris. 10 It also was revealed that Walter Head had secretly put up four thousand dollars to help defeat Senator Norris in the campaign. 11

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9 Ibid., p. 237.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
Grocer Norris was found guilty of perjury by Federal District Court. The United States Court of Appeals instructed the lower court to hold a new trial. Finally, the case reached the United States Supreme Court, which ruled the grocer guilty of perjury, and upheld his ninety-day prison sentence. One of the most contemptible election frauds ever perpetrated in the history of Nebraska was thus aborted. The senatorial race in 1930 was to prove of significant influence upon the 1936 election.

In addition to intra-party difficulties, Republicans faced increasing discontent from Nebraskans regarding national and state policy failures. Farm income had not kept pace with other segments in national economy during the 1920's, and Nebraska farmers had no accumulated surplus to cushion the shock when the Great Depression hit. From 1929 onward, the total agricultural income of Nebraska dropped from $479,900,000 in 1929 to $162,500,000 in 1932. By 1935, some improvement was evidenced but the figure had risen to only $239,700,000 (See Appendix A, Table 1). Nationally, the total farm income declined 46 per cent between 1929 and 1932, in addition to the fact that by 1929 the farmer found his purchasing power to be 40 per cent of

12 Norris, op. cit., p. 303.
what the average American received in wages.13

With a falling farm income, the farmers were also faced with an increasing farm debt. Between 1920 and 1930, one-half million of the nation's farm operators lost their farms. In Nebraska the Farm Security Administration reported in 1935 that 49.3 per cent of Nebraska's farm operators were tenants.14

Adverse weather conditions added to the distress with a period of drought prevailing from 1931-1936. The worst years were 1934 to 1936, when the rainfall record was one-half the normal amount received.15 In summary, with his farm mortgaged and his income declining, the farmer wanted an administration which would restore and protect farm markets and purchasing power.

While Nebraska was primarily an agricultural state, there was some industry. What industry there was in the state was clearly associated with agriculture. The General Index of Business Activity for Nebraska shows that 1932-33 were the lowest years recorded for business activity in


14Farm Security Administration, Handy Reference and Speakers Guide Region 7 (Chicago: No publisher, 1940), p. 7.

15James C. Olson and Verna Olson, This Is Nebraska (Lincoln: The University Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 304-05.
Nebraska since 1920. (See Appendix A, Table II). A partial recovery was indicated by 1936. The merchants were experiencing a resultant depression from the economic plight of the farmers, too.

Taking a twelve month average of employment in Nebraska for the period from November, 1931, when employment was at 100 per cent to December, 1935, the four-year average was 85.5 per cent employed. The lowest average for any one year was in 1933, when only 82.1 per cent were employed during the year.16

The large numbers of unemployed swelled the relief rolls. Prior to 1933, relief in Nebraska had been considered a matter for county concern. The inadequacy of the counties to deal with the problem brought about the creation of the Nebraska Emergency Relief Administration. This agency combined under one heading the Works Progress Administration, Civilian Works Administration, National Youth Administration, and Civilian Conservation Corps. When the program began in July, 1933, there were 50,457 persons on relief.17 With minor fluctuations from November, 1933, the number of persons on relief rose to

16William A. Spurr, Measures of Business Activity in Nebraska (Nebraska Studies in Business, No. 42. Lincoln: College of Business Administration, University of Nebraska, October 1938), p. 45.

Continuing to climb, the rolls reached 212,291 persons by February, 1935,—the highest total during the entire period from July, 1933, to December, 1935. From February, 1935, the figure declined to 116,837 persons on relief by December, 1935.

An underlying problem of both the farmer and businessman in Nebraska was the large number of bank failures in Nebraska during the 1920's and 1930's. There were 613 bank failures from 1920 to 1932, of which 572, or 93.3 per cent, were state banks. The debtors' losses were impossible to determine fully.

Facing the plight of the depression with a growing amount of dissatisfaction, many people began to emigrate to other sections of the country. The census in 1930 indicated 1,377,963 Nebraska residents; by 1940, there were 1,313,468. Approximately 4.7 per cent left the state during the depression, seeking to better themselves.

19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 H. Clyde Filley, Effects of Inflation and Deflation upon Nebraska Agriculture, 1914 to 1932 (Agricultural Experimental Station Research Bulletin No. 71. Lincoln: College of Agriculture, University of Nebraska, June, 1934), pp. 91, 93.
22 Farm Security Administration, op. cit., p. 9.
elsewhere. Many wage earners and farmers refused to leave the state, remaining to seek improvement of economic conditions through politics.

Political repercussions were evidenced by the electing of three Democratic congressmen from the First, Third, and Fifth districts during the twenties. The vote in these areas indicated the dissatisfaction on the part of the farmers with Republican efforts to solve the farm problem. While the urban areas of Omaha and Lincoln stood as Republican during the twenties, from 1930 onward Omaha swung heavily Democratic.

By the 1930 elections with depression plaguing the midwest, the Republican Party was being blamed for the economic plight. The assignment by the voters of responsibility for the depression was evidenced in both the Congressional and gubernatorial races. The Democrats won the governorship plus all the Congressional seats, with the exception of the Second District.

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23 Ibid.

24 The only exception was Fred Johnson (Republican) who defeated Ashton Shallenberger (Democrat) for congressman from the Third District in the 1928 election.

25 James O. Olson, History of Nebraska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), pp. 302-03.

President Hoover's recovery program had been unable to solve the problems of wide-spread unemployment and need for agricultural assistance. Senator Norris was one of Herbert Hoover's most severe critics because of the President's opposition to public power projects. 27

Although Senator Norris was not personally acquainted with Franklin Roosevelt, he had followed the governor's fight against private utilities in New York. 28 After Roosevelt's nomination the Senator announced he would support the New York Governor. A meeting was arranged at McCook in late September of 1932 when Roosevelt came through Nebraska on a campaign tour. 29 In his speech delivered at the fairgrounds in McCook, Roosevelt praised Norris as follows:

Not you alone in Nebraska, but we in every part of the nation, give full recognition to his integrity, to his unselfishness, to his courage and to his consistency. He stands forth--whether we agree with him on all the little details or not--he stands forth as the perfect knight of American progressive ideals. 30


28 Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 303.

29 Ibid., p. 298.

30 Ibid., p. 301.
Senator Norris described Roosevelt as "an outstanding friend of those who toil on the farm, in the factory and in the counting houses, and those who constitute the bulwark and background of our civilization."\textsuperscript{31}

The political bond was thus firmly cemented between Senator Norris and Franklin Roosevelt. The presidential candidate needed the liberal vote which George Norris represented. Believing the New Deal was the first attempt in many years to be concerned with the welfare of the masses, Norris campaigned actively all over the nation.\textsuperscript{32}

The final election returns showed Franklin Roosevelt received 22,815,539 votes to President Hoover's 15,759,930. The President-elect carried forty-two states, with his total electoral vote being 472 to Hoover's 59.\textsuperscript{33}

In Nebraska the 1932 state returns demonstrated the popularity of the Democratic Party, which won the governorship and all the Congressional districts. Even in the Fifth District, young New Deal supporter Terry Carpenter defeated Robert Simmons, Old Guard Republican

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 299.

\textsuperscript{32}Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 310.

of five consecutive terms. These two candidates were to assume importance again in the 1936 campaign.

Terry Carpenter became disillusioned, however, during his congressional apprenticeship. He had discovered inertia on the part of other newly elected Congressmen, as well as a general apathy as to their accomplishments, or even as to whether or not they attended sessions. In 1934, therefore, he decided to run for Governor of Nebraska, only to be defeated in the Democratic primary by Roy Coehran.

Riding high on President Roosevelt's popularity, the Democratic Party swept the state in 1934, winning the governorship and all the congressional districts, with the exception of the Third. Democrat Edward Burke carried the senatorial election over Robert Simmons by a majority of 68,832 votes. Simmons, smoldering in his defeat, determined to wage an even more vigorous campaign in 1936.

In addition, 1934 also marked the year in which the constitutional amendment for the unicameral was passed.

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34 Nebraska Blue Book 1932, p. 499.
35 Personal interview with Terry Carpenter at Scottsbluff on July 13, 1961.
37 Ibid., p. 527.
by a 92,934 majority. The amendment, sponsored by Senator Norris, had been one of his personal ambitions and desires since 1923. This personal victory for the Senator meant a more representative legislature in Nebraska, better equipped to handle the problems created by the depression.

The political and economic conditions of the depression made the Democratic Party the symbol of hope for the future. The effects of this faith upon the state were immense. Nebraska had demands placed on it that could not be met through local action. The need for relief was desperate, but the Republican administration had been unable to solve the problems of the depression successfully. With Franklin Roosevelt's emergence into office, the New Deal was instituted. While there was opposition to the program, the stresses of the depression had been relieved by the program. Not all phases of the depression were necessarily disadvantageous. The economic plight of the depression created an aroused citizenry, interested in better government. A new state unicameral legislature was brought about because of the failure of

38 Ibid., p. 530.
the two house legislature to handle the problems of the depression. The state had learned that it could not always count on making its own way without direct help from the federal government.

By 1936, the future looked promising to the Democratic Party and to ambitions of the citizenry. While the Nebraska electorate was wondering what the unpredictable Senator Norris would do, George Norris, at the height of his career, was considering retirement. The decision made by the Senator would have a direct bearing on the contest and contestants running in 1936. It was too early, however, to forecast the outcome of the Senatorial race.
CHAPTER II

A LOOK AT THE RECORDS--NORRIS AND HIS CHALLENGERS

By 1936, George Norris had been both admired and criticized for his sincerity. The Senator had been a controversial figure throughout his legislative career. Whether or not politicians and columnists agreed with his liberal ideas, there was little dispute as to his sincerity.\(^1\)

His honesty could be traced directly back to his rural background. Satisfaction and understanding are often derived from honest strivings toward an ideal or vision. Norris's labor with the soil gave him a deeper insight into the hardships of the working man.\(^2\)

When he was elected to the House of Representatives in 1903, after attending college, teaching school, obtaining a law degree, entering into politics, and serving as County Attorney and District Judge--his layman's view of politics was shocked by the corruption within political parties.\(^3\)

After three terms in the House, he was ready for rebellion. The House of Representatives was controlled

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\(^2\)Address delivered by Dr. Donald Typer at George Norris Centennial program, McCook, Nebraska, July 11, 1961.

\(^3\)Ibid.
by the Speaker of the House through his appointive powers over the Rules Committee, the administrative body for determination of legislation in the House. The House had a rule that a bill could be removed from the Rules Committee and placed on the calendar by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the body. Congressman Norris searched for a way to circumvent the two-thirds rule. The Speaker unwittingly provided for his own downfall by announcing that constitutional matters such as the census did not require a two-thirds majority, since the Constitution already made the census mandatory. At this point Norris introduced a resolution proposing the Rules Committee be chosen by the House. The House was forced to consider his proposal since the Constitution stated both houses had a right to make their own laws.\(^4\)

The courageous Congressman had fought for a principle regardless of possible personal cost.\(^5\) The proposal, passed by a majority of thirty-six Congressmen, represented a victory of freedom for the individual Representatives.

George Norris, always a man of principle, could not fully accept the confines of a political party. If


\(^5\)Ibid.
there was a job to be accomplished, he undertook the task without the framework of a set program by any party. He had established his reputation as a critic of parties through his congressional career. Political parties were defined by Norris as "only instruments . . . to bring about good government."

Too often, political parties relied on patronage, which did not allow the individual the right of self-criticism—an essential of democracy. Whenever Norris saw the need for criticism, whether it was of the President, cabinet, or industrial leaders, he spoke out. By 1936, he was spokesman for the Senate insurgents, a group which fought unselfishly on a dozen fronts for major political reforms. The venerable Senator remarked that his only ambition was to repay the people "by an unbiased service in their behalf."

Another one of his characteristics was his unshaken and consistent faith in the common man's ability to improvise a capable government. The Senator visualized America as "the bright beacon toward which the eyes of

7 Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., pp. 283-84.
8 Ibid., p. 382.
the world's oppressed and downtrodden ever will turn for inspiration and hope." He felt that one of America's greatest assets was its understanding and sympathetic attitude towards poverty, but yet tolerance for those with wealth.

The goals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness mentioned in the Declaration of Independence were, to Norris's belief, the object of the American government, and he advocated that elected officials be cognizant of this heritage. The United States government, a "method to bring to humanity the greatest amount of happiness," Norris claimed, "is founded, after all, upon the love of man for man."10

The Senator believed in this love as the foundation of religion, also. Both tried to promote the happiness and welfare of human beings. While he professed no particular religious faith, he did not condone religious prejudice. He sincerely believed the common goal of all religions was the love of humanity.11 Defining religion as existing "where charity is seen, and if we mount to Heaven, 'twill be on the grounds of love to man," Norris

9Norris, op. cit., p. 402.
10Ibid., p. 405.
11Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 177.
announced that his religious creed was to follow the dictates of his conscience with God's help.\textsuperscript{12}

The creative non-conformity which George Norris displayed throughout his career came from following his conscience. A constant objector to abuses of government, he based his argument upon the principle that the government existed for the common man.\textsuperscript{13}

The proving ground for his convictions was his refusal, along with five others, to accept the decision of the United States to enter World War I. Powerless to stop the rising war tide sentiment, and with the realization that the resolution would pass unanimously, he stated:

\textit{I feel that we are committing a sin against humanity and against our countrymen. I would like to say to this war god, 'you shall not coin into gold the lifeblood of my brethren'. . . . I feel we are about to put the dollar sign on the American flag.}\textsuperscript{14}

Here was the real test of Senator Norris's convictions. He alone had to answer the question which faced all politicians—Did an elected representative, when voting against the majority of his constituents, 

\textsuperscript{12}Norris, op. cit., p. 405.

\textsuperscript{13}Address delivered by Dr. Donald Typer at the George Norris Centennial program, McCook, Nebraska, July 11, 1961.

\textsuperscript{14}Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 117.
follow the sentiment of the state or of his conscience? Obviously, Norris followed his conscience, satisfied "in the knowledge that you have done your duty as God gives you light, regardless of the effect it may have upon political fortunes." 15

The Senator endured abuse and criticism, and once the resolution passed, he supported every proposal brought before the Senate. With amazingly accurate insight he forecast that the United States' entry into war meant "entanglements that will not end with this war, but will live and bring their evil influence upon many generations yet unborn." 16

The war disturbed Norris because of the vast loss of natural resources, as well as human life. Senator Norris, appreciative of nature and wishing to conserve the country's resources, sponsored the Tennessee Valley Authority Bill. The purpose of the bill was to create a federally administered, multi-purpose project for flood control, conservation, navigation, and electric power for promoting industry to aid our nation's defenses. 17

15 Norris, op. cit., p. 199.
17 George Norris, "Should All Electric Utilities Be Governmentally Owned and Operated?" Congressional Digest, 15 (October, 1936), p. 234.
Immediately, objection was raised by private power companies claiming the government would be competing with private enterprise. Senator Norris argued that monopolies such as power ought to be government owned and operated because the expense would be kept at a minimum. Senator Norris was ahead of his contemporaries who still believed the *laissez faire* attitude was the best policy. The Senator was just as firmly convinced that non-intervention by government no longer supplied human needs or served the masses.

The bill, first introduced in 1922, required six years for passage. From 1928 to 1933 when final passage was obtained, the Republican administrations of Coolidge and Hoover fought against the T.V.A. project. Franklin Roosevelt made the projects a campaign pledge, which brought Norris to his active support. One of the greatest days in the Senator's life saw the completion of a hard-won dream.

Norris never shirked a battle for his convictions. Another tedious effort brought passage of the Lame Duck Amendment, started in 1923 and finally passed in 1933.

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The amendment made a historic change in the constitution. Now the Congress would meet in January, and thereby eliminate the short session from January until March.21

The Unicameral in Nebraska was a more important personal victory, even though the passage was no easier than the other reforms. George Norris maintained a one house legislature could handle the legislation more efficiently if there were no parties involved.22 With most of the daily newspapers opposed to him, in addition to the political parties, the amendment was put on the ballot by petition, and won by a majority of 92,934 votes out of the total of 479,238 votes cast.23

At the pinnacle of his career, Norris could look back with no small amount of pride on his successful legislative victories in both state and national politics. Many of his personal ambitions for major reform measures had been enacted into law.

Realizing his youth was spent and fearful of what the Republican Party would do in this election, he was ready to retire in 1936. His innermost fear was that if he remained in the Senate he might prove to be a

22 Ibid., p. 279.
23 Nebraska Blue Book 1934, p. 530.
disappointment to himself and his friends, particularly Franklin Roosevelt. 24

In early November, 1935, on a journey to see his ill sister (Mrs. Clara Rakestraw of Los Angeles, California), he was interviewed in Salt Lake City by a group of reporters from the Desert News. In the interview, carried by the New York Times, he was quoted as stating: 

"I am no candidate. I am getting old. Younger men can and should carry on the work which I have tried to do during my years as a senator." 25

The Omaha World Herald concurred with the quote carried by the New York Times. In addition, the paper quoted Senator Norris as saying:

But a campaign would be a small disturbance compared to the trouble my not being a candidate has cost me. I have received hundreds of letters from all parts of the United States urging me to run next year. 26

From outward appearances it would seem that definitely Senator Norris would not run again. When questioned about the Salt Lake City interview upon his arrival in Los Angeles, he denied the statement saying: "I did not say at Salt Lake City that I would not be a

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26 Omaha World Herald, November 8, 1935.
candidate for re-election. I am on vacation and I want a rest. I am not discussing it."27

The outright denial was questioned by the newspapers of the country. The editor and staff of the Desert News maintained that the Senator had insisted he would not be a candidate. After the interview the question of his retirement had been discussed by the two reporters covering the interview, and again before the statement was printed in the paper. Both reporters had definitely agreed his statement implied that he would not run for re-election.28

Logical analysis would lead to the conclusion that Senator Norris was using masterful political strategy. To this point events in no way could imply his unavailability as a candidate, nor, on the other hand, had he committed himself.

Rumors were voiced by the newspapers that his colleagues in the Senate and various friends could persuade him to run again, or that Senator Norris might consider a fifth term as an independent if both parties elected "standpatters."29

27Ibid., November 14, 1935.
29Ibid., November 9, 1935.
While the Norris retirement controversy was going on, his colleagues in the Senate were issuing press releases on his retirement. Senator William Borah, Republican of Idaho, stated: "If I could [change Norris's plan for retirement] I would for his country's sake."30 Senator Hugo Black, Alabama Democrat, described him as: "One of the greatest men of the country, certainly of the Senate ... he is a man of rugged honesty ... the country needs him."31

While his senatorial colleagues of both parties were congratulating Senator Norris’s accomplishments, President Roosevelt came out with an extraordinary endorsement that broke all precedents. In a press conference he asserted:

If I were a citizen of the State of Nebraska, regardless of what party I belonged to, I would not allow George Norris to retire from the United States Senate, whether he wanted to or not, for the very good reason that I feel he is necessary in the Senate, not only to the people of Nebraska, but to those of the United States for as long as he lives.32

With the unqualified endorsement the Democratic Party nationally and in the state set into motion the party machinery to aid the Senator, should he decide to

30 Ibid.
32 Omaha World Herald, November 16, 1935.
run. Keith Neville, Nebraska Democratic National Committee-
man, and James Quigley, State Democratic Chairman, both
accepted the endorsement by the President, and hoped
Norris would run as Democrat. 33 Senator Joseph Guffey
of Pennsylvania, Chairman of the Democratic Campaign
Committee, announced: "If the Democrats out there are
satisfied, you can rest assured I am." 34

The editorials of the newspapers continued to
regard the question of Norris's retirement as open. The
situation seemed to indicate the Senator was not a can-
didate now, but that he would be a candidate if the course
of action seemed desirable. Liberal and non-partisan
groups did not want to lose Norris. The New York Times
editorialized that since he probably did not know what
to do, he would undoubtedly wait until after the primaries
to see if either party nominated a candidate of his choice,
and then announce his retirement and support the candidate.
If he were not in favor of the choices, however, he might
enter the race as an independent. 35

The Omaha World Herald was more forward in its
prediction. There was no question but that Norris would

33 Ibid., November 22, 1935.
34 Ibid., November 20, 1935.
pass up the primaries, choosing instead to run as an independent. 36

With the possibility of Senator Norris's retirement, Terry Carpenter, young Democrat of Scottsbluff, filed as nominee for the primary on November 28, 1935. Pledging continued support for outstanding ideas pursued by Senator Norris, he asserted:

Nebraska does not desire any more rubber stamps in Congress from Nebraska. Before the primary campaign ends I hope to visit every part of this state and to give the people a chance, at least, to meet Terry Carpenter and hear the things he stands for. 37

In addition to pledging continued support of the Norris program, he recognized the two main problems facing the nation as unemployment and the care of the aged. At the time of his candidacy he had not formulated a program. 38

What caused Terry Carpenter to file early in November, when he could have waited until after the beginning of the year? In a personal interview, Mr. Carpenter traced his friendship with Senator Norris to 1932, when Carpenter had begun his one term in the House of Representatives. 39 Even earlier, the venerable Senator had advised

36*Omaha World Herald*, November 15, 1935.
39*Personal interview with Terry Carpenter at Scottsbluff on July 13, 1961.*
the young man to bide his time for possible succession to Norris's Senate seat.

In late November, 1935, after the Senator announced his retirement, Terry Carpenter and his wife went to McCook to visit the Norrises. After dinner in the Keystone Hotel, they conversed on the mezzanine of the hotel. According to Carpenter, Norris frankly told him that "under no conditions would he run." 40

Thus encouraged, Carpenter filed, but assured the Senator in a letter that even if given the Democratic nomination, he would step aside in favor of Norris. Later published, the letter was used against the nominee. 41

In the interview twenty-five years later, Carpenter ruefully admitted that his friendship with Norris had proved to be politically impractical. 42

By December, events had confused rather than clarified the election. Nationally, Democratic Party Chairman James Farley was quoted as being in favor of the endorsement by the President. 43

40 Ibid.
41 Lincoln Star, October 12, 1936.
42 Personal interview with Terry Carpenter at Scottsbluff on July 13, 1961.
On December 7, even with the urging of the President, the Democratic Party, and his colleagues in the Senate, Norris publicly announced he was not going to be a candidate in the primary. He reasoned:

I believe President Roosevelt deserves re-election and I expect to support him actively, regardless of party considerations. I can perform this duty more effectively if I am not the candidate for Senator of any political party.¹⁴

With this announcement his friends in Nebraska, particularly James Lawrence, editor of the Lincoln Star, announced plans for a Draft Norris Movement. According to Mr. Lawrence, Senator Norris's statement did not interfere in any way with the program or plans of the committee. Editor Lawrence stated:

The committee believes that a primary contest is unnecessary in this state. He is the choice of a vast majority of the citizens so long as he will accept a draft upon his services at the proper time; the committee expects to place this question before the people of Nebraska.¹⁵

If he chose not to run in the primary, but later entered as an independent, the election would become complicated by the development of a three-way race. Any candidate, who had successfully won the nomination, would not step aside for Senator Norris.

¹⁴Ibid., December 7, 1935.
¹⁵Omaha World Herald, December 7, 1935.
At the beginning of 1936, speculation continued to be voiced that Senator Norris would accept the nomination as an independent. The Senator had not backed down under the intense pressure from the Democratic Party, his associates in the Senate, and the Draft Norris Committee; neither had he become convinced that he should run in the primaries. Collier's magazine summed up his position most accurately as follows:

As regularly as time comes around for Senator Norris to run again for re-nomination and re-election, he picks a spot in the exact center of the stage, sinks into an attitude of weakness and despair, sighs heavily and loudly for a while, and then in a voice that is scarcely more than a whisper, yet skillfully calculated to reach every corner of Nebraska, sadly announces that he has made up his mind to retire from the public scene.46

Since Nebraska recognized only two political parties, in order to place his name on the ballot as an independent, he would have to have a petition with a thousand signatures. Therefore, he could not run in the primary without a write-in ballot.47

Both political parties were seeking to put up strong candidates in the election. The month of January saw only two filings for the primary—both Democratic.


47 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), January 15, 1936.
The two candidates were George Hall, State Treasurer; and L. A. Larsen, former merchant of Curtis, Nebraska.

Hall, 65 years old, had been State Treasurer from 1915-19, and had been re-elected in 1932. He announced his candidacy from the hospital, where he was recovering from a broken leg. Upon filing, he pledged to adhere to the following program:48

1. He considered it an issue of the campaign to be pro-Roosevelt and New Deal or anti-Roosevelt and New Deal. He stated "I stand squarely pro-Roosevelt."

2. He directly opposed the United States entry into any war unless to defend ourselves against aggression.

3. A New Deal in patronage was pledged by the candidate for the Democratic Party of Nebraska.

4. He would do his utmost to bring agriculture and labor up to the level of industry and capital.

In addition to the above pledges, he maintained a sincere belief that he could beat George Norris, even if the latter chose to run as an independent. Hospitalized, Hall could not wage an active campaign, so he was not to be a strong contender in the election.

The remaining candidate, L. A. Larsen, Norwegian immigrant, lived in McCook in retirement at the time of

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48 *Columbus Daily Telegram*, January 6, 1936.
the election. He had attempted to run for Secretary of State in 1930 and 1932, only to lose both times.\footnote{Lincoln Star, January 9, 1936.}

Larsen's promises were admirable, but general:

1. He would be no one's "yes man."

2. He promised to hold the United States sacred above all else in the world.

3. He would not condone any official who spoke lightly of the Constitution by designating it as a "horse and buggy" document.\footnote{Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), January 19, 1936.}

In the various localities favorite sons were being mentioned as possible candidates. Former Democratic Congressman Edgar Howard indicated a willingness to run if Norris would definitely announce his retirement. Since Norris did not announce his retirement, the editor later withdrew his name.\footnote{York Daily Times-News, January 25, 1936.} The Republican farm element proposed Arthur Thompson of York. Growing up on a farm and obtaining his livelihood from being a livestock auctioneer, he was considered a likely choice. He refused to accept the nomination, giving no reason for his rejection.\footnote{Fairbury News, January 30, 1936.} Another local son, Keith Neville, outspoken critic of FDR, was considered to be available. He later refused the nomination, giving
no reason. The reluctance of the candidates to file was
due to their uncertainty regarding Norris's retirement.

By the end of January, three Democratic candidates
had entered the race. George Hall, confined to a hospital
bed, was supporting the President and the New Deal; L. A.
Larsen had pledged to support the Constitution; and Terry
Carpenter was running on a platform of continuing the pro-
gram and principles begun by Senator Norris.

Although February of 1936 was one of the coldest
and most severe winter months experienced by Nebraskans,
the political arena was not cold. In preparation for the
presidential primary, both parties in Nebraska were plan-
ing to circulate petitions requiring one hundred signa-
tures from each of the five congressional districts. The
names to be entered were Franklin Roosevelt, William
Borah of Idaho, and Governor Alfred Landon of Kansas.

With Norris still uncommunicative concerning the
Senate race, one additional Democrat and four Republican
hopefuls filed for the primaries. The Democrat was Emil
Placek, Wahoo banker; the Republicans included U. S. Renney
of Fort Calhoun, Lloyd Constable of Wymore, Harry Palmer
of Omaha, and Cleon Dech of Silver Creek.

53 Grand Island Daily Independent, February 17, 1936.
In addition to his banking connections, Emil Placek had been a farmer and a road culvert manufacturer. He represented no faction of the Democratic Party, and made no statement of platform at the time of filing, but he supported FDR and the New Deal.\textsuperscript{55} His home town paper, the Wahoo Democrat, gave the following biographical sketch:

He may be fairly classed as a lone wolf in politics, and always he has displayed courage and ability in party contests.\ldots The best thing about Placek is that he is honest as he is courageous, and the next best thing about him is his devotion to any principle or to any man to whom he may have pledged allegiance.\textsuperscript{56}

Because of his refusal to be identified with the party in Nebraska, he would lose patronage in the state, and not be a strong challenger.

The Republican Party offered little information on U. S. Renney or Harry Palmer. None of the questionnaires sent out by the newspapers was adequately answered by either candidate. Available information identified Renney as representing agricultural interests, particularly the Farm Holiday Movement, which advocated destruction of farm products en route to market to force government action.\textsuperscript{57}

Harry Palmer, Omaha attorney, had tried unsuccessfully to

\textsuperscript{55}\textit{Nebraska State Journal} (Lincoln), February 28, 1936.

\textsuperscript{56}Wahoo Democrat, March 12, 1936.

\textsuperscript{57}Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), February 27, 1936.
run for governor in 1932. His political views directly opposed the paternalistic approach of the New Deal.\textsuperscript{58}

A newcomer to politics, having spent most of his life as a druggist in Wymore, Lloyd Constable built his platform around the extant Constitution and its preservation. His ideas included enactment of an old age pension plan; promotion of better cooperation by farmers, labor, and merchants; extension of federal power to deal with criminals; federal government protection of, rather than competition with, private business; opposition to war, which he believed could be eliminated by supervision of the Fascist and Nazi movements.\textsuperscript{59}

The strongest Republican contender was Robert Simmons. Although an unsuccessful candidate for Senator in 1934, he had previously served five terms in the House of Representatives, 1922-1932.

An able debater, Simmons gave the press the following announcement at the time of his filing:

An extended statement is not necessary at this time. During the campaign two years ago, I debated the national issues before the people of the state. The results of the course of government since that time have justified my stand. . . . We face, not a contest of personalities, but a contest of ideals and conceptions of the purpose, powers, and functions of the national government.

\textsuperscript{58}\textit{Omaha World Herald}, February 28, 1936.

\textsuperscript{59}\textit{Leigh World}, March 6, 1936.
I shall oppose the New Deal's un-American, un-economic, extravagant, debt-increasing, and tax-burdening policies, the seizing of power from local governing bodies, and the partisan spoils system. I shall agree with the New Deal where I believe their purposes are right and the methods they follow are not harmful to our institutions of government. Communism in form and in fact must be wiped out.

I believe that we can solve the complex problems of agriculture, revive business, re-employ labor, care for those in need, restore our citizenship to real prosperity, and maintain the forward march of liberal and humanitarian movements, all within our system of constitutional government. I shall strive for the solution of our political, economic, and social problems upon a basis that will preserve to the individual citizen his liberty of thought, action and opportunity. To that end I pledge to fight side by side with an aroused and aggressive citizenship.

Since he believed that the New Deal and N.R.A. in particular represented a swing toward dictatorship, he made his appeal to the farming areas where the New Deal in 1932-35 had been primarily concerned with bolstering and stabilizing the major industries of the country rather than completely solving the farm problem.

Thus, with Simmonds's decision to enter the race, all the principal Republican candidates had filed by the end of February. Hugh Brown, liberal Republican and editor of Kearney Hub, had a petition filed without his

60 *Omaha Bee-News*, February 27, 1936.

knowledge. Because he could not be reached for a state-
ment, it was rumored that he would accept the nomination
by petition. But at the end of February, Brown had
promised only that he would definitely make a statement
in the next few days.

The Democratic hopefuls, on the other hand, were
filled with uncertainty and anxiety. Neither radical
Terry Carpenter, hospitalized George Hall, anti-partisan
L. A. Larsen, nor favored Emil Placek wanted to run against
Senator Norris. No candidate wanted to be asked to step
down for the man who had received unqualified endorsement
from Franklin Roosevelt.

Although Norris was noncommittal during the primary
filings, he was busy in the Senate trying to urge passage
of a bill to reduce the Supreme Court's check over Con-
gressional legislation. By a five-to-four decision, of
which the Senator was extremely critical, the Supreme Court,
in January of 1936, had declared the A.A.A. unconstitu-
tional because it regulated agricultural production by means
of a processing tax. Having stated his opinion that "People
can change Congress, but only God can change the Supreme

63 *Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln), February 26, 1936.
Norris urged in his hometown paper that agriculture be protected:

I realize that unless agriculture is revived, unless this fundamental industry is placed upon a basis where free men and free women can survive that, in the end, it means the destruction of the republic . . . I say, Mr. President, that decision cannot stand if our country is to continue to live and prosper . . . it means to me that this coordinate branch of our government has gone beyond any power that was ever contemplated in the constitution.65

A critic of the court for twenty-five years before Franklin D. Roosevelt's term, Norris's main objection was that a court appointed for life tended to be unsympathetic towards the needs and will of the people. Thus, the Senator supported F.D.R.'s plan for automatic retirement at seventy, and only by a decision of two-thirds vote of the court could an act be nullified.66 The immediate solution, according to the Senator, was the introduction of a bill proposing that the lower federal courts not decide constitutional questions and that invalidating legislation would be binding only if seven of nine justices concurred.67 Another long-range proposal

64Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 338.
66Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 349.
suggested by Senator Norris was a constitutional amendment limiting the bench term to nine years. In fact, if he had had his way, the Supreme Court would have been the major issue of the 1936 election.\textsuperscript{68}

Knowing that the court had declared the A.A.A. unconstitutional, he was fearful that the T.V.A. would also be invalidated. There continued to be speculation that he might be a candidate to protect the T.V.A. project.\textsuperscript{69} It is small wonder that the Democratic Party and the candidates were placed in a difficult position as events moved into March.

As the first week in March passed by, the candidates began to organize their campaigns for the primary, still not knowing what George Norris would do.

The political scene was not long to remain quiet. Perhaps the greatest surprise of the primary, particularly of the Democratic candidates, was the filing of James Quigley of Valentine, Chairman of the Nebraska State Democratic Committee. Refusing to resign his committee post, he stated:

\begin{quote}
I am not seeking this office for myself. I won't use the state organization for my personal benefit, and the other candidates
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{68}Alfred Lief, Democracy's Norris (New York: Stackpole Sons, 1939), p. 476.

\textsuperscript{69}Hastings Daily Tribune, January 13, 1936.
will get the same treatment from the state organization as they would had I not filed. 70

In addition, he indicated an unusual platform—urging voters to support Franklin D. Roosevelt and pledging to represent the farmer and livestock growers of the state. Then he gave his main reason for entering the campaign. His entrance was due to the three candidates who had not come out in support of Senator Norris and who would not resign if Norris chose to run. Since it was President Roosevelt's expressed wish that Norris run, James Quigley stated, "I thought it was up to me to make what I sincerely consider to be a sacrifice." 71

Continuing to clarify his position, he stated:

I also feel that the people of Nebraska demand the re-election of Senator Norris. Senator Norris does not belong to any party but he belongs to the people of the state of Nebraska and to the nation. It is conceded that he is one of the outstanding senators in Washington.

... I do want to obtain the democratic nomination for senator, but if Senator Norris sees fit later on to enter the campaign by petition and I am the democratic nominee, I feel that it will be my duty as a good citizen and for the best interests of Nebraska and of President Roosevelt and the nation for me not only to support Senator Norris for re-election, but to release my democratic friends and others from any obligation to vote for me. 72

Indeed, the other three candidates were put in a ridiculous situation. Terry Carpenter went to see Quigley

70 Omaha World Herald, March 5, 1936.
71 Fremont Tribune, March 5, 1936.
72 Omaha World Herald, March 5, 1936.
in Valentine the day before Quigley filed as a candidate. Quigley had been a good friend and he even implied at the time that there was no office which the Democratic Party would not give to Carpenter. Years later Carpenter expressed the opinion that the party had taken advantage of him.\(^73\)

The Democratic "lone wolf", Emil Placek, refused to accept Quigley's nomination by petition as delegate at large, stating:

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I am firmly convinced that no individual, that especially no Democrat, should aspire to more than one office, either in the primary or a general election, and no individual should have his name on the ballot more than once.\(^74\)
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Placek was indicating that James Quigley should resign one office before running for another. George Hall criticized Quigley for thinking that votes cast by the people at the polls could be transferred to another candidate.\(^75\)

In the Republican Party, on the other hand, Hugh Brown, the Republican petition candidate for Senator, refused to run for the position, stating: "Business affairs will take most of my time during the next two months, thus

\(^73\)Opinion expressed by Terry Carpenter in interview at Scottsbluff, July 13, 1961.

\(^74\)Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), March 13, 1936.

\(^75\)Lincoln Star, April 9, 1936.
making it impossible for me to make a campaign for the nomination."76 Also when U. S. Renney withdrew his name, giving no reason to any newspaper, the Republican Party found itself with five candidates still running in the primary, Robert Simmons being the most active campaigner.

Caught between two factions of their party, the Democratic contenders carried on with varying degrees of intensity. The three vigorous campaigners were—Emil Placek, Terry Carpenter, and James Quigley; George Hall continued his campaign efforts from a hospital bed. Each faction claimed strong representatives. Arthur Mullen and Senator Edward Burke opposed James Lawrence and Dan Stephens.

Mullen, a close friend of the administration since 1932, had been National Committeeman for Nebraska from 1932-34. During the period he had opened a law office in Washington. When the rumor was circulated that Mullen had opened the offices for political spoils, he resigned the post.77 Then Keith Neville, former governor of Nebraska, took over, only to resign to Senator Edward Burke, who was presently National Committeeman, and who was running for re-election to the post at the time of the 1936 election.78

76 Ibid., March 9, 1936.
78 Lincoln Star, January 1, 1936.
Since he was one of Nebraska's Senators, it was felt he could facilitate Nebraska's representation in National Party councils in Washington. Arthur Mullen, who was supporting Senator Burke, was quoted as stating:

As a Nebraskan, and I am still a Nebraskan, I am doing everything possible for Ed Burke. I am especially interested in the election of Senator Burke as national committeeman. Despite all reports to the contrary, Senator Burke stands high with the administration leaders and with the president himself.

Mullen believed that James Lawrence was causing the controversy in the Democratic Party. He was quoted in the Nebraska State Journal as implying:

The controversy in this primary is not new. It is headed by a man from Lancaster County. That county tells how to run the party, how to write our platform and how to elect the candidates and then always gives a Republican majority.

In contrast, James Lawrence, editor of the Lincoln Star, expressed the opinion that Arthur Mullen could be a likeable fellow and good friend if he were not in politics. He summed up his opinion stating: "It is regrettable that in heat of political discussion he develops a ruthlessness against any who oppose him both in speech and action."

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79 Ibid.
80 Omaha Bee-News, April 9, 1936.
81 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), April 10, 1936.
82 Omaha Bee-News, April 12, 1936.
Editor Lawrence was supporting Dan Stephens, Fremont banker, as National Committeeman rather than Senator Burke. Many Democrats, including Dan Stephens and James Lawrence, were opposed to Senator Burke for his votes of opposition against the New Deal in the Senate. 83 Dan Stephens ran on a three-point platform: one, to support F.D.R. and the New Deal; two, not to try to hand pick the delegates to the national conventions; and three, not to attempt to be national committeeman by irregular methods. 84 It was a contest of personalities rather than one of issues. The Lawrence-Stephens faction was supporting George Norris for the Senate, hoping that he would run. Lawrence felt that the Mullen-Burke faction represented everything which George Norris did not. 85 On the other hand, the Burke-Mullen faction was supporting James Quigley for Senator. The remaining candidates, George Hall, Terry Carpenter, and Emil Placek, were not included in controversy. Thus, the four Democratic candidates did not need to look for a major issue. The rift in the Democratic Party provided a ready primary campaign issue.

In a series of speeches, Emil Placek campaigned that he was independent of Arthur Mullen or any other

83 Omaha World Herald, February 29, 1936.
84 Omaha Bee-News, March 9, 1936.
85 Omaha Bee-News, April 12, 1936.
person or corporation. In a statement printed by the Omaha World Herald, he emphasized:

I apologize for stumping in Senator Burke's behalf and promising you that he ... would be a senator free from the influences of Mullen. I want my party to be pure ... Elect me and I'll help take the party away from Mullen and Burke and put it back into the hands of the Democrats. 86

Another alleged campaign issue was the inherent tendency of the New Deal to be socialistic. In a speech at Grand Island, Placek pointed out that the present administration's program was not socialistic. It was ridiculous for the Republicans to think they could return to rugged individualism. The best reason for not returning to rugged individualism was John Dillinger's crime wave. This kind of individualism the United States could do without. 87

Another Democratic candidate who used the rift of the party to his advantage was George Hall. His criticism was centered around James Quigley's acceptance of the nomination in the name of George Norris. Candidate Hall was constantly trying to convince the public that he could even beat George Norris. None of the other Democratic candidates ever made statements to that effect. 88

86 Omaha World Herald, April 10, 1936.
87 Grand Island Daily Independent, April 4, 1936.
88 Columbus Daily Telegram, March 17, 1936.
Since no candidate can release votes given to him by the voters, Mr. Hall suggested that James Quigley ought to withdraw his name from the ticket.\(^89\)

Of the four Democratic candidates, James Quigley received the most backing. Although he was not well known by Nebraskans, a group of party regulars got a fund together for his campaign.\(^90\) Since he was the choice of Arthur Mullen and Senator Burke, he gained additional support from the party.

As to his capabilities as a candidate, he released the following statement at a meeting in Omaha:

> I have no idea that I am a statesman. I don't know what kind of a senator I will make. I am neither saint nor sinner, just a democrat preaching the doctrine of Jeffersonian Democracy.\(^91\)

Then very clearly he gave his position as a candidate in the Democratic Party. In the following lines he expressed the view:

> I filed for United States Senator and I said then and I repeat now that if I am nominated on April 14, I will not withdraw, but I will be the Democratic candidate for senator and I will campaign for the Democratic national and state ticket. But if Senator Norris files as an independent, I will release every Democrat in the state from any obligation to support me.\(^92\)

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\(^{89}\) *Hastings Daily Tribune*, April 9, 1936.  
\(^{90}\) *Cherry County News* (Valentine), March 12, 1936.  
\(^{91}\) *Omaha Bee–News*, March 27, 1936.  
\(^{92}\) *Ibid.*
James Quigley also campaigned as a supporter of F.D.R. and the New Deal. In a radio address just prior to the primary election, he emphasized that President Roosevelt in three years had reduced unemployment by 30 per cent. He maintained the banner of the Democratic Party was: "Join our army and march under the banner inscribed: 'Roosevelt and Recovery'."

The remaining Democratic candidate, Terry Carpenter, believed the party had taken advantage of his early filing. Since he was in opposition to the actions of the Democratic Party, he received no financial support from the party. He said: "the Democratic Party had treated him like he had diphtheria." He was urged to withdraw from the campaign but flatly refused. Usually speaking to small audiences, he maintained that Arthur Mullen and Senator Burke were obnoxious to Senator Norris. In fact, according to Carpenter, Senator Norris once stated: "The only time Senator Burke and I ever voted alike were on motions to adjourn." Carpenter referred to

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93 *Grand Island Daily Independent*, April 7, 1936.
94 Ibid.
95 Statement made by Terry Carpenter in an interview at Scottsbluff on July 13, 1961.
96 *Omaha World Herald*, April 10, 1936.
James Quigley as "second choice in the clique [Mullen-Burke] with which he is associated." 97

Carpenter's platform in the primary was one of strong opposition to chain stores' unfair competition and price cutting. The solution was first, to place a tax on chain operations; and second, to allow inflation so that the farmers would receive a just price for their farm products. 98 He also endorsed the Townsend Old Age plan to retire people automatically upon reaching the age of sixty with a pension of two-hundred dollars a month. 99 Advocating isolationism and strict neutrality, Carpenter felt that no belligerent nation should receive aid in form of arms or loans that would help it to wage war, nor should the United States meddle in European affairs until the enemy came to this country. 100 The final decision on Carpenter and the other Democratic contenders was to be given by the voters on April 14, 1936.

The primary campaigns of the Republicans, in contrast, were not nearly as involved. The only vigorous contender was Robert Simmons. He opposed the New Deal

97 *Lincoln Star*, April 10, 1936.
98 *Alliance Times Herald*, February 28, 1936.
100 *Nebraska Signal* (Geneva), March 12, 1936.
and charged the administration with an attempt to set up a dictatorship. Very few newspapers, however, carried any of his speeches; certainly his campaign did not compare to the Democratic Party campaigns. Since the remaining Republican candidates were relatively unknown to the voters of Nebraska, outside of their own localities, and since they carried on very poor campaigns, there was good reason for Simmons' actions. It was a foregone conclusion that Robert Simmons was going to be the Republican candidate.

Across Nebraska the Republican Party was elated over the Democratic Party squabble. The outcome of the primary election could be only speculative. An independent survey of sixty-one Nebraska editors, conducted by the Lowell Newspaper Service of Lincoln, indicated that in the Democratic Party, James Quigley was the leading choice of the editors with twenty-four votes; George Hall next with ten; Terry Carpenter eight; Emil Placek six. In the Republican Party, Robert Simmons was given fifty-three votes while the only other candidate, U. S. Henney, received one. The survey showed the Democratic candidates were close after James

101 Wayne Herald, February 27, 1936.
102 Omaha World Herald, March 23, 1936.
103 Albion Argus, March 26, 1936.
104 Ibid.
Quigley but, in the opinion of the editors, Quigley was far out in front.

Just prior to the election, there was an attempt to urge the Democratic and Republican voters to write in the name of George Norris. With the Nebraska Progressive League sponsoring the draft movement, it was hoped that enough voters of both parties would write in the Senator's name so he could be the preferred choice of the two parties.\(^\text{105}\)

Election day came. All the political headquarters were making a concentrated effort to get people to the polls. Several groups such as the Independent Voters League and Progressive Association made cars available on election day. When the voter reached the polls, he faced the longest series of primary ballots in Nebraska's political history. Since every twelve years the city elections coincide with the primaries, the Omaha voter faced a particularly formidable ballot—it contained 1,125 names for consideration.\(^\text{106}\)

There was little excitement at the polls until the returns were in, although some confusion was evidenced in both parties as to whether voters should choose from

\(^\text{105}\)Columbus Daily Telegram, March 11, 1936.

\(^\text{106}\)Omaha World Herald, April 14, 1936.
the party slate or write in George Norris's name. The voters unanimously chose from the party slates.

The Democratic tickets presented a problem. It was difficult to choose among James Quigley, Emil Placek, and Terry Carpenter. The election returns were not nearly so perplexing as was the surprise the Democratic Party had at the outcome.

Early returns from the Democratic primary indicated that Terry Carpenter was leading with James Quigley second, and George Hall ran a close third with Emil Placek fourth. In the Republican camp, Robert Simmons was leading by nearly a four-to-one margin over his nearest competitor, Harry Palmer.¹⁰⁷ The final results in the Democratic senatorial race indicated that Terry Carpenter had received 26 per cent of the total ballots cast defeating James Quigley by 4,330 votes. In the Republican Party, nominee Simmons received 60 per cent of the total ballots cast in the Republican senatorial race defeating Harry Palmer by 59,371 votes.¹⁰⁸

The final tabulation showed a total vote cast of 297,291, the second largest primary vote ever cast in

¹⁰⁷Ibid., April 15, 1936.
¹⁰⁸Ibid., May 22, 1936.
Nebraska. Only August, 1934, had been larger. Breaking the figure down by parties, the Democratic Party had 157,903 of the total, the Republican Party 139,388. The statistics from a local concern showed that three candidates were nominated by more than 50 per cent of the total vote in their parties; namely Roy L. Cochran, Democratic nominee for Governor; Robert G. Simmons, Republican nominee for United States Senate; and Dwight Griswold, Republican nominee for Governor. The highest percentage that any candidate received was incumbent Governor Cochran with slightly more than 80 per cent of all Democratic ballots. It came as a surprise to many Republicans that Robert Simmons, top vote getter, polled 60 per cent of the party's vote while Dwight Griswold, Republican nominee for Governor, polled even more.

On a geographic basis in the Democratic primary, nominee Carpenter's strength was found to be outstate in the South Platte and Republican Valley territories. He also won Hall County (Grand Island) and Platte County (Columbus). In the panhandle he carried Scottsbluff

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109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
County and Box Butte County.  A survey of sixty-one outstate counties indicated that Terry Carpenter carried forty-one counties to James Quigley's ten, the remainder going to Emil Placek, who received six, and George Hall, who obtained four.

Specific groups that were backing Terry Carpenter were: The German-Americans, whose voting strength was estimated at sixty-five thousand, which was won because of Carpenter's defense of the German people as a congressman on the floor of the House of Representatives in 1933; the radical farm groups, and the railroad brotherhoods.

The Democratic Party was unhappy with Carpenter's nomination. All the factions were lining up to support Norris. The Mullen-Burke faction had selected James Quigley to run for the nomination. If he won and if Senator Norris decided to run, Quigley would release the voters from voting the party ticket. Since the favorite candidate did not win, there were several conclusions to be drawn: First, James Quigley was not as popular among the rank and file as was previously thought by the Democratic Party; and second, George Norris still could not be counted on to run.

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114Ibid., April 16, 1936.
115Ibid.
116Ainsworth Star-Journal, April 16, 1936.
Arthur Mullen and James Quigley made no comment after the primary election. Senator Burke, however, made his position quite clear when he stated: "From Norris to Carpenter... is too long a leap for me. I cannot picture Carpenter filling Norris's seat, and I want Norris to enter the race." 117

Terry Carpenter replied to Senator Burke with the following statement: "I still look on Burke as I always have! How that is, I know you would not print." 118 He went on to indicate that six weeks ago he wrote Norris a letter describing his plans if Norris would run. If the Senator wanted to make it public, it was acceptable to Carpenter. Senator Norris refused to release the letter unless specifically authorized to do so. 119 Thus, the Democratic nominee could not gain the support of the party leaders at this stage. Although the voters of Nebraska had chosen him, the party leaders did not consider this a mandate.

To sum up the results of the primary returns, Robert Simmons, Republican, and Terry Carpenter, Democrat, were to contend for the United States Senate. The possibility that George Norris might file as an independent candidate was not, however, out of the question.

117 Columbus Daily Telegram, April 15, 1936.  
118 Omaha World Herald, April 16, 1936.  
119 Ibid., April 17, 1936.
CHAPTER III

THE CONVENTIONS

Since Carpenter was unacceptable to the Democratic Party leaders, efforts were intensified to convince George Norris that he ought to be a candidate. Norris, meanwhile, had been busy in the Senate working out the details of his Mississippi Valley Authority Bill. This bill was designed for flood control, irrigation, and navigation of the Mississippi basin.¹ He also was working to secure the final passage of his Rural Electrification Bill.²

Back in Nebraska, rumors were flying from all sources. Again, came the hint that a petition movement would be under way. James Lawrence, editor of the Lincoln Star and head of the petition committee, indicated that possibly a petition would be circulated.³

Yielding to pressure from the voters and Democratic Party leaders, the Senator made a statement on April 18, 1936, concerning the election:

I feel just as I always did. I don't want to be a candidate. But I am only human and I don't want to disregard any duty I owe.

¹New York Times, April 17, 1936.
³Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), April 17, 1936.
I am not so egotistical, either, as to believe that I am the only man who could represent my state in the senate. There are hundreds of others. But I don't close my eyes to the demand being made. I hope it will die out.4

One of his close friends, Mayor LaGuardia, while on a stopover before going on to the West Coast for a mayors' conference, was quoted as saying: "I consider Senator Norris the outstanding statesman of our time. . . . I hold him in great respect. . . . I hope the people of Nebraska will send him back to the Senate."5

On April 20, the cautious Senator made a political speech praising President Roosevelt as a statesman able to solve the tremendous economic problems confronting the nation.6 In fact, in Norris's own words: "No greater service can be rendered to the common individual by the just voters of America than to unite loyally in an effort to see that President Roosevelt is re-elected."7 He had made it quite clear that whether or not he was a candidate, he would definitely campaign for Franklin D. Roosevelt.8

James Farley, Democratic National Party Chairman, shed some light on the confused political situation by

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1 Hastings Daily Tribune, April 18, 1936.
2 Omaha World Herald, April 18, 1936.
3 Ibid., April 20, 1936.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., op. cit., p. 480.
commenting as follows: "In my judgment, George Norris will be the next senator from Nebraska." Additional encouragement was obtained from a member of the Norris household, who indicated to reporters the opinion that Norris would accept the petition movement as an independent candidate.  

Although there were many good indications that Norris might become a candidate, the editorials were divided. The Omaha World Herald expressed the opinion that Norris would not run. The Omaha Bee-News, on the other hand, regarded his chances for re-election as good as they had ever been. The Eagle (South Sioux City, Nebraska) believed that Norris would win if he would run as an independent. Even the editors of the newspapers could not agree on the unpredictable George Norris.

The speculation concerning Norris caused the other candidates, particularly Robert Simmons, to go almost unnoticed. Just prior to the convention, Republican

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9 Omaha World Herald, April 27, 1936.
10 Nebraska Daily News-Press (Nebraska City), May 6, 1936.
11 Omaha World Herald, April 29, 1936.
12 Omaha Bee-News, April 24, 1936.
13 Eagle (South Sioux City), May 4, 1936.
nominee Simmons presented his fourteen point program to the voters of Nebraska:

1. Keep taxes down.
2. Reduce interest rates.
3. Prevent increase of national debt.
4. Turn from a program of scarcity to production of foods.
5. Stop importation of foods and agriculture products which can be produced in America.
6. Restore and rebuild agricultural tariffs to protect American Farmers; lower industrial tariffs where experience has shown not needed.
7. Develop new and increased uses for products of our farms, such as industrial alcohol.
8. Develop and expand the production of those crops consumed but not now produced in America.
9. Develop and expand production of those foods now produced in America, but which are not produced sufficiently to supply our own needs (e.g., sugar).
10. Recapture and develop foreign markets for products.
11. Encourage rather than discourage the consumption of products of the farm.
12. Solve the problems of marketing by cooperative action and lower handling and transportation charges.
13. Recapture the purchasing power for farm products, relieve purchasing power for farm products.
14. "Above all else, preserve liberty of thought, action and opportunity of the American farmer."

Robert Simmons had stated his views clearly to the agricultural interest of Nebraska, prior to the state convention. Most of his program was against the New Deal philosophy.

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Scottsbluff Star Herald, May 1, 1936.
Terry Carpenter was caught squarely in the middle between the Democratic leaders on the one hand and the possibility that George Norris might be a candidate on the other. He reiterated his determination to stay in the race regardless of the circumstances, stating: "I'm going to make a campaign the like of which this state has never seen before and I'll be at the Democratic state convention in Omaha, May 7, to tell them about it." Carpenter wanted the Democratic Party to either support him or turn him down. He felt confident that if he were supported at the state convention, he could win over Simmons and even beat Senator Norris should he decide to run.

With the candidates involved in various pursuits, the conventions of both parties were ready to meet in Omaha on May 7, 1936. Democrats and Republicans formed a joint committee which worked out a series of resolutions on amending the primary election procedure. The joint committee proposed: One, that the candidates for each office named be placed on the ballot as the choice of the state convention, with others filing if they so desired; two, that the state convention endorse two candidates

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16 *Omaha Bee-News*, May 6, 1936.
for each office, but permit others to file; finally, that the convention endorse the two candidates getting the largest number of votes in the convention as first choice and second choice respectively. The proposals did not apply to Senators, Representatives, or Governors. If acceptable, the resolutions would be presented to delegates of both conventions.

On the eve of the Democratic convention, James Quigley predicted that his party would become united, but already the Democratic Party had a three-sided dispute going among its factions. One group wanted to introduce a resolution endorsing Norris as an independent; another faction, which included Terry Carpenter, intended to denounce "Ed" Burke and Arthur Mullen; a third group wanted a resolution recognizing "Ed" Burke's contributions to the Party. Two counties, Jefferson and Saunders, urged that the party support Norris. Terry Carpenter and his backers were opposed to endorsing Senator Norris. To add to the confusion, Lancaster County refused to endorse Senator Burke. Most of the Democratic Party delegates favored an amendment allowing the convention to endorse the primary

17Ibid.
18Hastings Daily Tribune, May 6, 1936.
19Omaha Bee-News, May 3, 1936.
20Ibid.
candidates. The final decision was to endorse no one; according to the election law of 1929, Section 32, Chapter 1173, the party was prohibited from taking action by a "state convention either for or against any person who is or may be a candidate for any office that is to be voted on at the next general election."  

Even the next order of business had caused confusion to break out in the Democratic session, as the party's choice for State Central Committee was announced. Fred Deutsch of Norfolk was temporary convention chairman. Terry Carpenter disliked Deutsch and indicated that he favored Edgar Howard of Columbus. Carpenter and his supporters, therefore, were without favor in their dissent. In the uproar Emil Placek, sponsoring a petition proposing the election of the Democratic Central Committee Chairman from the floor, took the microphone. He was booted from the stage.

As order was being restored, one of the delegates reminded the temporary chairman that in all the excitement no one had said the opening prayer. As soon as the prayer

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21 Ibid.
22 Columbus Daily Telegram, May 6, 1936.
23 Omaha Bee-News, May 8, 1936.
24 Ibid., May 7, 1936.
was given, the keynote address was presented by Harry B. Fleharty, a former solicitor of Omaha.26 The delegates then adjourned until the evening session when the question of the chairmanships would be revived.27

When the session reconvened in the evening, a group of Democrats united to try and demand that the Democratic State Central Committee Chairman be chosen from the floor.28 Terry Carpenter was supporting Frank McGrath, presently Clerk of the District Court, for the chairmanship.29 Behind Senate nominee Carpenter's candidate were Charles Barth of Seward and Frank Taylor of St. Paul. Opposing the attempt was the Burke-Mullen-Quigley group. Neither Senator Burke nor Arthur Mullen made his appearance at the convention.30 The remaining Democratic leaders, however, were so certain of Quigley's strength that they let the question of the election be recognized on the floor.31 The temporary chairman called for nominations from the floor, and nomination was made and seconded for James

26 Ibid.

27 According to Carpenter, the convention had agreed to support him as the Democratic nominee. If this is true, then the party bosses took advantage of him later in the state convention. Interview with Carpenter, July 13, 1961.

28 Omaha World Herald, May 8, 1936.

29 Omaha Bee-News, May 7, 1936.

30 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), May 8, 1936.

31 Omaha World Herald, May 8, 1936.
Quigley. Another nomination was made and seconded for Frank McGrath. Then Thomas O'Brien sent the delegates into laughter by proposing Joseph Koutsky of Omaha, a Republican. Upon being ruled out of order, O'Brien humorously stated: "Since we are going to support Senator Norris, I believe we should have a Republican as our state chairman."32

When the temporary chairman called for a vote to be taken, the convention decided overruled the Carpenter forces by a four-to-one majority.33 Senate nominee Terry Carpenter then asked for the floor and received permission to make a statement. Taking the microphone he said:

I want you to make a decision, whether you accept me or throw me out by the seat of the pants. I want this convention to go down in history as having indicated the will of the people and not of the steam roller that ran the convention two years ago.34

After Carpenter's speech the chairman attempted to restore order. Since the evening had been spent arguing over the State Central Committee election, the lateness of the hour made it imperative that the platform be read immediately. With confusion still existing on the floor, the platform was presented a few minutes before adjournment.

32Ibid.
33Omaha Bee-News, May 8, 1936.
34Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), May 8, 1936.
Many of the delegates did not hear what was read.35

The platform was a confirmation of the New Deal. Nationally, the party platform encouraged private enterprise and commended the President for his farm program. Concerning the state, there were planks demanding no new taxes, urging preservation of the natural resources of the state, commending the social security program of the state, and suggesting that a change be made in the primary law so the parties would have more voice in the state convention. (See Appendix C, Table I).

The convention then turned its attention to the party candidates. Governor Cochran was endorsed and commended for his record.36 Then Senator Burke was commended for his congressional record. While confusion still reigned supreme on the floor, the party endorsed George Norris, commending him for the T.V.A. and R.E.A. programs. He was characterized as "the ablest champion in Congress of the common man, and the sternest foe of those seeking special privileges."37

Stating that no one could replace George Norris in the Senate, the party pointed out to the voters that he

35Ibid.
36Omea World Herald, May 8, 1936.
37Work Projects Administration, Nebraska Party Platforms 1858-1940 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1940), p. 485. See Appendix C, Table I.
had to be re-elected in order to complete his program. The concluding statement summed up the reason for his being the party's choice:

The need for his return to his unfinished work in the congress outweighs all consideration of party and party regularity and transcends all fair regard for the political aspirations, however worthy, of any individual.38

This statement concluded the platform, and the convention adjourned immediately after the platform was read.

Terry Carpenter charged that the Norris resolutions were pushed through the convention after 90 per cent of the delegates had left.39 Although he still considered George Norris a friend, he could no longer support the Senator because he felt that in accepting the convention endorsement, George Norris was backed by the party bosses.40 Candidate Carpenter implied that from then on he did not want to be affiliated with the party. He reported: "I intend to carry the fight to the people."41 Carpenter's only hope lay in going to Washington to obtain an audience with the President.42 The Democratic Party leaders had been successful in their refusal to endorse the nominee.

38Ibid.
40Omaha Bee-News, May 8, 1936.
41Omaha World Herald, May 8, 1936.
42Personal interview with Terry Carpenter, July 13, 1961.
For both the confident Robert Simmons and the disillusioned Terry Carpenter, the state conventions had clarified the party positions on senatorial candidacy. The Republicans were endorsing and supporting Simmons, while the Democrats had refused to accept the "favored" candidate. Instead, they endorsed George Norris, who as yet had refused to state whether or not he would run.

The conventions had shown certain common characteristics. Both had agreed on primary laws to allow conventions more voice in choosing the candidates. Both wanted to keep the government in the hands of the individual. Both platforms recognized the individual needs of the state, but the solutions differed. Although Republicans sought to solve these problems through local administration, the Democrats believed that state needs could be better satisfied by a uniform, federally directed program.

The Republican platform, as read to the delegates assembled in the Fontenelle Hotel, contained four major planks: One, indictment of the present administration; two, agricultural reform; three, relief in the state; and four, a change in the state primary.43

In indicting the administration, the Republican Party maintained that private enterprise had been discouraged;

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that the New Deal was a spendthrift program requiring increased taxes; that the administration, by failing to balance the budget, had increased the national debt by ten billion dollars; and that the President should be criticized for attempting to change the basic fundamental beliefs embodied in our Constitution. (See Appendix C, Table II).

Perhaps the most important plank in the state platform was the proposed agriculture program. The Republican Party proposed the following:

a. Oppose the importation of agricultural products which will depress the price received by our farmers.
b. Build farm-to-market roads.
c. Take government lands out of competition with the farmer.
d. Promote the industrial use of farm products by applied science.
e. Facilitate economical production and increased consumption on a basis of abundance instead of scarcity.\footnote{Work Projects Administration, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 486. See Appendix C, Table II.}

Concerning the problem of relief, the Republican Party felt that it should be placed under local administration. The party was against federal state dollar matching, because it would prevent the states from carrying out projects which were needed in the individual states.

The platform contained endorsements of Robert Simmons as senatorial nominee and Dwight Griswold as
gubernatorial nominee, and concluded with the following statement:

We insist that the Nebraska state government be run from the state capital, not from Washington. We would substitute the square deal of Theodore Roosevelt for the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt.\(^{45}\)

The Republican State Convention, which adjourned late in the afternoon, had been noteworthy for its lack of discord.\(^{46}\) Republican leaders were delighted and optimistic of easy victory in November over the wrangling Democrats, who were faced with the danger of a major party split over their own senatorial endorsement.\(^{47}\) In a jubilant mood, many of the thousand Republican delegates went from the hotel to observe the bitter contest at the City Auditorium, where the Democrats had been meeting since 1:00 P.M. After the state conventions, both parties began preparing delegations to go to their national conventions.

There had never been an instance in Nebraska political history quite like the circumstances pertaining to the senatorial race in 1936. Senator Norris did not run in the primary because he desired to retire. Even after the primary results and the endorsement by the state

\(^{45}\)Ibid., p. 487.

\(^{46}\)Lincoln Star, May 8, 1936.

\(^{47}\)Omaha Bee-News, May 8, 1936.
convention, he still indicated he would not run as an independent candidate. Speculation continued to be voiced that Norris would not run, in hopes of obtaining a cabinet post; Democratic Party leaders maintained he would run.48

To help influence the Senator, a non-partisan group of between one hundred-fifty to two hundred people met in Lincoln at the Cornhusker Hotel to form the Draft Norris Committee.49 Heading up the committee was Democrat James Lawrence, editor of the Lincoln Star, and two Republicans, James Kindler, former U. S. District Attorney, and W. E. Barkley, Lincoln banker.50

The Committee praised George Norris as "the outstanding liberal leader in the United States Senate," and continued to commend the Senator by asserting:

His failure to remain in the senate would be a calamitous blow to those who repose their faith in him and whose inspiration and belief in government comes from him.51

The Draft Norris Committee hoped to secure so many signatures on the petitions that Norris would feel obligated to accept. Nebraska law required one thousand signatures to place an independent on the ballot.52 The Draft Norris group

48Columbus Daily Telegram, May 6, 1936.
49Tbid., June 3, 1936.
50Omaha World Herald, June 4, 1936.
51Lincoln Star, June 2, 1936.
planned to circulate five thousand petitions with the hope of obtaining fifty thousand to one hundred thousand names. The state was organized according to the ninety-three counties. A letter of inquiry was sent to the editor, banker, lawyer, or housewife who had been known to be a supporter of Norris in each of the counties. Since the committee was non-partisan, once a person of either party was found who was willing to circulate the petitions, he was made chairman of the county. The next step was the sending of literature for circulation. Once the literature had been distributed, the chairman of the county recruited volunteer workers to circulate the petitions door to door and from farm to farm. The volunteers circulated the petitions in one of the hottest and driest summers on record. It was hoped that the sacrifices made by the volunteer workers would place Norris in a position where he would feel obligated to run. Once the petition was filed the candidate could decline but, according to the ruling of the State Attorney General, he would not have to declare his position.

The cautious Senator made no comment to the press about the petition movement. He implied that he was not

53 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), June 4, 1936.
54 James Lawrence Collection MSS, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.
55 Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 318.
56 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), June 20, 1936.
personally aware of a petition drive.\textsuperscript{57} In a letter to one of his constituents, he indicated that he would like to retire at the end of that term but stated: "I do not wish to be placed in the attitude of shirking a duty or a responsibility or of quitting in the middle of a fight."\textsuperscript{58} Again, he repeated that his main campaigning would be for the re-election of President Roosevelt. His friends, however, urged him to campaign for the President and still be a candidate for the Senate himself.\textsuperscript{59} The Senator concluded the letter by stating:

However, I have been so busy in connection with matters pending before the Senate and the various committees of which I am a member, I have been unable to give this subject much thought.\textsuperscript{60}

In addition to the non-partisan Draft Norris Committee, left-wing splinter groups within each political party threatened solidarity. Had they united, these groups urging more radical programs could have posed a great danger to both Democrats and Republicans.

In 1936, three radical movements caught the imagination of the economically depressed people. One radical group was the "Share the Wealth Program" begun by Huey

\textsuperscript{57}McCook Daily Gazette, June 5, 1936.
\textsuperscript{58}New York Times, June 14, 1936.
\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., June 15, 1936.
\textsuperscript{60}Ibid.
Long, demagogue of Louisiana politics. The plan was to give each American family five thousand dollars a year. Before the program made much headway, however, Huey Long was assassinated. In 1936, the Reverend Gerald K. Smith made an ineffectual attempt to revive the idea.

Another radical movement was developed by the Reverend Charles E. Coughlin, a Roman Catholic priest near Detroit. He had a weekly radio program in which he attempted to analyze and offer solutions to the problems confronting the nation. His platform was indefinite, with planks subject to much change. Father Coughlin had one permanent plank, urging complete control of currency and credit, which was similar to the Populist party doctrine of the 1890's.

Dr. Townsend, an elderly California physician, offered a startling, simple plan to solve America's economic ills. Under his plan all non-workers over the age of sixty years would receive a federal pension of two hundred dollars a month. The only stipulation to be placed on the pension was that the two hundred dollars had to be spent that month.

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62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
Individually, the programs would never have posed a threat to the major parties but when North Dakota Congressman William Lemke, a Non-Partisan League Republican, announced his candidacy, the movement provided the adhesive necessary for uniting the groups into one party. A convention held in the early summer at Cleveland produced a fifteen point program embodying all their proposals. The platform clearly demanded that federal control be exercised over currency and credit, but it was so vague on other matters that it did not gain liberal support. Then, too, Lemke's background of radical agrarianism, and the fact that Father Coughlin seemed to have Fascist leanings turned many voters away.

In June, 1936, the attention of both of Nebraska's major parties, as well as the dissident splinter groups, became sharply focused on the Republican National Convention, which opened in Cleveland, Ohio. Even the question of Senator Norris's candidacy assumed secondary importance. Two factors put the Republicans in a poor political position in 1936. Many voters blamed the Republicans for

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66 Ibid.
67 Roseboom, op. cit., p. 452.
the depression, and many would remember that what little aid they had received during these terrible years had come from the Roosevelt administration.\footnote{Richard C. Bain, 

Therefore, the Republican convention was faced with the problem of finding a candidate who could match Franklin Roosevelt in popular appeal and at the same time be liberal enough. Herbert Hoover was not to be considered because he was still identified with the depression.\footnote{Schlesinger, Jr., _op. cit._, p. 527.} Frank Knox, liberal publisher of _Chicago Daily News_, was in contention, but was unable to gain many backers in the Republican Party.\footnote{Ibid., p. 529.}

In the Senate possibilities were limited by the defection of the liberals such as Robert LaFollette, Jr. and George Norris to the Democratic Bandwagon. One liberal, Senator Borah, was proposed as a candidate, but he was still remembered by the Old Guard Republican leaders as having opposed Herbert Hoover in 1932.\footnote{Roseboom, _op. cit._, p. 447.}

There were only two Senators who were being considered, namely, Senators Charles L. McNary of Oregon and Arthur H. Vandenberg of Michigan. Each had the dis-
advantages of being relatively unknown outside of his own state, and their voting records indicated liberal tendencies.\(^{72}\)

Few strategic states had Republican governors to offer as presidential material. Two candidates worthy of mention were Stylas Bridges of New Hampshire and Alfred M. Landon of Kansas. Since the westward expansion of the nation, no candidates had been selected from New England; Governor Bridges' New England residence, therefore, was a real handicap. Kansas, on the other hand, was small but centrally located. Alf Landon also had won the governorship against stiffer odds than Bridges had had to face, and Landon's personal appeal was more widespread. He had been an oil producer, thus appealing to businessmen. In addition, he was regarded as being able to carry the farm belt, something which Herbert Hoover had not been able to do in 1932. The political philosophy of Governor Landon could be so worded that it would mean all things to all people, while there was no compromising with Governor Bridges, who was ultra conservative.\(^{73}\)

With Alfred Landon considered the best pre-convention choice, the meeting opened on June 9. Devoid of open conflicts, the entire emphasis was on attacking

\(^{72}\) *ibid.*, p. 446.

\(^{73}\) *Bain, op. cit.*, p. 246.
the administration in power for its failure to carry out campaign pledges. Hoover addressed the delegates after a half-hour demonstration. He attacked the New Deal as being un-American and comparable to the dictatorships of Europe.

After his speech the platform was presented to the convention. While the platform was an indictment of the New Deal, it represented a compromise between the Old Guard and liberal wings of the Republican Party. The platform began:

America is in peril. The welfare of American men and women and the future of our youth are at stake. We dedicate ourselves to the preservation of their political liberty, their individual opportunity and their character as free citizens, which today for the first time are threatened by government itself.

The main provisions of the New Deal indictment were: One, the congressional power had been abused by the President; two, the Supreme Court's reputation had been damaged by the administration; three, the individual rights of the American citizen had been violated; four, the administration had passed laws contrary to the existing

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74 Roseboom, op. cit., p. 448.
75 Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 544.
76 Bain, loc. cit., p. 247.
Constitution; and five, the Republican Party had pledged itself to correct these wrongs.\(^7\) The document did not urge return to complete laissez faire. The Republican Party recognized the responsibility of government toward the needy, protection of labor, and a working social security program; but the platform stressed the fact that the responsibility rested with the state governments.\(^7\) Other clauses demanded more economy in government, stabilization of currency, no alliances or commitments in foreign affairs, no participation in the League of Nations or World Court, and settlement by arbitration of all international disputes.\(^8\)

The nomination of candidates took up the remainder of the convention. Alfred Landon's name was the only one to appear on the presidential ballot. Accepting the nomination by telegram, he announced that he supported the platform in "word and spirit."\(^9\) He wanted to make sure, however, the delegates understood his position in several matters: To aid the economic plight, he favored a constitutional amendment; the mention of sound currency in the

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\(^7\) Porter and Johnson, op. cit., p. 368.

\(^7\) Bain, op. cit., p. 247.

\(^8\) Porter and Johnson, op. cit., p. 369.

\(^9\) Bain, op. cit., p. 247.
platform he understood to mean currency converted to gold; improvement of the merit system meant to him that any worker below the rank of Assistant Secretary in any major department or agency, including the Post Office Department, could be under civil service. With these reservations, the Republican Party had its presidential nominee. When Senator Vandenburg withdrew, the vice-presidential candidacy was conferred upon Frank Knox for his pre-convention campaigning.

With the end of the Republican Convention, attention was again directed toward Senator Norris. In a nation-wide radio address, the wily Senator described the Republican National Convention as a group of reactionaries controlled by special interests which were against the reform measures of President Roosevelt. According to Senator Norris, the vested interests nominated a candidate "whose greatest asset is that nobody knows him and nobody knows what he stands for."

Senator Norris, continuing his attack on the Republican Party, pointed out that the platform "covers everything, and does not touch anything." To clinch

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82 Ibid.
83 Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 546.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
his argument, he enumerated a number of humanitarian acts which President Roosevelt had sponsored, but which were opposed by monopolies, combines, and special interests. The vested groups, he implied, were attempting to shift the burden of government on to the poor, and the Republican Party was portrayed as the villain who sought to take advantage of the economic plight of the depression. 87

Realizing that Senator Norris had definitely joined the Democratic ranks, Terry Carpenter announced his intention of conferring with the President and James Farley, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Carpenter, who had been given the nomination to the senatorial race in the Nebraska primary, had remained relatively silent during and after the state Democratic Convention, in which he had lost his party's support. Now, regarding his visit to the capital, Carpenter pessimistically stated: "It probably won't get me anywhere, but I am going to give the party a chance to stay by its own candidate." 88

When he arrived in Washington, he was granted an interview with the President. In the interview President Roosevelt was quoted in Carpenter's words as

87 Ibid.
88 Lincoln Star, June 24, 1936.
saying: "You know you can't win. I am in a position to do things for you if you get out of the race and clear up the mess." 89

In a press interview Carpenter told reporters he was pledged not to reveal what the President had said, but he stated: "I can say he hasn't changed his attitude since he announced several months ago he hoped Nebraska would send Norris back to the Senate again." 90

Having been rebuffed by the President, Nominee Carpenter visited Senator Norris to determine if Norris was going to run. After the conference, Carpenter maintained that neither one talked about the coming election, but he said: "I am sure he will [run] and I know I will." 91 With the loss of the Democratic Party support, he now intended to confer with Father Coughlin and Dr. Townsend. When asked if he were going to join the Union Party, he emphatically said no. 92 He indicated he was in the process of writing his own platform which would deal only with the State of Nebraska. Since there was no partisanship involved in his platform, he maintained

89 Interview with Mr. Carpenter, July 13, 1961.
90 Omaha Bee-News, June 26, 1936.
91 Ibid.
92 Fremont Tribune, June 20, 1936.
that he could more effectively represent the state. Carpenter estimated that he would receive one hundred fifty thousand votes, which would leave four hundred fifty thousand for Bob Simmons and Senator Norris to fight over.

In summary, he predicted that "Senator Norris... was in grave danger of going down to defeat." With the cryptic Senator Norris still publically uncommitted, and Terrry Carpenter a lonely battler for national recognition, the most useless Democratic National meeting in history convened in Philadelphia on June 23, 1936. The platform and candidates had been predetermined. No roll call was taken. When James Farley called the meeting to order, he asked: "Shall we continue the New Deal... or shall the government be turned back to the Old Dealers who wrecked it?"

Senator Albin W. Barkley of Kentucky, temporary chairman, delivered an address on this, the real convention issue. He contrasted the twelve years of the Republican administration with the three years under the New Deal. He also laid low the recent decision of the United States

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93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Bain, op. cit., p. 248.
Supreme Court on the constitutionality of New Deal legislation. 97

Without much deliberation Senator Joseph Robinson of Arkansas was made permanent chairman of the convention. He harassed the Republicans for Landon's disagreement with his own party platform. 98

As the platform was read, the real difference between the Democrats and Republicans appeared in their solutions to national problems. The former proposed measures by the federal government; the latter favored retention of state and local controls. The Democratic Party, refusing to accept the finality of the decisions in the Supreme Court on constitutional questions, suggested an amendment clarifying the role of the Supreme Court if the present trend continued. 99 On other domestic issues the Democrats resolved to balance the budget, advance the housing program, make sound currency a governmental objective, and solve the problems of wages and maximum hours. Regarding foreign affairs, the party pledged to continue the Good Neighbor Policy, take the profits out of war, and be on guard against international involvement. 100

97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
Although there was, of course, no contest on the presidential nomination, it took a full day for at least one representative from each delegation to give endorsement to Franklin Roosevelt. Following a formal presentation by Judge John E. Mack, and the renomination of James Garner as Vice-President, the delegates heard Roosevelt's acceptance speech at Franklin Field on June 27. The address, which signaled the end of the convention, set a precedent; it was the first time an incumbent president seeking the nomination had addressed the entire assembly.

On the day before Roosevelt's acceptance speech, Senator Norris had had a luncheon conference with the President. When interviewed by reporters, as to his reason for being there, he reiterated that he would campaign for the President and that he approved the platform because, "Roosevelt is the platform." He declined to state whether he would run for re-election but he told the reporters: "I wanted to say good-bye to him [the President], since I am going away and don't expect to come back." The Senator was leaving Washington and

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101 Roseboom, op. cit., p. 450.
104 Ibid.
motoring to a backwoods retreat in Waupaca, Wisconsin, where the Senator always spent his summers. He remained in Wisconsin during the summer because years earlier he suffered a heat stroke, which made it difficult for him to spend the summer months in Nebraska.105

Thus, with the stage set for the summer campaigning and the November election, the Democratic National Convention closed its uneventful sessions. The greatest profit from the Philadelphia meeting appeared to have been gained by the city's merchants, restauranteurs, and hotel managers.106

106 *Roseboom*, op. cit., p. 449.
CHAPTER IV

THE TEMPERATURE RISES

In all probability, July was the hottest month as far as weather was concerned, and the coolest month for campaign activity. Neither Terry Carpenter nor Robert Simmons wanted to announce their intentions until George Norris declared himself.

After attending the Philadelphia convention and having been turned down by the President, Carpenter went on to New York to seek support from Dr. Townsend and to confer with Bainbridge Colby, Woodrow Wilson's former Secretary of State. Dr. Townsend endorsed Carpenter, but Colby, a conservative Jeffersonian Democrat, offered only sympathy. Opposed to the New Deal, Colby quipped to Carpenter, "I suppose the S.O.B. promised to make you a notary public."

On his return trip to Nebraska, Carpenter made a stop in Detroit, and attempted to confer with Father Coughlin, but was unable to reach him. The nominee's chances were becoming dimmer by the week.

In Nebraska, meanwhile, Robert Simmons was campaigning to a limited degree. He continued his attack against

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1 Personal interview with Terry Carpenter at Scottsbluff on July 13, 1961.

2 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), June 27, 1936.
the New Deal. According to Simmons, people had lost confidence in the government because the New Deal was so extravagant. In a speech at York on June 22, 1936, he listed agriculture, industry, labor, and social security as the main problems facing our nation. In offering solutions to any and all problems, he stated, "the rights of individual, which the New Deal had forgotten, must be protected under the constitution." The problems listed above and condemnation of the New Deal appeared to be the main theme of all the speeches he gave during the remainder of the summer.

The non-committal Senator Norris continued to vacation at Waupaca, Wisconsin, refusing to mix business with leisure. The Senator did, however, deliver one major speech for the administration during July. In this speech he tried to convey to the common people, farmers, and laborers, that since they had the same common interest, they should unite in supporting honest reform measures. When partisanship formed the basis of government, Norris continued, a tremendous amount of damage was often done unwittingly. The speech concluded by praising the

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3 Omaha World Herald, July 20, 1936.
independent thinker and voter as the basis "upon which the welfare and stability of our country lies."  

On the Senator's seventy-fifth birthday, the Draft Norris Committee announced that despite the heat and the fact that farmers were busily working in their fields, "a qualifying number of petitions" had been secured, and expressed the hope that the petition movement could be completed in a few days. In his book *Democracy's Norris*, Alfred Lief stated that twenty-five thousand names had been obtained by the end of July. Since this figure fell short of the projected goal of fifty thousand names, the committee renewed its efforts to get additional names on the petition.

The Republican State Party Chairman, Lyle Jackson, felt certain that Governor Landon's candidacy meant the election of a Republican ticket. Agriculture, he implied, had so much confidence in Alfred Landon that it was an opportunity to elect a president who represented agriculture.

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5 *Omaha World Herald*, July 7, 1936.
Democratic Nominee Carpenter did not do much campaigning during July since he was busily organizing and setting up a newspaper. In addition to a profit motive, Carpenter felt that a newspaper would be essential for his campaign. The Fremont Tribune in an editorial expressed the opinion that a paper started for political reasons was doomed to failure and could never be a financial success. 10

The most unusual thing that occurred in July was the statement made by the Omaha World Herald in relationship to its editorial policy. For fifty years the World Herald had had an Democratic editorial policy under the ownership of Gilbert Hitchcock. Since the newspaper disagreed with the New Deal's broken promises, unbalanced budget, terrible waste, and unconstitutional laws, the editorial policy would be revamped without partisan prejudice. 11 The Democratic Party found itself without support from a major newspaper in Nebraska.

August was a reversal of July. The heat wave broke, and the candidates began to increase the tempo of their campaigns. Terry Carpenter broke into headlines by challenging Robert Simmons to a debate for the amusement of the public. While admitting that Simmons had the advantage of formal education and congressional experience,

10 Fremont Tribune, July 17, 1936.
11 Omaha World Herald, July 9, 1936.
Carpenter dared Simmons to point out one accomplishment from his congressional record. Simone retorted that the campaign issues were too vital to subject to public entertainment, and that anyone who had amusement as the purpose of a debate did not recognize the seriousness of the situation the world faced. Carpenter indicated his willingness to discuss any issue, including personalities, but Simmons declined the offer for debate by stating emphatically: "My purpose in this campaign is to discuss issues, and not personalities."

Delivering one of his major speeches at North Platte, Robert Simmons condemned Congress as being un-American for pushing through important legislation without even considering or debating it. In his closing remarks he maintained that a Republican Congress would insure debate on bills.

On August 31, 1936, the first issue of Terry Carpenter's newspaper appeared. The entire plant had cost forty thousand dollars, with a ten-year wire service contract signed and paid for. Entitled the Daily

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12Daily Senator (Scottsbluff), September 3, 1936.
13Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), August 20, 1936.
14Ibid.
15Omaha Bee-News, August 28, 1936.
16McCook Daily Gazette, August 31, 1936.
Senator, the paper carried an unadvertised circulation of ten thousand subscribers.17

In an editorial announcing its intention of taking a position on civic questions, the Daily Senator admitted that it might be wrong many times. The article maintained, however: "If we fail to take a stand, then we have not done our duty and would be in the same position as the morning contemporary."18 Politically, the editorial indicated that the paper was Democratic "in the partisan sense and in the broader sense." Promising to fight for and publish the truth, the paper asserted: "We expect to call a spade a spade. Some will call it 'throwing mud', and we expect to be accused of muck-raking."19 The editorial concluded with a boastful statement that, "If Scottsbluff is not big enough for two daily newspapers, some other publication will have to go, for we haven't known the meaning of defeat."20 Carpenter now had a newspaper with which to conduct his campaign. The small weekly circulation, however, tended to make it a local paper, failing to reach many voters in other parts of the state.

17 Ibid.
18 Daily Senator (Scottsbluff), August 31, 1936.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
In August, the rift among the various Democratic party factions in Nebraska was made apparent by Senator Burke, National Committeeman. In a statement to the press, the Senator hinted he might withdraw as National Committeeman if Senator Norris did not become a candidate. Burke believed that the National Committeeman should support the entire Democratic ticket. Since he refused to be identified with Terry Carpenter, Senator Burke considered submitting his resignation. He had taken the job, he said, to render service to the President.21 Terry Carpenter challenged Burke to debate the question on August 21, 1936, but the Senator told the press he would be far from Nebraska by then.22

Senator Burke had been criticized for not supporting the New Deal as vigorously as he had in 1934. He had made several statements which could have embarrassed the administration. His criticism of the New Deal for keeping the depression going, and his stand on returning the government to the fundamental principles of the Constitution, did not go unnoticed by the administration. He implied that certain administration measures had given the impression of destroying private business. In another statement, he agreed with Governor Landon that restoration of private

21*Omaha World Herald*, August 14, 1936.
business should be and was the key to recovery. 23

While confusion raged in the Nebraska senatorial campaign, the presidential nominees were planning and organizing their campaign strategy. The Republican Party strategy was to plan the campaign to appeal to the anti-Roosevelt factions, particularly the farmers opposed to the A.A.A. and the Progressives who had left the party, and to attract the labor vote. 24 The personality of Alfred Landon was portrayed to the public as being a great economist, comparable to Coolidge, man of common sense, and a hard working self-made American. 25 Having been chosen because he was a compromise between conservative and liberal, the candidate was cautioned not to offend William Randolph Hearst or William Allen White, as these editors exerted great influence. 26

The Republican campaign was in charge of John Hamilton, a conservative, who did not favor the idea of having a candidate appear as a modest and humble individual to the voting public. Hamilton started a whispering campaign to spread gossip about the President's private life and insinuations about his advisors. 27

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25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
Alf Landon and Frank Knox stumped all over the country during the summer. Following the strategy of the party, the candidates proposed: one, that industry absorb unemployment; two, that the Supreme Court not be restricted; three, that free enterprise and free competition be restored; four, that the budget be balanced; five, that the merit system in civil service be restored; and six, that the confidence of business be reassured. 28

The President, meanwhile, coasted through the early part of summer. During July and August, he made a non-political tour of the drought areas of nine states. Speaking as the President, he simply contrasted the conditions in 1932 with those in 1936. 29 The tour was part of a grand strategy to appear firm yet kind; human rather than an economizer; hopeful instead of pessimistic; insistent that every man have a chance; and above all else to appear to be President to all the people. 30 These tactics were not to change until September 27, 1936.

Landon and his advisors disagreed over their campaigning methods. The liberals, under Landon and Charles Taft, wished to offer a program similar to the New Deal, but

28Ibid.


30Ibid., p. 278.
without direction from Washington. The "Old Guard" conservatives, however, favored an all-out assault on liberalism as a threat to the nation.31

When businessmen were used as advance men in lining up a city for his visit, Landon became worried, but left National Committee Chairman John Hamilton in charge of the campaign while Landon took a Colorado vacation.32 Landon had wished to withhold his attack until the President began his campaign.33 Hamilton and Frank Knox, however, threw moderation aside while Landon was gone, and accused the administration of setting up a dictatorship.34

When Landon returned in August, he did not criticize Hamilton, but he did attempt to change the strategy on a tour of Pennsylvania and New York. In the opening speech in Pennsylvania, he praised the "American Way," failing to mention the New Deal. A few days later at Chateaugay, New York, he discussed the civil liberties enjoyed by Americans.35

Optimism and pessimism, both state and national, rose in mercurial flares as the candidates girded themselves

32 Ibid., pp. 604-05.
33 Gosnell, op. cit., p. 156.
34 Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 606.
for the hot September battle. September signaled the official opening of the political campaigns of all local and state candidates. In the Senate race in Nebraska, two candidates were waging campaigns hoping to be successful in November with George Norris's candidacy still undetermined.

The Democratic nominee, Terry Carpenter, thirty-six years old, was a native of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He attended school in Cedar Rapids, finishing the eighth grade and one year of high school. Quitting high school, he left Cedar Rapids to find a job in California. When he finally settled in Long Beach, he entered politics, holding various jobs from deputy city auditor to municipal utilities manager. 36

He left California to come back to Nebraska to go into business for himself. After acquiring a valuable tract of land adjoining Scottsbluff which he called Terrytown, Carpenter started in business with a filling station. He subscribed from the farmers the necessary capital to start the business, and promised not only to repay them, but to give them a reduction on all gas bought from Terrytown. His advertising motto was, "we will not be undersold." 37

36 Omaha Bee-News, January 1, 1936.
37 Ibid.
He built an oil refinery to make cheaper gasoline; then acquired a grocery store; and built a tavern. Since the city of Scottsbluff did not permit liquor by the drink, Carpenter's latter venture was quite popular, except with churches. The assorted businesses grossed seventy thousand dollars in 1935.\(^{38}\)

His political philosophy was hard to label. Coming from a lower class background, he felt an obligation (although he was wealthy in his own right) to represent the poor. He maintained that although wealth did influence the lower class, it did not gain their respect. The moneyed interest did not understand Carpenter since he did not act wealthy. He stated, "I am what I am and that is all there is to it."\(^{39}\)

Asserting that people were too complacent, his campaigns were conducted to arouse the voter's awareness to conditions of government. He was considered a radical Democrat and once was compared to Huey Long.\(^{40}\) Terry Carpenter backed the Townsend Plan and Father Coughlin's financial plan, both of which were considered radical movements.\(^{41}\) Had he run only against Simmons, he would probably

\(^{38}\) Ibid.

\(^{39}\) Personal interview with Terry Carpenter, July 13, 1961.

\(^{40}\) Omaha Bee-News, August 23, 1936.

\(^{41}\) Omaha World Herald, April 19, 1936.
have won. The German Americans were supporting him, as well as the Townsendites and Coughlinites. If George Norris entered the race, it was doubtful whether Carpenter could pull enough votes in the Democratic Party.

The Republican nominee for the Senate was Robert Simmons, forty-four years of age, a native Nebraskan born in a Scottsbluff County sod house. His father, whose family could trace their ancestors back to 1623 when they first arrived in Massachusetts, had come to Nebraska to set up an implement business. Going broke, he had homesteaded the land on which the candidate was born.

Robert Simmons' formal education was climaxed when he received an L.L.B. from the University of Nebraska in 1915. He served a term in the U. S. Army from 1917-19.42

His political career began in 1922, when he was elected to the House of Representatives from the Sixth District in Nebraska. While a member of Congress, he voted for the Boulder Dam, restricting the immigrants, first public building program in 1925, for no repeal of inheritance tax, for Norris's Lame Duck Amendment, for drought and relief loans to farmers, and Phillipines' Independence. In Congress he served on the Agricultural Sub-Committee and as Chairman of the District of Columbia Committee.

42 Ibid.
After ten years, he was defeated for re-election by Terry Carpenter, and moved his family to Lincoln, where he set up a law practice. Nominated for the Senate by Republicans in 1934, he lost to Edmund Burke.

Simmons, speaking from an outline rather than notes, had an excellent political asset in his natural ability. His speeches revealed him as conservative to the point of being reactionary. Certainly he could see little value in the New Deal or the administration's methods of solving the depression, but urged the restoration of government to the place it had prior to the depression.

The development of a three-cornered race could mean that Robert Simmons might be the next Senator from Nebraska if Senator Norris caused a split in the votes of the Democratic Party. Upon this enigma, the race depended. Now, after serving the people of Nebraska for over thirty years in Congress, Norris, at the age of seventy-five, was considering an independent candidacy in the 1936 election.

Senator Norris was a native of Ohio. Coming from a poor farm family, his formal education stopped after a year at Baldwin-Wallace for lack of funds. He took a job

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43 Ibid.
45 *Omaha World Herald*, April 19, 1936.
teaching school to earn enough money to return to college; then he enrolled at Valparaiso University, attending classes until his money ran out. Then he would return to teaching until he had enough money to go again. Finally, he completed the course work for a B.S. degree in 1880, and three years later received a law degree.  

Attracted by the railroad advertisements and the fact that his family owned a small farm in Nebraska, Norris decided to go West to practice law. He settled in Beaver City, a thriving town in Furnas County, and soon became prosecuting attorney. He served as county attorney for three terms, but refused the nomination for the fourth term to run for Judge of the Fourteenth Nebraska District in 1895. He was successful. The court being located in McCook, he moved his family there.

When asked to run as the Republican nominee for the Fifth Congressional Nebraska District, he resigned from the bench. After a strenuous campaign, he was elected to Congress, and served in the House for five terms. The highlight of his House career was bringing about the downfall of Speaker Joe Cannon. Norris, influenced by his success, decided to run for the Senate in 1912. Again,

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47 Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 22.
48 Ibid., pp. 38-40.
success smiled upon him, and he had represented the people of Nebraska in the United States Senate continuously since that time.

His noteworthy legislative accomplishments included the Tennessee Valley Authority, Lame Duck Amendment, and Norris-LaGuardia Act (outlawing federal injunctions and "yellowdog" contracts). In Nebraska, the Senator championed the one house legislature, which was convening for the first time in January, 1937.

In his political career he was known as a bolter from the Republican Party. From 1924, when he supported Robert LaFollette, Progressive candidate for President, to Al Smith in 1928, and finally Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, the Senator was considered a statesman who never let the party be his guide. He placed his faith in his conscience to guide him. In the coming election there were many factors to consider, any one of which could swing the election for one of the candidates. The greatest factor, however, was the conscience of George Norris.

As the first week in September began, Democratic and Republican candidates announced publicly how their campaigns would be conducted. Robert Simmons planned a

\[\text{\textsuperscript{49}}\text{Ibid.}, pp. 254 ff.\]
twenty-five thousand mile personal tour covering twenty
towns beginning September 11.  

Terry Carpenter employed a sound truck which went from town to town playing music. After a crowd gathered, Nominee Carpenter would appear and make a speech. He used a sound truck because the Democratic Party refused to introduce him when he spoke. When he was unable to attract large crowds by this method, he turned to the use of the radio in order to reach the voters. He bought radio time from small stations across Nebraska over the noon hour eight days prior to the election. In Omaha, he attempted to buy up all the free radio time of one station. The station, not knowing the radio schedule more than two weeks in advance, promised to save him a spot each evening at the same time for eight days before the election.

Still the petitions for Senator Norris had not yet been filed. No one knew for sure whether he would accept or not. On August 26, James Farley and James Quigley indicated that Norris would accept, but possibly this was only wishful thinking. There were rumors that he would not accept the Draft Norris petition for fear

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52 Omaha Bee-News, September 1, 1936.
53 Ibid., August 23, 1936.
54 Ibid.
of defeat. The *New York Times* voiced the opinion that Senator Norris was waiting until the petition was filed before he commented. The paper believed that he would accept the petition, which the newspaper estimated would run between thirty and forty thousand signatures.

The *Omaha Bee-News* ridiculed Terry Carpenter for saying he lacked the education and training to know his way around in national and foreign affairs. Carpenter's defense was that since he would be so busy doing everything possible for Nebraska, he would not have time to follow the international scene.

Two weeks later Senator Burke resigned the National Committeeman post, giving two reasons:

He could not support Terry Carpenter, who, according to Burke, was masquerading as a Democrat...and who neither understands nor cares...for the fundamental principles, adherence to which has made the Democratic Party such a vital force in the upbuilding of our nation.

Further, Burke could not give blanket approval to the Democratic administration. He stated:

I have found it necessary to vote against certain administration measures and to express my opposition to some doctrines which I consider neither democratic nor for the best interest of the country.

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56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., September 7, 1936.
58 *Omaha World Herald*, August 26, 1936.
59 Ibid.
James Farley was conferring with James Quigley, Nebraska State Party Chairman, on state campaign strategy when the latter came announcing Senator Burke's resignation. Farley immediately selected Quigley to be temporary National Committeeman. Quigley informed the press that the committee post would not be filled until after the general election. The position was important to the state because the National Committeeman represented the contact man between the state and national party organizations. With Quigley's appointment no forces hostile to Senator Norris would get the nomination. What could have been a crisis was averted.

Both Quigley and Farley stated they expected Senator Norris to declare within a few days his independent candidacy. Farley implied that he was privately advised some time ago that Norris would run. Thus, the administration felt assured that in all probability Norris would accept the nomination.

On September 9, 1936, James Lawrence filed, for George Norris, the largest petition ever filed in the state. The petition, bearing 40,504 names, represented people from all walks of life, and covered all 93 counties.

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60 _New York Times_, August 26, 1936.
61 Ibid., August 28, 1936.
62 Ibid.
including 527 incorporated and unincorporated towns, cities, and villages. James Lawrence sent a telegram to Waupaca, Wisconsin, informing the Senator of the filing of the petition, commending the Senator on his record, and urging him to accept the petition to continue his brilliant career in the Senate. The telegram concluded with the declaration that "the state and the nation itself need you to battle as you have in the past for the attainment of ideals which promote human welfare and happiness." In Washington, James Farley praised the petition movement and stated: "... the country can ill afford to be deprived of the services of such an outstanding statesman and great American as Norris." Indeed, it was surprising that Farley would endorse George Norris. Earlier in the year, Norris had argued that James Farley should resign from either the Postmaster Generalship or the Democratic National Committee Chairmanship because partisanship was being used as the basis for postoffice jobs.

In his autobiography, *Behind the Ballots*, Farley discussed the 1936 campaign and pointed out that there

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63 *Lincoln Star*, September 9, 1936.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
were numerous decisions where public action had to be considered. In Norris's case, the party abandoned the cardinal principle of endorsing the Democratic Senatorial nominee. Since the endorsement was against the party doctrine preached by the National Committee, Farley was criticized for his actions. He maintained: "It would have been unthinkable to oppose a liberal statesman like Norris for mere party reasons." 67 Choosing silence in the best interests of the party, Farley remained silent in the face of criticism. 68

Now that speculation was over, and the petition had been filed, the other contestants were questioned by reporters as to their plans. Robert Simmons commented: "I shall continue my plans for the campaign without interruption and without change." 69 Terry Carpenter, still bitter about losing the administration's endorsement, had implied earlier that the volunteers circulating the petitions had been paid five cents for each name. 70 Now he wondered why James Lawrence would continue to urge Senator Norris to run, when Lawrence himself had predicted

68 Ibid., p. 314.
69 Lincoln Star, September 9, 1936.
70 Scottsbluff Star Herald, August 23, 1936.
that Norris would lose in a three-cornered race. Although Carpenter had been asked to withdraw by state and national party leaders, he refused stating: "I . . . expect to make a most active campaign and there is no power that is on this earth that can change my position in this matter." Boostfully in his own paper, the Daily Senator, he stated: "Nebraska will reply by sending Terry Carpenter to the United States Senate by the biggest majority that any candidate ever received in the history of Nebraska elections."

The other candidates and the citizens of Nebraska did not have to wait long for the Senator to reply. On September 11, 1936, just two days after the filing, the Senator wrote a quiet letter of acceptance. The months of speculation, rumors, and questioning were over.

The letter of acceptance told the voters he had hoped he might retire and put the burden of public office on a younger man's shoulders. But with thousands of letters from all over the land urging him not to retire, he could not disappoint his friends. He stated: "I again offer myself as a candidate for re-election to the

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71 Omaha World Herald, September 10, 1936.
72 Ibid.
73 Daily Senator (Scottsbluff), September 9, 1936.
United States Senate." Humbly, he indicated that the numerous well wishers overestimated his ability and overlooked his many shortcomings. His campaign, he said, would be honestly and fairly conducted, with no ill feeling toward the other two candidates. If elected, the Senator promised he would follow the dictates of his conscience rather than the lobbyist or special interest. In closing, he called upon God to give him reasoning "if elected, meet the responsibility of my office without fears or favors, and courageously follow the path of honesty and justice."  

That George Norris had become an independent candidate was now public knowledge, but why did he choose to run as an independent? A partial answer is to be found in his autobiography, Fighting Liberal. He had, he writes, contemplated an independent candidacy for years, but his intense desire was not finally realized until 1936. Even in his college days, although a Republican, he had opposed almost everything his party favored. His professor, Oliver Kinsey, predicted that Norris would be a senator but would vote independently of the party.

74 Lincoln Star, September 11, 1936.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 17.
George Norris had maintained for years that there was no difference between the Republicans and the Democrats. The corruption and evil found in American life used the political parties, he believed, as a tool to accomplish their goals. When he became convinced of corruption in the Republican Party and went against the party's candidates and policies, he was a big disappointment to his Republican friends. He stated: "Every member of Congress... ought to expose wrong or evil whenever he finds it; and where he finds it in his own party, he ought to be doubly anxious to condemn it...." The Senator had seen many public officials let the lure of power and wealth be their guide. If men followed their consciences, Norris was certain there could never be any question about their honesty.

The sincerity of the Senator in believing that there was little difference between parties probably had a lot to do with his decision to run as an independent. Obviously, however, the backing he was going to get from the Democratic Party was an important factor in his decision. He could not risk losing in a three-cornered race.

78 Norris, op. cit., p. 371.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid., p. 372.
The fact that the administration was supporting him, the state convention had endorsed him, plus his brilliant record of service in the Senate were all in his favor. In addition, since he was running on a non-partisan basis, party faithfuls could vote for him without terrific repercussions. Disgusted by Republican attempts to steal the 1930 election by putting another candidate on the ballot with the same name as the Senator's, Senator Norris had planned to retire in 1936. Under no circumstances would he have run on the Republican ticket, but neither would he accept nomination on the Democratic ticket because he did not want to be identified with the partisan politics of that party. 82 In 1936, therefore, he was realizing a long-standing ambition by running independently.

The question asked by many Nebraskans and the nation at large was: Could George Norris win in November, running as an independent candidate against the Democratic nominee, Terry Carpenter, and Robert Simmons, the Republican nominee? At the time of acceptance, Norris did not announce his campaign plans. In Nebraska, the Draft Norris Committee was being enlarged into a campaign organization. The committee now included Arthur Weaver, former Republican governor; Democrat William Richie, Omaha attorney; in addition to C. A. Sorensen, former Republican State Attorney

82Ibid., p. 369.
General; James Lawrence, Lincoln Democratic editor; and James C. Kinsler, Republican. 83

Nationally, the second week in September saw the convening of the Progressive League, a non-partisan group of liberals meeting in Chicago, under the joint leadership of Mayor LaGuardia of New York and Senator Robert LaFollette, Jr., of Wisconsin. The meeting was called to organize the channeling of the Progressive vote towards F.D.R. Although Senator Norris did not attend the meeting, he was made honorary president of the Progressive League. 84

At the same time, Republican Senator Vandenburg of Michigan (one of those mentioned as a possible candidate for president or vice-president at the Republican Convention) came to Nebraska to campaign for Robert Simmons. Vandenburg commended the candidate and criticized George Norris. Admitting George Norris was a man of deep seated convictions did not mean that good intentions would win in the 1936 election, he said. Senator Vandenburg indicated that Robert Simmons was well thought of in the Republican Party and was considered capable of being an outstanding Senator from Nebraska. 85 He hoped Nebraska would send him to the

83 Columbus Daily Telegram, September 9, 1936.
84 Lincoln Star, September 12, 1936.
85 Omaha Bee-News, September 11, 1936.
Senate in November stating: "He has the courage, wisdom, experience, and capacity to render unto you a superlatively perfect job. . . ." 86

On September 13, 1936, at Sidney, Simmons questioned the New Deal's scarcity program. He believed the program was forcing a dependence on other nations for essential needs. If war broke out between nations, our foreign food supply might be destroyed. He went on record as being against government supervision over surpluses and the marketing of agriculture products. 87

The following week Simmons began his personal tour of the state at Wahoo. The Republican National Committee had furnished a sound truck, which entered the town ahead of him. A display attached to the side of the truck showed foodstuffs imported from such places as Canada and Argentina. The Candidate, outfitted with his own public address system, addressed the bystanders and merchants. 88 He assured his listeners that he would make no promises that he could not keep. 89 Next, he outlined his conception of a senator. Having been a congressman, he maintained that a senator sent to Washington ought to represent his state. He was

86 Ibid., September 12, 1936.
87 Ibid., September 13, 1936.
88 Lincoln Star, September 20, 1936.
89 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), September 15, 1936.
implying by this that the T.V.A. and similar programs, in theory, disenfranchised the people of Nebraska.90

During a speech at North Bend, Simmons received an ovation for urging cheap duties on needed agricultural items and high tariff on imports already grown in this country. The flooded agricultural market was due, in part, to the southern cotton planters, who were receiving money for not planting cotton and had used the vacant land for raising northern products. This procedure had lowered the market even further.91

On Wednesday, September 19, Simmons spoke at Ponca, South Sioux City, Scribner, Oakland, and West Point. In South Sioux City one half of the audience were, or had been, on relief. He implied that the relief program had paid out $691,200, while taking in only $308,100 in taxes.92 If the government continued at the present rate, he asserted, the country would be bankrupt.93 At Scribner and Oakland, Simmons continued to attack the administration for its wasteful spending, and repeated his arguments on duties and tariffs in speeches at Tecumseh, Weeping Water, and Ashland. At West Point, he placed the blame for the plight

90Ibid.
91Omaha Bee-News, September 15, 1936.
92Ibid., September 9, 1936.
93Ibid.
of the farmers on the New Deal's failure to protect American agricultural products from imports, and on the southern farmers for glutting northern markets with foodstuffs. He believed that relief should be administered by local county boards to minimize waste. In Tecumseh, he charged that Soil Conservation Committees were urging the farmers to vote for F.D.R. To eliminate corruption and waste, Simmons suggested limiting the benefit payments to family-sized farms.

Friday was the most strenuous day, as he made stops at Nelson, Deshler, Hebron, Wymore, Beatrice, and Fairbury. Except for the supper address at Beatrice, the speeches condemned the New Deal's extravagance and its failure to solve the farm crisis. In the Beatrice talk Simmons showed historically that every time the government became overpowering the colonist revolted. The present government, he stated, was ready for a revision of the laws because it no longer served the people.

On Saturday, he carried his campaign to Papillion, Waterloo, and Blair, repeating the theme of Friday's addresses, and fulfilling his first week's engagements.

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94 Norfolk Daily News, September 17, 1936.
95 Omaha Bee-News, September 18, 1936.
96 Ibid., September 19, 1936.
97 Ibid.
During that week, Simmons had toured eastern Nebraska, traveling twelve hundred miles. He told the press that in most of the towns visited, the crowds were wearing Landon, Knox, and sunflower buttons. The buttons, he reported, outnumbered the New Deal insignias two to one. In his speeches he talked about unfairness of the New Deal agricultural program to the Nebraska farmers, the huge waste and expenditures of the administration, and the rising national debt.

George Norris, still vacationing in Wisconsin, began receiving his share of criticism during the third week in September. The Nebraska newspapers found fault with him for having accepted the petition. The Omaha Bee-News maintained that the New Deal Machine, and not the people of Nebraska, had chosen Norris. The Fremont Tribune concurred that Washington had chosen the man. Destroying the primary, it was felt, ought to be grounds for defeat. The paper charged that Norris maintained a tenantless, boarded-up house in McCook as a means of claiming residency. He certainly was not the Senator from Nebraska.

During the latter part of the month, Norris left Wisconsin and started back to Nebraska. He was accompanied

98 Ibid., September 20, 1936.
99 Ibid., September 14, 1936.
100 Fremont Tribune, September 14, 1936.
101 Ibid., September 16, 1936.
by his wife, and secretary J. P. Robertson. On the way, he was quoted in Des Moines as defining the fundamental issue of the 1936 Presidential race as the "struggle of the common man against the power of money," and commented that he expected the campaign to be a hard-fought battle. Again, he repeated that the election of Roosevelt was more important than his re-election as Senator. 102

The Senator also indicated his early campaign plans. On September 18, he was scheduled to make a nation-wide radio address from Omaha to open his campaign officially. On September 23, he was scheduled to speak to the Nebraska League of Women Voters in Grand Island and the next day, he was to address the Nebraska State Water Conservation Congress at Kearney. On October 2, he planned to address the celebration of the North Loup Power and Irrigation District in Ord. 103

In his September 18 radio address, Norris defended the President against Landon's implication that the administration was bolshevistic and a dictatorship. 104 Senator Norris refuted the charges of Landon, pointing out that this administration had made tremendous strides forward

102 *Lincoln Star*, September 18, 1936.
103 *McCook Daily Gazette*, September 18, 1936.
104 *Omaha World Herald*, September 19, 1936.
In removing the depression. Since the President was opposed to the wealthy, Norris claimed, he had angered the Republican Party. While he defended the President, he still maintained he could have been more helpful to the presidential election had he not been running for the Senate.

As for his own campaign, he predicted the contest would not be an easy one. Nominee Carpenter, he told the listening audience, had every right to run, and had not been asked by Norris to resign. However, the Senator continued, if the candidate should withdraw, convinced that he could not win, that would be acceptable to Norris.

In analyzing the three-cornered situation, Norris noted that Carpenter, if he remained in the race, would get a considerable number of Democratic votes. Simmons, moreover, would receive the "stand-pat Republican vote, plus a few Democrats of the old school." If, as Norris had been told, the battle was between Simmons and himself, "then every vote gathered by Carpenter would be at least half a vote for Simmons, because every vote going to Carpenter would be taken from me."

The President sent George Norris a personal letter

105 Columbus Daily Telegram, September 19, 1936.
106 Omaha World Herald, September 19, 1936.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
on his radio address. In the letter he congratulated the Senator on his candidacy and the fine support given to liberal action in the address. Although the President had been on the train coming back from Cambridge and did not hear the address, he had read it the next morning. He commended Norris stating: "Thank the Lord for it and you. You have the same punch and the same old clarity. More power to you." 109

Although Senator Norris was the subject of comment, there was no mention of Terry Carpenter's campaign in the newspapers during the third week. He had not even indicated what towns he would visit. In the fourth week of September, however, Carpenter re-entered the campaign and increased the tension by charging that Senator Norris's candidacy was not by popular demand. The petition, he recalled, was to have had eighty thousand signatures; the final document bore forty thousand names, obtained by paid solicitors and by forced signatures of government employees. 110 Although the charges could not be substantiated, they made good campaign powder for Carpenter's cannon.


110 Columbus Daily Telegram, September 21, 1936.
The Scottsbluff politician expressed the opinion that Norris was embarrassing the Democratic Party by forcing their support of an independent. Since Carpenter had a mandate from the people, he would stay in the race regardless of the circumstances. Whatever he lacked in experience, he felt he could make up with his youthful vitality. "Youth," he said, . . . "possesses vitality, aggressiveness, and the fighting spirit that cannot, will not let itself be defeated."111

Robert Simmons, after a weekend rest, continued his tour, moving into central Nebraska. On Tuesday, September 22, he spoke to audiences at Friend and Sutton, labeling anyone who believed in the crop program of the administration as being dominated by Washington.112

On Wednesday in a speech at Central City, he switched to a discussion of liberty. H. R. Wiley, a resident of Central City, described "the liberty speech" as the greatest speech since the Lincoln-Douglas debates, which he had heard as a boy.113 Liberty, according to candidate Simmons, involved the right to worship God according to one's own conscience, freedom of expression and thought of mind, and the right to be considered equal

111Daily Senator (Scottsbluff), September 21, 1936.
112Omaha Bee-News, September 22, 1936.
113Ibid., September 23, 1936.
to every other man. He summarized: "We must preserve that liberty for ourselves and the children of America."  

To highlight the week, the three candidates were staged to face each other at the convention of the Nebraska League of Women Voters at Grand Island on September 23. Terry Carpenter was received with shouts and screams from the crowd. In his opening remarks he implied the Senator was getting too old to run in another contest. It would be a service to the grayheaded Senator to remove him from the worry and responsibility of the Senate post. Candidate Carpenter then discussed the fear that war was near. If he were a member of the Senate, he would go on record as being opposed to war. He further charged that Democratic Party bosses, particularly James Farley, were spending party money to defeat the regularly nominated candidate, and maintained that if the Democratic Party did not clean house, someone would do it for the party. Carpenter's monotone delivery and slurring of words made a very boring speech, according to the Columbus Daily Telegram.

The next speaker to take the rostrum was bald-headed Robert Simmons. While not being as enthusiastic as

114 Ibid.
115 Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 324.
116 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), September 24, 1936.
116 Nebraska Daily Telegram, September 24, 1936.
Carpenter, Simmons did not condemn the Senator's legislative record, nor his integrity or fearlessnes
His main argument was that a younger man ought to serve Nebraska.

When the old veteran took the stand, he spoke softly for thirty minutes. Carpenter, Norris asserted, should have criticized his senatorial record. Norris agreed with Carpenter that war was near, and that he, also, was not in favor of United States' entry into a world war. He concurred with Carpenter again on denouncing and exposing bosses and special interests that had gotten into the parties.

Next, the Senator proceeded to comment on his age. All he had heard since he had returned was how old, and feeble he was getting. Many critics thought he should return to private life and let a younger man take over, yet countless letters and petitions had made him feel it was his duty to enter the race. Evidently, the Senator commented, Carpenter had been subjected to too much intense labor during his public service. His sight must be failing since he wore strong glasses and delivered his prepared speeches with difficulty.

Robert Simmons,

118 Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 324.
119 Ibid.
120 Lincoln Star, September 24, 1936.
121 Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 324.
according to the Senator, must have been under severe mental strain while in Congress, because he was bald.\textsuperscript{122}

Looking at the two party candidates, Senator Norris said: "I've reached the conclusion I'm the youngest in the bunch. I read newspapers without glasses; and when I get old, maybe I may be bald like Mr. Simmons."\textsuperscript{123} As he walked back to his seat, both Carpenter and Simmons were observed grinning.\textsuperscript{124} There was little doubt that George Norris had won the argument on his senility.

The following day, candidate Simmons continued his campaign tour, speaking at Burwell on Thursday, and Friday at North Platte. The speeches had the same familiar theme of the New Deal destroying agriculture and private business.\textsuperscript{125} Simmons' campaign activities for the remaining four days of September have become obscured by time. No Nebraska newspaper carried reports of speeches during that period, and Simmons, himself, is now unwilling to review the events of that stage of his political career.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{122}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{123}\textit{Lincoln Star}, September 24, 1936.
\textsuperscript{124}Neuberger and Kahn, \textit{loc. cit.}
\textsuperscript{125}\textit{Lincoln Star}, September 26, 1936.
\textsuperscript{126}On April 3, 1962, the researcher wrote a letter to Robert Simmons, now Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court, requesting an interview. In a reply dated April 9, 1962, Simmons commented, "I do not care to discuss the matter." (See Appendix D)
Although Terry Carpenter was not receiving much space in other Nebraska papers, he used his own Daily Senator to editorialize about the campaign.\(^{127}\) He felt bitter over his "betrayal" by Norris (who, Carpenter stated, had assured him in November of 1935 that he would not run) and by the Democratic Party, who shunned its own nominee.\(^{128}\)

In the September 26 issue, the Daily Senator charged the Democratic Party of Nebraska with knowing that George Norris could not be elected. If Simmons were elected, he could be handled by patronage.\(^{129}\) Continuing his attack a few days later, Carpenter predicted that more money would be spent in Norris's election than any other senatorial campaign in Nebraska history. Since he was receiving no help from the party, Carpenter had recorded mortgages to pay for his expenses.\(^{130}\) Carpenter's campaign future did not look very bright by the end of September.

Near the end of the month, Sam Rayburn, Democratic Representative from Texas, inquired as to whether Senator Norris would be able to take the stump outside of Nebraska. In a return letter Norris said conditions of the campaign

\(^{127}\text{Daily Senator (Scottsbluff), September 22, 1936.}\)

\(^{128}\text{Personal interview with Terry Carpenter, July 13, 1961.}\)

\(^{129}\text{Daily Senator (Scottsbluff), September 26, 1936.}\)

\(^{130}\text{Ibid., September 30, 1936.}\)
made it impossible for him to leave the state.131

Meanwhile, the Draft Norris Committee had arranged for a series of Progressives within and without the state to stump for the Senator. Outstate speakers included Senators Robert LaFollette, Jr., Republican of Wisconsin; Gerald Nye, Republican of North Dakota; Congressman John Rankin, Republican of Mississippi; Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture; Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior; Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York; and Editor William Allen White, a Landon supporter.132

The Senator closed the month with a speech opening the Johnson County Fair at Tecumseh. His main themes were support of F.D.R. and lower rates for rural electrification.133

Nationally, the Republican nominee, Alfred Landon, and the Democratic nominee, President Roosevelt, met at a governors' conference held in Des Moines, Iowa. Each candidate appeared courteous and friendly toward the other, and neither attempted to campaign at the conference.134


132 Neuberger and Kahn, op. cit., p. 320.

133 Lincoln Star, September 30, 1936.

134 Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 610.
The Republican Party leaders thought the August campaign trip and the Des Moines conference were too mild a campaign to run against a popular President. Landon had not specifically attacked the New Deal, preferring rather to deal in generalities; the party was demanding a more forceful campaign. In Maine, the nominee quieted criticism somewhat by maintaining there was no compromise between planned economy and the democratic form of government. This tone of no compromise set the pattern for the rest of the campaign.

Landon, who could not get party leaders to agree on a proposed program for the campaign, took the initiative himself. At Des Moines with the party split over the campaign issues, he promised if elected to continue the A.A.A. payments and, at the same time, balance the budget. Two days later at Minneapolis, he went on record as being against reciprocal trade agreements. He denounced the "favored nation" clause as selling the American farmer out. On he went to Milwaukee, where he condemned the Social Security law as being unjust and unfair. A program which involved prying into the personal

135 Ibid.
137 Omaha Bee-News, October 23, 1936.
records of American people, he feared, would sooner or later lead to regimentation.\textsuperscript{139}

The Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin speeches lost Landon all support of the Liberal wing of the Republican Party. The conservatives of the party thought his program looked like a compromised New Deal under the Republican Party. The trip also confused the voters, as Landon appeared to swing from liberal to conservative.\textsuperscript{140} Feeling his campaign was becoming ineffective, Alf Landon quickly discarded his non-emotional approach upon the advice of the conservatives. With the liberals deserting him, he let the party direct his campaign from this point.

The Republican Party decided to play up the anti-New Deal thesis. On September 16, 1936, William Hearst accused the New Deal of being Moscow directed. He even implied that the communists had supplied campaign funds to the administration.\textsuperscript{141} This was the type of issue for which Republicans had been searching. During the remainder of September, communism became the major backbone of the party's campaign.

Franklin Roosevelt had been touring the drought areas of the nation during September. As the President

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{139}Ibid., October 27, 1936.
\item \textsuperscript{140}Schlesinger, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 615-16.
\item \textsuperscript{141}Omaha Bee-News, September 20, 1936.
\end{itemize}
he had been giving non-political speeches on how much better conditions were in 1936 than they had been in 1932. Observers who had wondered if his campaign would remain non-political saw a change in tactics on September 29. On that day Roosevelt opened his campaign in Syracuse, New York, at the state Democratic convention, and answered the communist charges of William Hearst. The administration, the President asserted, had refused all communist support. In his opinion communism had been prevented by the New Deal. With conditions of hunger, loss of homes, and closed banks fostering communism, the Republican Party did nothing but denounce the evil. The conservative leadership of the Republican Party promised to alleviate the dangers, but took no positive action. Refusing to face change had brought the country to the brink of disaster in 1933. In the view of the President, the Democratic Party faced the issue and protected the short-sighted conservative from threatening our institutions' destruction. Wise conservatives, he believed, knew that institutions had to be adjusted to the changing times. The President

142 Schlesinger, op. cit., pp. 615-16.

concluded: "I am that kind of conservative because I am that kind of liberal." The speech effectively answered the charges of communism, and signaled the start of the President's political campaign in 1936.

Although September's end saw little indication as to the victor of the Nebraska senatorial race, it had served to define the issues of both national and state campaigns. As Roosevelt and Landon stepped into the open arena, Senator Norris began testing his years of experience in the greatest political adventure of his long life.

George Norris had found the pace active enough to refuse to leave the state. During September, his strategy was to counter the references to his old age with an active campaign. He stumped for F.D.R., and entered discussions as to the basic issues in the contest.

The speeches of Robert Simmons differed little from previous months. The main theme was criticism of the New Deal for destroying the basic rights guaranteed in the Constitution, and for failing to bring about a complete solution of the farm problem.

Terry Carpenter, who had done little campaigning, had confined his attack to the partisanship of the Democratic Party. Poor receptions and lack of party support had made his campaign more difficult.

\[1\text{Ibid.}, p. 390.\]
Although the summer heat had abated by the end of the month, the campaign temperature continued to rise. The Nebraska election appeared, at that time, to be a toss-up between Robert Simmons and George Norris. The stage was set for the critical period from October 1 to November 3, 1936.
CHAPTER V

THE CRITICAL PERIOD

With election day only five weeks away, the campaign became increasingly more aggressive and strenuous. The remaining weeks would determine victory or defeat.

Robert Simmons opened the month at Fremont on October 2. Delivering a speech on the merit system of selecting governmental employees, he assured the voters that a Republican victory would eliminate the spoils system and restore the civil service.¹ The remainder of the weekend was spent in Omaha preparing a filmed address to be distributed to the theater chains in all ninety-three counties.²

On the third of October, he spoke at Geneva on the methods and principles that government followed. The real issue, he said, was not the question of humanitarian ideas, because in a discussion of human rights against property rights, it was difficult to determine where one ended and the other began.³

The third week of the tour closed his campaign in Northern and Central Nebraska. On Monday evening, he

¹Edgar Sun, October 2, 1936.
²Omaha Bee-News, October 4, 1936.
³Ibid.
launched the last week of his personal tour, to be completed at his home town of Scottsbluff on October 18, 1936. The last two weeks before the election he would spend campaigning in Lincoln and Omaha. 4

Senator Norris, too, faced his busiest month. The Draft Norris campaign committee had arranged to have the Senator give at least one speech a day from October 1 to election eve. 5 The committee had also arranged a series of spot radio announcements which described Norris to Nebraskans as "the greatest single-handed champion of the rights of the common man." 6

On October 2, Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace, delivering a speech at Beatrice in behalf of the Senator, said the Midwest and the nation owed George Norris a "debt of gratitude." Secretary Wallace was here, he asserted, to acknowledge the debt owed to Norris. Having listed the independence, integrity, and courage of Senator Norris as the qualities which had endeared him to the nation, Wallace concluded his speech: "George Norris stands out as a foremost champion of the great principle that the function of government is to serve the general welfare." 7

4Ibid.
5James Lawrence Collection MMS, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.
6Ibid.
7Lincoln Star, October 2, 1936.
Morris, meanwhile, was in Central Nebraska addressing the North Loup Power and Irrigation District celebration at Ord. At the ground-breaking ceremony, George Norris emphasized his youthful vigor by taking a two-horse team and plowing a furrow. He addressed the gathering on the importance of saving the country's natural resources, but human greed rather than politics prevented the building up of the country. In closing, the Senator remarked: "If we could put humanity in the statute books and mercy in the courts, we could have a happier world."8

Norris then left for Wayne where, in an address to twelve hundred people, he remarked that his opponents found little to criticize about his career except that he was too old. He told the crowd he was as healthy and active as he had been six years before.9 The Wayne Herald criticized Norris's speech as being inconsistent. The paper editorialized that Norris would have retired had the President not asked him to stay on. Since he now represented Washington, he ought to be retired as he had wished earlier.10 The Nebraska Daily News-Press was critical of the Senator because he discussed his health rather than campaign issues, but implied that this was to

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8 Omaha World Herald, October 2, 1936.
9 Lincoln Star, October 2, 1936.
10 Wayne Herald, October 8, 1936.
be expected from a "rabble rouser." 11

In Lincoln on Tuesday, Senator Hugo Black, Democrat from Alabama, praised Norris for his immovable courage in following his convictions. Black said both Norris and he had worked side by side for the interests of the common man. 12

The World Herald implied, in an editorial, that Norris must be losing because the Democratic Party was bringing in so many speakers. The paper predicted that Norris, being a reactionary trying to do away with parties, would not be elected in November. 13

The Republican Party attempted to wage an attack on George Norris, first by calling him a "renegade Republican," and secondly by bringing out figures on the amount of money Norris had received from the taxpayers of Nebraska. Estimating his public salary for forty-seven years to be four hundred thousand dollars, the party opined that no one else had been paid so well. 14

Terry Carpenter went a step further and itemized the Senator's total salary as a public official:

11 Nebraska Daily News-Press (Nebraska City), October 7, 1936.
12 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), October 7, 1936.
13 Omaha World Herald, October 2, 1936.
14 Beatrice Daily Sun, October 7, 1936.
In addition to the figure above, Carpenter noted that Norris's son-in-law, as his secretary, had received $30,000. The mileage charges of the Senator were $15,000, not including the trips he took, as a congressman, at government expense to the Philippines, Panama, and Alaska.15

Whether or not this criticism hurt Norris's popularity was difficult to measure. The editor of the Columbus Daily Telegram, Edgar Howard, conducted a two-week poll on the relative strengths of Carpenter and Norris, but reported on October 3 that the results were inconclusive.16

On October 7, at York, Norris defended the administration against the opposition's charges that F.D.R. was a dictator. In discussing his own candidacy, he stated that he was running because forty thousand constituents had asked him. He wanted to serve the people and had not received any favors from the President.17

15Daily Senator (Scottsbluff), October 10, 1936.
16Columbus Daily Telegram, October 3, 1936.
17Grand Island Daily Independent, October 8, 1936.
The next day it was disclosed that Franklin D. Roosevelt was going to include stops at Lincoln and Omaha in his eleven-state tour from October 8 to the 17. Preliminary plans called for Senator Norris and Senator Burke to join the train in Iowa. The President would then deliver a nation-wide address from Omaha.

The Democratic nominee, Terry Carpenter, thought Senator Norris had stated earlier he would campaign outside the state. But now, refusing to leave Nebraska, he had been waging one of the hardest campaigns of his career. According to Carpenter, the Senator was now bringing in the President "to bolster up the Norris campaign."

Reporters inquiring if Carpenter would resign should he be asked personally by the President were told: "I could not consider withdrawing from the race." Since he considered that he had a mandate from the people, nothing could make him withdraw. Asked whether he was going to Lincoln, he replied: "Those things are somewhat formal affairs, and a man shouldn't go unless he's invited."

The first hint that Carpenter was in financial difficulty in his lonely battle was contained in an article

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18 *Omaha World Herald*, October 8, 1936.
19 *Omaha Bee-Ne.ws*, October 7, 1936.
20 *Omaha World Herald*, October 10, 1936.
21 *Omaha Bee-Ne.ws*, October 10, 1936.
published in the Lincoln Star on October 8. In the article, he criticized the Democratic Party for spending its money against him, stating:

I am not able financially to carry on an aggressive personal campaign. . . . My campaign must be limited to a radio campaign during the last eight days before the general election.22

Two days later he told the World Herald he would even have difficulty paying the bill for his radio campaign.23 It began to look as if Carpenter were trying to gain sympathy from the voters of Nebraska.

Due partially to lack of funds, Terry Carpenter's campaign had lacked the vitality of his opponents' battles. Perhaps fearing to tackle concrete issues, at no time did Carpenter refer to Simmons by name, and his primary criticism of Morris was his age.24 The New York Times commented that the Democratic nominee's campaign had "degenerated into a pose of innocence, which falls flat as campaign publicity."25

The Republican nominee, Robert Simmons, spent Tuesday at Arapahoe, discussing the extravagance of the New Deal and promising the Republican Party would reduce wasteful spending and bring efficiency back to the national

22Lincoln Star, October 8, 1936.
23Omaha World Herald, October 10, 1936.
24Scottsbluff Star-Herald, October 13, 1936.
government. On Wednesday, he covered Beaver City, Cambridge, Oxford, Wilsonville, and McCook, continuing his attack on the New Deal. In McCook, where he was asked to discuss personalities, he replied: "This is a campaign of issues, not personalities. I have not discussed personalities elsewhere, and I do not propose to do it here."27

On Thursday, Simmons moved on to Ogallala, Oshkosh, and Bridgeport. The major address, at Bridgeport, was representative of all three speeches. He told the voters the Republican Party stood for decentralizing the farm program, and placing it back in the hands of the farmers. 28 The following day he campaigned at Hemingford, Crawford, Chadron, and Grant. In answer to Alabama Senator Black's visit earlier in the week, Simmons countered by saying that Alabama had been paid for not raising cotton. Instead, Simmons said they raised midwest products, which increased northern surpluses and lowered market values. Small wonder, he implied, that Black favored the New Deal. 29

At Chadron, he attended a dinner reception for railroad workers and laboring groups. He urged the laboring groups to vote Republican to remove the New Deal's

26 Omaha Bee-News, October 7, 1936.
27 Ibid., October 8, 1936.
28 Ibid., October 9, 1936.
29 Ibid.
false economy of creating jobs by relief. He expressed confidence that labor would see the light and vote for Simmons.  

On Saturday, he addressed audiences at Mitchell and Bayard, and ended his tour of Western Nebraska at Scottsbluff Saturday evening. Here, Simmons discussed with a hometown audience, the large national debt and the agricultural problems facing the nation. Being critical of the government's spending two dollars for every one taken in, he informed the crowd that the country's share of the national debt was $7,865,000. Each person's share amounted to $275. Then, turning to agriculture, he listed destruction of American markets, restrictive sugar quotas, and government directed crop insurance as forcing the farmer under control of the government. He concluded by pointing out that the basic problem was unemployment. If it could be successfully solved, he felt that the other existing problems would also be eased.

In all of his speeches during this period, Simmons constructively criticized the New Deal, defended the Republican platform, and explained the principles on which Landon was running. At all points along his route, he had been well received. According to the *New York Times*, however,

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31 *Scottsbluff Star Herald*, October 11, 1936.

32 *Omaha Bee-News*, October 11, 1936.
since he had little new material on which to base his speeches, he had talked himself out long ago. The coming week would be spent working back toward Lincoln and Omaha.

The Democratic Party was finishing the final preparations for Franklin D. Roosevelt's visit to Omaha on October 10. The party was hopeful of bringing in the doubtful state for the Democratic Party, and assuring the re-election of George Norris. Up to this time, neither party had been able to claim the state by more than twenty-five thousand votes because there was so much doubt as to the outcome. To illustrate the confusion, one of the Democrats who circulated a Draft Norris petition in Omaha refused to vote for F.D.R. in November. Another petition circulator was a Landon Republican. The indications were that Norris would carry the state but F.D.R. would not. The Democrats, however, hoped that Roosevelt, by choosing his words carefully at Lincoln and Omaha, could yet win the Nebraska vote. Whether or not Roosevelt could win support for himself, it was a foregone conclusion that the President would endorse George Norris.

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34 Ibid., October 9, 1936.
35 Ibid.
The administration would hazard the loss of the state's electoral votes in order to re-elect Norris to the Senate.

James Lawrence, head of the Senator's campaign committee, was busily organizing the campaign on the county level. The plan of organization was to line up in each county a campaign committee representing both Republicans and Democrats. Each committee was in charge of making arrangements should Senator Norris make a personal appearance there. If there were any problems of importance, the county chairman were requested to forward the information to headquarters in Lincoln. The county committees were also to solicit funds in behalf of the Senator, and distribute campaign posters.

Outside of Nebraska, the campaign committee sought funds from the East. T. C. Corcoran, a member of the Senate Democratic campaign committee, wrote a letter to James Lawrence, stating: "I've shaken the bushes all over the East about money for the Senator." He assured the campaign committee that large and small contributions were coming in. The Independent Legislative Bureau, an agency set up to help the congressmen draft their bills, had

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36 James Lawrence Collection MSS, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.

37 T. C. Corcoran, Washington, 15 October 1936, letter to James Lawrence, Lincoln, James Lawrence Collection MSS, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.
also solicited funds, but the bureau had to use discretion or the press could make it embarrassing for the Senator. The Senator's campaign organization, composed of members from both parties, became daily more efficient.

In summary, before the President's visit George Norris was portrayed as campaigning as he never campaigned before, speaking daily before audiences or over the radio.

The outcome in Nebraska hinged strongly on the President's visit to Nebraska. All of the Democratic candidates, as well as Senator Norris, were invited to board the Presidential train at various points along the way so they could be identified as being endorsed by Franklin Roosevelt.

Senator Norris boarded the train at Red Oak, Iowa. Already on the train were Mrs. Gilbert Hitchcock, widow of the late Senator Hitchcock, founder and publisher of the Omaha World Herald, and Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace.

At Plattsmouth, the President, Mrs. Roosevelt, Wallace, Mrs. Hitchcock, and Senator Norris were on the rear platform of the train. As they arrived, the President turned to Norris and said: "I brought about the best part

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38 Richard Hague, Washington, 2 October 1936, letter to James Lawrence, Lincoln, James Lawrence Collection MSS, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.

39 Omaha Bee-News, October 10, 1936.
of Nebraska into Nebraska with me—George Norris.\textsuperscript{40}

An interesting political personality sideline occurred as the President was making his informal remarks. Arthur Mullen, one of the leading Democrats in the state, had disliked Norris because of his partisan unpredictability. At Plattsmouth, Mullen seemed indecisive about boarding the train, until the President specifically invited him. Later on, it was rumored that when Senator Norris was in the President's private car, Mullen was not; however, the press believed a truce was forthcoming. Other notables who boarded the executive train included James Quigley, Governor Roy Cochran, Senator Burke, and Congressmen Charles McLaughlin and Henry Luckey.\textsuperscript{41}

The President was scheduled to give an afternoon address at Lincoln. A temporary stage had been constructed for the President's appearance on the capitol steps. Governor Cochran introduced Mayor Bryan of Lincoln, who welcomed the President to the city.\textsuperscript{42}

In his formal address the President contrasted the increased national debt of eight billion dollars over a three-year period to the national income, which had

\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{42}\textit{Ibid.}
increased by twenty billion dollars. The New Deal, in his opinion, had been a good investment. He told the audience that he had gotten a lot of amusement out of his opponents' comments. The administration's farm program had been compared to the model changes made every year in automobiles. Just as automobiles improved throughout the years, so did farming. He was sure no one would want to take an old model automobile when there had been so many improvements in the new models.

Cautioning the people against being misled by false campaign propaganda, he turned and looked at the motto, "The Salvation of the State is Watchfulness in the Citizens," inscribed on the state capitol. With this motto, he believed there could be no misleading the citizens of Nebraska.43

With his speech concluded, he called to Senator Norris, who had been standing to one side in the crowd. Norris did not want to go to the platform because it was the President's day, but with the crowd's shouting and Mrs. Roosevelt's insistent beckoning, he stepped to the platform and replied:

I am glad to be able to share with you in honoring the President, a President, who I think, has done more for helping the ordinary,

common man than any other President who has been in the White House in the last twelve years.\textsuperscript{44}

The party then boarded the train for departure to Omaha for the evening radio address from Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum. The plan was for the President to remain on the train until the parade to Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum at 7:00 p.m. As the Presidential caravan left the depot, crowds jammed the streets along the parade route and wildly cheered the President.\textsuperscript{45}

James Quigley quieted the crowd at the Coliseum, as the notables took their places on the stage. In addition to the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, these included: Senator Norris, Henry Wallace, Senator Burke, Mrs. Gilbert Hitchcock, Arthur Mullen, Governor Cochran, Dan Butler (Mayor of Omaha), Bishop James H. Ryan of the Omaha Diocese, Congressman and Mrs. Charles McLaughlin.\textsuperscript{46}

Introductions were passed by Quigley, Mayor Butler, Governor Cochran, and Mrs. Hitchcock. The latter promptly stated to the capacity crowd, "I have the honor to present to you the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt."\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{44}Lincoln Star, October 10, 1936.
\textsuperscript{45}Omaha Bee-News, October 11, 1936.
\textsuperscript{46}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47}Omaha World Herald, October 11, 1936.
Before he began the text of his speech, Roosevelt told the audience and radio listeners that he had a few words to direct to Nebraska. On the stage with him, the President declared, set a man who had earned a reputation for being subject to no man but his conscience—a man who had earned nation-wide recognition—George Norris. Commenting that he did not usually interfere with or participate in state elections outside of New York, the President called Senator Norris the "one magnificently justified exception."\(^{48}\)

Praising the Senator, Roosevelt remarked:

George Norris's candidacy transcends state and party lines. In our national history we have had fewer elder statesmen who, like him, have preserved the aspirations of youth as they accumulated the wisdom of years. He is one of the major prophets of America. Help this great American to continue a historic career of service. Nebraska will be doing a great service not only to itself, but to every other State in the Union and to the Nation as a whole, if it places this great American above partisanship, and keeps George Norris in the Senate of the United States.\(^{49}\)

In the body of his address, the President described his administration's role in the farm program. There were two convictions, he said, upon which the administration based its attack on farm problems. One, the farmer's

\(^{48}\)Roosevelt, op. cit., p. 431.

\(^{49}\)Ibid., pp. 431-32.
plight was a nation-wide problem; and two, farm policy
must be run by the farmers. 50

To the nation-wide audience he described in seven
sentences what the administration had done for the farmer:
(1) set up the Agricultural Adjustment Act which raised
farmers' annual net incomes by three times what it had
been in 1932; (2) brought into existence the Farm Credit
Administration, saving thousands of homes and farms from
foreclosures; (3) passed reciprocal trade agreements
which brought about recovery of the farmers' foreign
markets; (4) instituted a program of recovery in busi-
ness, improvement of wages, and an increase of the con-
sumer's purchasing power, thus restoring the national
income and the home market of the farmer; (5) had pre-
served the land through the land use program and with
a policy of soil conservation; (6) had given the farmer
some of the comforts which go towards bettering his
standard of living, by bringing rural electrification,
improving farm-to-market roads, and aiding rural schools;
(7) aided the farmers and stockmen with drought relief
when needed. 51

Franklin Roosevelt then contrasted the administra-
tion's program with the proposed farm plan of the Republi-

50Ibid., pp. 433 ff.
51Ibid., pp. 435-36.
cans. In the opinion of the President, the Republicans wanted to junk the present program and restore the economy to its laissez faire position prior to 1933. Next, Republicans wanted to give the farmers producing exportable farm crops (particularly cotton, tobacco, hogs, and wheat) a tariff-equivalent payment which was, in essence, a dole. The program would not remove the problems facing producers of other farm commodities, and would tend to create surpluses. The Republican plan, the President remarked, "is a straight subsidy of unlimited farm production."52 Continuing his attack on Republican philosophy, the President questioned their intent to restore the Smoot-Hawley tariff and repeal the Trade Agreements Act. The old tariff, he felt, would pile up surplus at home.

Roosevelt then promised extension during his second term, of the administration's benefits to farmers, to include: continuation of the conservation policy; enlargement of the domestic market by an increase in the nation's purchasing power; removal of the farm tenant system; and institution of a crop insurance plan to protect crops and prevent food shortages.53

In his closing remarks, President Roosevelt reiterated:

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52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., pp. 436 ff.
Our plans... will continue to be guided by the fundamental belief that the American farmer, living on his own land, remains our ideal of self-reliance and of spiritual balance—the source from which the reservoirs of the Nation's strength are constantly renewed.54

The speech, which drew thunderous applause from the Coliseum crowd, proved one of the major policy addresses of the campaign. About thirteen thousand in the stands, and twenty-five hundred standing outside, applauded even as the President got into his car for the trip back to the station.55

One person partially disgruntled by the occasion was Arthur Mullen. He had not been able to introduce the President. Roosevelt reminded Mullen that although party policy usually allowed introduction by the Governor if a Democrat; an exception had been made. Mrs. Hitchcock, he explained, as widow of the former owner of the World Herald, could lend the impression that she was dissatisfied with the paper's present policies. By giving her the honor of the introduction, the party hoped to lessen the effect that the current editorials would have on the readers.56

54 Ibid., p. 438.
55 Omaha Bee-News, October 11, 1936.
56 Ibid.
In the capacity crowd of party faithfuls and curious citizens, there was one person who was conspicuous by his absence—Terry Carpenter had stayed at home. Carpenter was questioned the next day as to his opinion of the F.D.R. visit and the Norris endorsement. Even after being shunned by the party, Carpenter still supported the President and was in complete agreement with his speech, except the part dealing with the Trade Agreements Act. Commenting on Norris's endorsement, he stated: "Well, I'm glad that's over and the President has gone on. I'm sure McGrath [Carpenter's campaign manager] and I can go out now and counteract it." 57

Unknown to Terry Carpenter, his mother, Mrs. George Hillerege took an automobile to Cheyenne, hoping to see the President and to reprove him for his treatment of her son. Extolling the virtues of her son, she remarked to reporters:

"Why my boy is as fine a man as there is. He is honorable, he has no bad habits, his intelligence is above average, and if right is right he will win this election. I'm back of him heart and soul until November 3rd."

She was not successful in her attempt, however, as she had car trouble on the way. 59

58 *Omaha World Herald*, October 13, 1936.
The campaign strategy of Carpenter was now to play for sympathy of the voters by making it look as though George Norris had taken advantage of him. In the Daily Senator he recapped, step by step, Senator Norris's entry into the campaign: On April 18, 1936, Norris publicly had announced his desire to retire and spend his time helping the President's campaign by speaking outside of Nebraska. After Senator Burke had announced that he would not support Carpenter, the Democratic nominee had written a letter, dated April 29, to Senator Norris, stating: "I am forced into a position where I must stay in the race in order to keep my chin up."  

On June 17, in a letter to Norris, Carpenter had stated that the convention had been unanimous in its refusal to endorse the Senator. The resolution endorsing Norris, Carpenter claimed, was put over by the leaders after the convention had adjourned. Advising the Senator of his intention to run, Carpenter stated: "The best you can do is to complicate matters if you file. . . . In my opinion, since the convention and the way it was handled, the best you can hope to do is run third."  

As late as August 21, 1936, the Senator advised Carpenter in a letter that he did not know if he would be a candidate.  

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60 Omega Bee-News, October 13, 1936.
61 Daily Senator (Scottsbluff), October 14, 1936.
62 Ibid., October 13, 1936.
Since Norris's political opponents were circulating a report that he had encouraged Carpenter to run in the primary, the Senator published a letter that Carpenter had written to him nearly a year before. In this letter, dated November 28, 1935, Carpenter announced his intention to file for the Democratic nomination in the United States Senate. The letter went on to state, however, that,

There is one thing I want to make very clear to you, Senator. In case you later decide to run for re-election, I want you to know that I will openly support you, regardless of whether or not I win the Democratic nomination. . . . This statement, as you know, is given voluntarily. It is sincere. If you later feel that you want to go to the Senate, I will help, not hinder, your election to the office you have served so well.63

The letter cleared up any doubts about Senator Norris's part in the injustices against the Democratic nominee. Carpenter, however, would not give up his fight easily. He secured additional ammunition when Arthur Mullen endorsed Norris during the second week in October. Mullen commented:

As a friend and supporter of this administration, I intend to assist President Roosevelt in electing a Senator whom he and the Democratic state convention endorsed. My vote will be cast for George Norris.64

Yielding to the President's wishes, Mullen supported Norris, even though he believed the party was making a

63Lincoln Star, October 12, 1936.
64Omaha World Herald, October 14, 1936.
mistake. He believed Senator Norris to be as "Hamiltonian as was Hamilton himself . . . with his injection of Federalist principles of national concentration into our political development . . . . He should never have been associated," Mullen continued, "with the Democratic Party, and he has been as much of a liability to us Nebraska Democrats as has Henry Wallace."65

Carpenter charged that Norris was now part of the machine he used to fight as the greatest evil in government. No longer could the Senator freely attack James Farley or "bossism" after what the Democratic Party was doing for him. Mullen's endorsement of Norris, Carpenter continued, was "one of the good reasons I have for changing my mind about Norris."66

An interesting sidelight to the controversy was the correspondence between Dr. A. P. Fitzsimmons, Chairman of the Johnson County Democratic Committee (Tecumseh), and Terry Carpenter. Fitzsimmons urged Carpenter to put aside his personal ambitions or it was possible his career could be hurt. The doctor was certain that Carpenter was man enough to see the implications and announce his withdrawal. Said Fitzsimmons,


66 Omaha World Herald, October 14, 1936.
I feel sure that by making this sacrifice and by laying personal ambition aside, you will endear yourself to the rank and file of the Democrats of Nebraska in such a manner as to insure your future consideration, and place your political expediency at a premium with the democracy of Nebraska.67

In his reply the Democratic nominee maintained that a man seventy-five years old was a very poor health risk. Also, Carpenter wrote that he had offered earlier to resign, but he could not afford to now, after spending three thousand dollars on his primary campaign. Recently, the Senator had made attacks on his honesty, and now had joined the party bosses. Since Norris was the intruder, he could not possibly be elected. Carpenter concluded:

I am a big enough man that I do not want our primary system overthrown by political bosses,
I am big enough to fight for Nebraska's right
to choose her own representatives.68

All the while Carpenter was being urged to resign, his financial problems were mounting. He charged that the Democrats had spent twenty-five thousand dollars in Omaha alone to defeat him.69 While he was virtually destitute of funds, he told the newspapers he had spent three thousand

67Dr. A. P. Fitzsimmons, Tecumseh, 14 October 1936, letter to Terry Carpenter, Scottsbluff, James Lawrence Collection MSS, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.

68Terry Carpenter, Scottsbluff, 15 October 1936, letter to Dr. A. P. Fitzsimmons, Tecumseh, James Lawrence Collection MSS, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.

69Omaha Bee-News, October 14, 1936.
dollars on billboard advertising and had received a notice to pay up in forty-eight hours; in addition, he had put down only seven hundred fifty dollars on his radio broadcasts, which represented 25 per cent of the entire cost; the operation of his sound truck had cost him one hundred and fifty dollars; and he had laid out eighteen thousand dollars for his newspaper, which was presently running in the red. 70

With his funds running low, Carpenter announced he was going to finish his campaign with a whirlwind personal tour during the week of October 20-26. From October 26 until election day, he would devote himself entirely to radio broadcasts. 71

Norris was not particularly active during the week of October 12-17, although he delivered speeches at Syracuse, Falls City, Beatrice, and Grand Island on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday respectively.

At Syracuse, he maintained that an unbalanced budget was the best in times of crisis. Admitting that there had been waste and extravagance in the national government because men were not capable of perfection, he remarked: "We've tried to avoid extravagance. We couldn't avoid it. We've done the best we could." 72

70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Nebraska Daily News-Press (Nebraska City), October 14, 1936.
At Falls City, he replied to Carpenter's charges of discrimination and "bossism." He repeated he had entered the Senatorial race because of the petitions by the voters. Norris predicted that Carpenter's abuse of him would elect Robert Simmons. In answer to the charges of boss control, he asserted:

I believe I'm so well known in Nebraska and also in the nation that that statement would not be believed anywhere in the United States. . . . If I am elected, I will go to Washington with clean hands and pure lips. It's going to be free or I'll not be there.

Terry Carpenter's allegations worried the Norris Committee enough that James Lawrence, Chairman of the Committee, gave a speech at Central City denouncing them. The Senator, according to Lawrence, was known for his uprightness and integrity. No one would believe Senator Norris could "be linked arm and arm with the bosses of Nebraska."

In Beatrice on Thursday, Norris did not even mention the senatorial race. Urging people to forget partisanship, he extolled the record of President Roosevelt and urged the crowd to vote for the President on election day.

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73 Lincoln Star, October 15, 1936.
74 Ibid.
75 Central City Nonpareil, October 15, 1936.
76 Lincoln Star, October 15, 1936.
Norris completed the week with a major speech at Grand Island. He reminded the audience that the charges of boss control did not include charges that he was dishonest or lacked courage and wisdom. If elected, he would defend the interests of agriculture and labor.77

The newspapers continued to speculate as to what effect the President's visit would have on the election. The New York Times summed it up as a two-fold proposition. The Democrats were won over by it, while the opposition raised the question of interference by the President in the state. Since the farmers, who represented more than one-half the voting strength in the state, were not a homogeneous voting block, the outcome would depend on their vote.78

Robert Simmons, after finishing his personal campaign tour in the Panhandle the week before, now started back towards Lincoln. On Monday, October 14, he spoke at Kimball where he took issue with the administration's claim to have solved the problem of unemployment. Until full employment was restored, the administration could not claim success.79 The following day at Sidney, he maintained

77 Grand Island Daily Independent, October 17, 1936.
78 New York Times, October 18, 1936.
79 Omaha Bee-News, October 12, 1936.
that the nation could not have a strong national defense until it stopped relying on foreign agricultural products. He hoped that in the future the national defenses would be strong enough to remove the threat of war. On Tuesday evening, he addressed an audience at Dunning, comparing the proposed Republican tariff to the New Deal's Reciprocal Trade Act.

Returning to eastern Nebraska on Wednesday, he spoke at St. Edward. He implied that any free people who were placed under the domination of a centralized government were going backwards instead of progressing. Emphatically, he asserted: "The bureaucracy assembled under the New Deal is a throwback to the theory of divine rule which Americans threw out." The next day he reiterated at Fullerton that the South was producing northern products while on government allotment, which caused a surplus and lowered markets.

In a major address at Hastings on Friday, Simmons defined the two issues of the campaign to be economic philosophy and a change in the form of government. He questioned that any one person or political party could have a monopoly on humanitarianism. Everyone wanted

80 Ibid., October 13, 1936.
81 Ibid., October 14, 1936.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., October 15, 1936.
business recovery in order for wages and new job opportunities to increase, but the real difference between the parties was the method proposed to bring this about. He was quoted as being opposed to any change in the fundamentals of the American system of government. Critical of Congress for surrendering to the President, Simmons implied that the country now found itself with an extravagant government and a helpless Congress. "Every community in America," he stated, "is at their mercy."

In the evening, he addressed an audience at Tilden, repeating his argument that neither party "had a monopoly on the hopes and aspirations of the American people." In conclusion, he asserted:

The Republican Party offers a program of relief, farm aid and pensions with the difference that all waste and needless expenditure will be removed.

Summing up in Pawnee City on Saturday, Simmons listed nine points which he promised he would work for if elected to Congress: (1) He would put a stop to the wasteful spending of the federal government and avoid any more tax increases; (2) urge the return to normal

84 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), October 16, 1936.
85 Hastings Daily Tribune, October 16, 1936.
86 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), October 17, 1936.
87 Ibid.
farm production; (3) halt foreign imports from entering this country; (4) stimulate domestic consumption of farm products and remove reciprocal trade agreements by removing federal subsidies from southern farmers, but continuing benefit payments to family-sized farms; (5) develop agriculture to a competitive position with industry; (6) propose a bill whereby the farmers could own their own warehouses to store their surpluses at home; (7) pledge direct action to preserve the democratic form of government; (8) control of relief administration on a local level to improve efficiency; (9) permit Americans, under the Republican Party, to spend more money locally under the direct control of the voters instead of the bureaucrats in Washington.

The Pawnee Republican, in an editorial, described the speech as being earnest and sincere. The paper believed the arguments were convincing and impressive, and commended Simmons for being a courageous campaigner who was sweeping the state.

With the election only two weeks away, the candidates conducted their campaigns with seriousness and earnestness. All were cautious about statements or impli-

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88 *Omaha Bee-News*, October 18, 1936.

89 *Pawnee Republican*, October 22, 1936.
cations since one misinterpretation could cost any candidate his election.

Carpenter opened the week of October 19-25 in Omaha. Frank Arbuckle, one of the organizers of Townsend clubs, indicated the group would do anything to help Carpenter since he had openly supported the Townsend Plan. In an interview Carpenter, again, made the statement that, "Folks don't seem to believe that I'm down to bedrock and haven't had a bit of financial help from anyone."  

The week began his whirlwind tour of Nebraska. In Hastings on Monday morning, he discussed the threat of war. He would not vote for war until the enemy arrived on the shore of America. Then, he asserted, "I'll hold my vote until I . . . [could] almost see the whites in their eyes first." To confuse the issue, however, he informed the people that the United States must arm for protection if the other nations of the world armed.

That afternoon, he urged the people of Grand Island to "vote for a President, not a party of an individual."

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90 *Omaha World Herald*, October 19, 1936.
91 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
He, again, charged the Democratic machine with trying to defeat him, and accused the party of having already spent forty thousand dollars against him. Telling the crowd he did not need the senatorship since he already had his own successful business, he appeared to be running out of a feeling of patriotic duty towards his country. He compared Norris to a child, saying: "More than ever before, I believe that old saying: 'a man is once a man, but twice a child'."

At Norfolk on Friday, he discussed charges of federal over-control. Carpenter reminded his audience that although the politicians had not started the depression, the people had turned to the government for help. The opposition, he asserted, had charged that Congress had surrendered its prerogative in giving the President emergency powers to bring about recovery. With conditions somewhat relieved, Congress would again have more time to consider appropriate legislation.

On Saturday, Carpenter devoted his attack to personalities. He called, "'Mullenism' . . . the greatest curse the people of Nebraska ever had fastened onto their necks," and labeled Norris a machine candidate. The

95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Norfolk Daily News, October 24, 1936.
98 Omaha Bee-News, October 25, 1936.
President had to come to Nebraska to save the Senator, instead of the Senator's going outside of the state to campaign for F.D.R. 99

The speech at Blair closed out Carpenter's quick personal tour. His campaigning had not varied greatly from previous weeks. Allegations against the party and Norris had been continued. His irrational statements on the threat of war were confusing to the voter, although what he had meant to say was that he was a confirmed isolationist.

While Carpenter continued to snipe at the Democratic machine, Norris waged his campaign against the opponents of the New Deal. "The best friend the administration has," he stated, "is one who offers constructive criticism. . . . Most of the criticism that is made against the administration is not constructive." 100

At the beginning of the week of October 19, two out-of-state congressmen (Senator Robert LaFollette, Republican, Wisconsin, and John Rankin, Democrat of Mississippi) came to Nebraska to endorse Norris. LaFollette praised the Senator as being "recognized throughout the nation as the most effective spokesman labor and agriculture have had in Congress." 101 Rankin characterized Norris as senator-at-large for the entire nation. He asserted:

99 Ibid.
100 New York Times, October 20, 1936.
101 Lincoln Star, October 19, 1936.
George Norris is the greatest friend the mass of people ever had in a national Congress. Not to re-elect Senator Norris will be the greatest national tragedy this country has ever experienced. Members of both parties helped the Senator's campaign. Senator Pinchot, a Republican campaigner for Alfred Landon, was scheduled to speak in Nebraska, but his tour was cancelled for fear he would endorse Senator Norris. He did issue a statement, nevertheless, noting that while the two differed on political parties, Norris had done more for the country than any Senator or Representative of either party. He continued by saying:

George Norris is the most useful man in either house of Congress. In forty years of intimate acquaintance with public men, I have never known a more fearless, devoted, and effective public servant.

Senator William Borah, proposed Republican candidate, wired the Lincoln Star, as follows:

George Norris is an outstanding constructive statesman. He has a keen insight into and a deep sympathy for the interests of the average man and woman, and is as courageous as he is able.

Harold Ickes, Secretary of Interior, was one of the few men who could not be persuaded to campaign for Norris.

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102 Ibid., October 20, 1936.
103 Ibid., October 21, 1936.
104 Ibid., October 22, 1936.
105 James Lawrence Collection MSS, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.
In one radio address from Shenandoah, Iowa, he acknowledged the President's support, but declared he was "not interested in Roosevelt politics." 106

The "senator-at-large," meanwhile, was out in the western part of the state. In a two-hour speech at North Platte on October 20, he traced the benefits of the New Deal, and urged the voters to support the President on election day. 107 Pointing out to an audience of twelve hundred that the President had brought about tremendous accomplishments for the farmer and laborer, he challenged the crowd to name any other President who had done as much to find jobs for those out of work and to stabilize the economy. In his closing remarks, he asserted:

I don't care what President Roosevelt's politics are, I don't care whether a man is a Democrat or Republican--what matters is whether he is honest and whether his actions are for the farmers and the laborers of this nation as Roosevelt's were. 108

On Tuesday, the Senator moved into Scottsbluff, the residence of Terry Carpenter. The evening, with a crowd of nine hundred persons, was one of the most unusual and exciting of the campaign. Norris told the crowd that for the public record he was going to read the letters

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106 *Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln), October 16, 1936.


108 *Lincoln Star*, October 20, 1936.
which Carpenter had written personally to him. He started by reading the letter published in the newspapers in which Carpenter had agreed to decline the nomination if the Senator would run in the primary. At this point, a woman heckler and promoter of candidate Carpenter, Mrs. John Herstead, stood up and shouted: "Senator Norris, you are breaking the rules of the game in reading Terry Carpenter's letter." Leaving a startled and surprised crowd behind, she stalked out, as the Senator called, "I wish you wouldn't go away." Then, turning to the crowd, he asked:

Is a man who has received such letters as these—letters which he was not asked to treat confidentially—to stand silent in the face of such vilification as that to which I am now subjected? The crowd shouted: "No, no, no, we're with you, Senator Norris." After reading the second letter, dated April 29, 1936, in which, according to the Senator, Carpenter predicted a three-way race with Carpenter the loser and Simmons the winner, he commented that Carpenter was "the biggest cog in the Simmons machine tonight." Concluding his speech, he urged the audience to re-elect the President and to ignore

109Ibid., October 21, 1936.
110Ibid.
111Ibid.
112Ibid.
113Scottsbluff Star-Herald, October 21, 1936.
the false propaganda being circulated this year. 114

On Wednesday in Alliance, he reaffirmed his support of F.D.R. and explained the constructive measures accomplished under the administration. Although the Republican Party had charged the administration with extravagance in the unbalanced budget, he repeated that it was impossible to bring about recovery without spending money. There was no question, he thought, but that the budget should be balanced if nothing were done to bring about recovery. 115

In a short stop in Chadron on Thursday, Norris told his audience he could see little difference between Simmons and Alf Landon. Concerning Simmons' legislative record, he wondered what bills Robert Simmons had introduced as a congressman, since his name was not to be found on any bills. In conclusion he said: "I simply give you the record, and it is for you to choose..." 116

On Friday in a two-hour address at Valentine, he urged the group of five hundred not to let big businessmen and vested interests elect the president. The administration was presently waging a fight to return the government to the people. He finished the speech by asserting:

114 Ibid.
115 Alliance News, October 22, 1936.
116 Lincoln Star, October 23, 1936.
"All I ask of every true Nebraskan and every true American is that they vote as their conscience tells them to."117

On Saturday evening, he addressed a crowd of seven hundred persons at O'Neill. Reminding the audience of the President's never-ending battle to serve the farmer and the laborer, Norris stated that the administration had increased the national income from thirty-eight billion in 1932 to fifty-three billion in 1935. In 1936, estimates place the national income at sixty billion.118 He urged voters to keep this in mind when they went to the polls, and urged: "Rise above partisanship."119

The newspapers were not editorially silent, either. The Grand Island Independent (Republican) was critical of Norris for bypassing the primary and becoming a machine candidate. The Senator had admitted earlier the greatest opposition to the primary came from selfish politicians, party machines, and special interests. The final choice of the candidates was entrusted to the people, but in the 1936 election the paper felt that Norris had put aside the primary.120 The Omaha Bee-News (Republican) concurred with the Grand Island newspaper and even went a step further.

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117Ibid., October 24, 1936.
118Ibid., October 26, 1936.
119Ibid.
120Grand Island Daily Independent, October 23, 1936.
labeling Senator Norris as a member of the Farley-Burke machine.121

The Fremont Tribune, another Republican paper, insinuated that Senator Norris was using outstate money from vested interests. Two days later, in the same paper, the editorial implied that Senator Norris was a third member of the Senate from Wisconsin, since he spent most of his summers in that state.122

His age temporarily pushed into the background, the Senator became, during the week of October 19, the target of attacks as a machine candidate.

The Republican Party was campaigning as never before because the prospect of Terry Carpenter's splitting the vote could mean the defeat of the incumbent and victory for Robert Simmons.

Carl Stefans, a Nebraska Republican Congressman and personal friend of Simmons, endorsed him. Since he was a native born Nebraskan, and had an outstanding record while he was in Congress, Stefan remarked: "Men on both sides of the aisle of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, told me of his work—work that earned him the title of 'Fighting Bob'."123

121Omaha Bee-News, October 21, 1936.
122Fremont Tribune, October 22, 1936.
123Omaha Bee-News, October 21, 1936.
The Republican candidate, who had been resting from his arduous personal tour, spoke on October 28 at Falls City, where he challenged F.D.R.'s statement that the farm income was increasing. The average yearly income during the three years from 1932-35 was $7,397,000,000. On the other hand, the average yearly farm income for the nine years prior to the New Deal was $10,200,000,000. In essence, the New Deal had really not accomplished much, he implied. 124

On Thursday at Stromsburg, he repeated a speech given earlier at Hastings on October 16 concerning the two basic issues in the campaign. He concluded as follows: "I am unalterably opposed to changing the fundamental structure of our American system of government. That issue we shall neither evade nor compromise." 125

Speaking to a women's group at Laurel, Simmons praised the women for being promoters of good government. Women, he believed, wanted to protect the family earnings and at the same time assure peace and prosperity for the future. Desirous of building a better America, women remained alert to the dangers threatening our traditional form of government. In order to prevent the breakdown of our government, Robert Simmons maintained that the women

124Omaha World Herald, October 23, 1936.
125Grand Island Daily Independent, October 22, 1936.
were backing candidates supporting the principles of the Republican Party.\textsuperscript{126}

At Wayne on Saturday night, Republican candidate Robert Simmons ended his sixth week of campaigning with a torchlight parade. In his speech he charged that all government employees were required to give one per cent of their salary to the New Deal campaign fund.\textsuperscript{127} In conclusion, Simmons maintained that no government employee was obligated to contribute to any political party nor should he give unless he wished.\textsuperscript{128} The appearance at Wayne completed a week of campaigning in which Simmons had covered eight thousand miles and two hundred towns.\textsuperscript{129}

The national Republican organization was also active in Nebraska. John Knox toured Nebraska, speaking from the rear platform of his train, winding up his campaign tour in Fremont. Speaking in that city, he indicted the President for dictating to Congress. "That performance," he continued, "is worthy of King George III . . . that's what he did to the colonies."\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{126}\textit{Omaha Bee-News}, October 24, 1936.
\textsuperscript{127}\textit{Ibid.}, October 25, 1936.
\textsuperscript{128}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{129}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{130}\textit{New York Times}, October 21, 1936.
The presidential nominee, Alfred Landon, speaking in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, said the Democrats of Nebraska were sold down the river by F.D.R. It was just one of the many instances, he added, where the regular nominee was rejected for an administration choice.\(^{131}\)

The Republican National Chairman, John Hamilton, agreed that the President's visit to Nebraska, indicating support for Norris and denial of Carpenter, would cause Senator Norris to lose. Hamilton was certain that his party would carry the state.\(^{132}\)

October, as a whole, had served to increase the tensions and anxieties among politically-minded Nebraskans. Robert Simmons had pushed his campaign with, perhaps, the greatest effort. Terry Carpenter had been reduced to complaining about his betrayal and his state of financial embarrassment. Norris, who had been treated with relative courtesy, now became politically involved through charges of machine control. Of all the events during the month, however, the President's appearance at Omaha seemed to have contributed the greatest impetus to the campaign hopes of the independent candidate. One more week would reveal the extent of Norris's true popularity and of Roosevelt's influence in Nebraska.

\(^{131}\)Ibid., October 24, 1936.

\(^{132}\)Ibid., October 22, 1936.
ELECTION WEEK AND THE AFTERMATH

Election week in any politically minded area is charged with a special, electric excitement. Seldom in American history, however, has a more uncertain and interesting senate race been fought to a dramatic conclusion than in Nebraska in 1936. As the final week drew the balloting inexorably closer, the Nebraskan candidates focused their most intense efforts on Omaha.

Terry Carpenter planned to stay in Omaha, devoting his attention to radio broadcasts. His programs were designed to mix music, drama, and other entertainment with political arguments. The Republican candidate, Robert Simmons, was scheduled to arrive in Omaha on Tuesday, October 27. George Norris, still personally campaigning in outstate Nebraska, did not intend to arrive in Omaha until Friday. On Saturday, a big rally was planned in the city auditorium.

For the Senator, the last would be one of his busiest weeks in the campaign. Opening on Sunday, October 25, with a radio address from Yankton, South Dakota over WNAK he asserted:

1Omaha World Herald, October 25, 1936.
F.D.R. gets my support no matter what it costs me in my own campaign, because he saved the life of my country and my people at a time when our nation was crumbling.\(^2\)

At Columbus on Monday, he told a crowd of five hundred at the municipal auditorium that both Landon and Hoover had the political philosophy of restoring the country to the position it had had prior to 1932. The Senator would rather go ahead with F.D.R. than to go backwards with Landon. Continuing, he criticized the Omaha Bee-News for being run by Hearst from London, England, where he could not be familiar with current Nebraska politics.\(^3\)

In addition, Norris attacked the editorial policy of the Grand Island Daily Independent, whose editor lived in Kansas.\(^4\) The Senator concluded by reminding the audience that the only safe solution was to vote for Franklin Roosevelt.\(^5\)

On Wednesday in Hastings, Norris charged that Carpenter had already spent more than sixty thousand dollars on the election; the sum spent was equivalent to the six-year salary of ten thousand dollars a year.\(^6\) He was not questioning the right of the Democratic nominee to

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\(^2\)Lincoln Star, October 26, 1936.

\(^3\)Ibid., October 27, 1936.

\(^4\)Ibid.

\(^5\)Ibid.

\(^6\)Ibid.
enter the race, but stated that Carpenter had won only a third of the total Democratic votes cast in the primary. The Senator could not understand why the nominee never attacked Robert Simmons, except that Simmons had never taken a stand on a controversial bill while in the House. He reiterated to the audience that Carpenter had admitted he could run third in a three-cornered race, and he repeated to the crowd that their choice lay between Simmons and Senator Norris. 7

The Wednesday edition of the Lincoln Star carried the Senator's proposed program. The fundamental proposition, asserted Senator Norris, was: "Our nation cannot prosper or become great unless first of all the farmer and the laborer are assured an adequate income." 8 The proposition implied that the farmer and laborer receiving a reasonable income would be assured a comfortable standard of living and the ability to save part of their earnings. 9

Turning to national politics, he again endorsed Franklin Roosevelt, stating:

I honestly believe that Franklin Roosevelt saved my country and my people from chaos. I do not care what his politics are. He has put humanity upon the statute books. . . . I am proud to have helped him in my humble way and no matter what it costs, I support him. 10

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7 Ibid., October 26, 1936.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
Norris then defended the administration on key issues of spending, budget, and taxes. Concerning spending, he pointed out that when the President had taken office, people were hungry and unemployed. In order to solve the problems facing the nation, Roosevelt had provided useful work through FWA and CCC, which would benefit future generations. To illustrate his point, he showed how the national income had risen from thirty-eight billion dollars to an estimated sixty billion dollars for 1936.\(^{11}\) The proportion of national debt to cash in hand, in 1936, was less than in 1933.\(^ {12}\)

In relation to budgets, the Senator maintained it was unimportant to have a balanced budget when human beings were in misery. Had the United States attempted to balance the budget, greater human misery than in 1933 would have occurred.\(^{13}\)

On the subject of taxes, Norris criticized Alfred Landon and Robert Simmons for trying to leave the impression that the federal debt represented a lien on the nation's homes and farms. No federal tax represented a lien on anyone's real or personal property. Favoring heavier taxes on the upper income brackets, Norris

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
\(^{12}\) Ibid.
\(^{13}\) Ibid.
reasoned: "Shouldn't they be glad to pay heavy taxes in a country where laws permit them to amass such huge fortunes?"\(^{14}\)

Returning to the Nebraska situation, he repeated he still was a firm believer in primaries. He reminded the voters that every primary law made provisions for candidates to run as independents. Six years ago he had been criticized for being a party candidate; now he was accused of violating and destroying the primary.\(^{15}\)

He refused to discuss his opponents' motives, stating: "I only want my people to have the record clear and vote as their heart and conscience dictates."\(^{16}\) Mentioning the candidates by name, he implied that a vote for Robert Simmons would be a vote for Herbert Hoover, and repeated his Hastings statement about Carpenter.\(^{17}\)

During this pre-election week, additional endorsements for Senator Norris came from Senator Gerald Nye, North Dakota Republican; William Allen White, a liberal Kansas Republican editor who was a close friend of Alfred Landon; and from former Republican State Attorney-General, C. A. Sorensen.

\(^{14}\) Ibid.
\(^{15}\) Ibid.
\(^{16}\) Ibid.
\(^{17}\) Ibid.
Senator Nye, in endorsing Senator Norris, remarked:

No man has greater accomplishments in legislation to his credit than Senator George Norris; Norris is definitely needed in the senate. . . . [He] should be returned. . . .

William Allen White, opponent of F.D.R., also praised the Senator in a telegram. The unqualified endorsement compared Norris's achievements to those of Daniel Webster and James G. Blaine who, while being tremendously important statesmen in their generation, did not achieve nearly the legislative heights of Senator Norris. In his concluding remarks, White asserted:

It seems to me the candidacy of Senator Norris is above party. In all this land no one living has done so much as George Norris for his country to change the old habits and customs and set us moving along wise political paths into new ways of strength and light.

In addition, C. A. Sorensen, former Republican campaign manager of Norris, admitted the Senator was not a good "party man," but he questioned: "Do you not believe that he serves his party best who serves his country first?"

As these tributes were being published, the Senator continued his speaking engagements in Nebraska. On Thursday, October 29, he addressed a crowd of eight hundred

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18Ibid., October 26, 1936.
19Ibid., October 28, 1936.
20Lincoln Star, October 28, 1936.
21Hastings Daily Tribune, October 29, 1936.
persons at Red Cloud, receiving applause when he suggested the refinancing of the farm debt by the federal government at cost. He reasserted that the election of President Roosevelt would mean an administration free of partisanship. 22

On October 30, in a two-hour address to a Democratic rally on the agricultural campus at Lincoln, Norris answered charges of the Republican Party that the New Deal had prolonged the depression. He cautioned the audience of one thousand persons not to be misled by propaganda, and maintained that the charges were made by the great wealth behind Republican Nominee Landon, to confuse the voters. 23

Friday was quite a day for Senator Norris as he prepared to close out his campaign at Omaha's auditorium on Saturday with a rally sponsored by the Non-Partisan Labor League. Mayor LaGuardia was to be one of the featured speakers. 24

At Johnston on Saturday morning with dust blowing and occasional rain, the Senator pointed out that his opponents had taken no stand on his legislative career. He urged the crowd to vote for President Roosevelt, and thereby remove the threat to the nation's progress.

22 Lincoln Star, October 29, 1936.
23 Ibid., October 30, 1936.
24 Omaha World Herald, November 1, 1936.
Ending his speech with a plea, Norris commented:

I believe I have faith, I have confidence that I shall be re-elected. For over thirty years I have fought your battles. Now, if I am to continue that fight, I need your help.25

A crowd of three thousand people gathered at the Auditorium on Saturday evening, October 31, to hear the Senator close out his campaign. Mayor LaGuardia of New York introduced the candidate, stating:

I come here with a definite mission. I know I speak for every citizen of New York who works for a living. I come here to ask the people of Nebraska to send back to the Senate that all-American Senator, George Norris.26

Taking the rostrum, Norris addressed the audience and radio listeners. "The New Deal," Norris told his audience, "has brought the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God nearer to reality than anything in history."27 He reminded the crowd that the election was one of wealth against the wage earner. He was certain the workers would not let the wealthy interest take over the government.28

The Senator then defended his stand on the Supreme Court, repeating that he never had introduced an amendment which would reduce the power of that judicial body.

25Lincoln Star, October 31, 1936.
26Omaha World Herald, November 1, 1936.
27Ibid.
28Ibid.
The amendment he introduced, however, required a two-thirds majority to declare an act of Congress invalid. The Senator pointed out that in Nebraska, the Supreme Court's liberty was not destroyed because five of the seven judges had to concur. 29

Moving on to the campaign in Nebraska, Norris reminded the audience that neither candidate had criticized his legislative career. The only criticisms the opposition could make were that the Senator had brought outstate people into the state to campaign for him, and that he had destroyed the primary by running as an independent. The Senator was proud to have people come into the state, spending their own time to campaign for him. Referring to Terry Carpenter as a "fluke", Norris asserted that the Democratic candidate had received only one-third of the total Democratic votes cast. 30 He concluded by repeating that the choice rested with the voters of the state. 31

The rally at the City Auditorium officially closed the campaign of Senator Norris except for the celebration and final speech at McCook on Monday evening.

As Senator Norris wound up his campaign, Terry

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
Carpenter campaigned busily by radio and personal addresses in Omaha. The radio campaign alone was rumored to have cost the candidate six thousand dollars.\(^{32}\) To start off the week, he addressed a women's group at the Fontenelle Hotel on Sunday, October 25. The speech was critical of the Democratic leaders who acted as dictators of the party. He forecast that younger Democrats would take over the party, insuring that the party would represent all the members. Concerning the candidates, he asserted:

I do not believe that Nebraskans are going to vote for Carpenter, Norris or Simmons as individuals. They are going to vote for a principle. If the Democratic Party wanted Norris in Washington, why didn't they put him in the cabinet?\(^{33}\)

Although the President endorsed Senator Norris, Carpenter was confident the citizens of Nebraska would refuse to be governed by the President's wishes or it would mean an end to representative government.\(^{34}\)

Tuesday evening, on radio WOW, he said:

It is comforting to know our destiny is never tied up with any party or any group of individuals, and most certainly never, above anything else, in a single individual.\(^{35}\)

In a Wednesday evening radio address, he urged closer co-operation between the farmer and laborer. With

\(^{32}\) Ibid., October 26, 1936.

\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., October 28, 1936.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.
the rapid scientific developments, the two could help each other. 36

On Thursday, the Logan County Pioneer, in an editorial, listed six reasons why Terry Carpenter should be elected: First, he had been duly elected in the primary; second, Carpenter was more dependable and more qualified than Senator Norris; third, the Democratic machine was spending money on Norris to defeat the regularly nominated candidate; fourth, since Carpenter was 100 per cent for Franklin Roosevelt, he would be more reliable; fifth, legally the race was between Robert Simmons and Terry Carpenter; sixth, Senator Norris was not entitled to the independent votes because he was backed by the Democratic Party. 37

On Friday evening in a radio address, Carpenter charged Senator Norris with trying to discredit him by saying he had spent sixty thousand dollars on the campaign. He asserted his campaign had cost him ten thousand dollars of which six thousand dollars was borrowed. The propaganda of the Senator was comparable to that of a man in his second childhood. 38

The Daily Senator, Carpenter's newspaper, carried

36 Lincoln Star, October 29, 1936.
37 Logan County Pioneer (Gandy), October 30, 1936.
38 Omaha World Herald, October 31, 1936.
a comment by his mother, Mrs. George Hillerage, as follows:

My son is a fair-minded, intelligent man of whom I am justly proud, and my admonition to him, should you be kind enough to elect him, is this: 'Stand out for truth and right even though you be alone.'

In a radio address on Saturday night, Carpenter insinuated Norris had turned against everything he had previously stood for, and was using unfair campaign tactics. Turning to the administration, he admitted the President had made some mistakes, but the important thing was that he had corrected them. In closing, he urged the voters to protect the nation from greater mistakes by keeping the President in power.

After his series of radio talks during the week, Carpenter spent the weekend waiting for election day. It should be noted that at no time in his entire campaign had he attacked the administration. His election, however, would be embarrassing to the Democratic Party in the Congress. The verdict of election day would determine whether or not the people would vote out of sympathy for the alleged injustice committed by Senator Norris and the Democratic Party.

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39 Daily Senator (Scottsbluff), October 31, 1936.
40 Lincoln Star, November 1, 1936.
Robert Simmons' campaign philosophy differed from the other candidates in that he had attempted to visit personally all of the important vote-getting towns in Nebraska. After a vigorous six-week personal tour, he had returned to Omaha for the last week of the campaign, with twenty radio addresses scheduled for the last few days.41

Opening the last week, he was endorsed by Republican Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. and Senator Steiwer of Oregon.

Senator Steiwer commented:

Simmons is needed to hold up the hands of Governor Landon in case he attains the presidency and, in case the New Deal should be retained in power, then to stand in the last trenches of American democracy and to fight for the peoples' freedom in the only free forum in which the peoples' rights can be defended...42

Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., praising the candidate in a letter, stated:

I earnestly hope that you are elected senator. You are the type of man we need in Washington in these days when democracy and liberal government are threatened.43

In Beatrice on Monday evening, October 26, Simmons delivered a speech in one of his last personal appearances.

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41 Omaha World Herald, October 27, 1936.
42 Omaha Bee-News, October 25, 1936.
43 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), October 27, 1936.
He demonstrated that the thirty-four and one-half billion dollar national debt was the equivalent of a two-thousand dollar mortgage on the average one-hundred-sixty acre farm in Nebraska. If federal spending were not curtailed, the federal government would have to resort to a direct tax. Since changing the Constitution was not the way to stop the wasteful spending, he maintained:

The only solution—the only hope—is retreat from extravagance, from political plundering and the establishment of a courageous policy of economy in the federal government.44

He further compared corn and livestock markets in Nebraska with those in the South, showing relative increases during three years of New Deal administration.45

The next evening, Simmons addressed a rally of Douglas County Republicans at Elkhorn. He accused the administration of prolonging the solution to the nation's agricultural problems. If there were tariffs to protect the American farmer, there would be no need for payments to farmers. Farm subsidies, the Republican candidate argued, had caused the South to plant Northern products, which increased surpluses. If markets were restored through tariffs, the laborer, too, would benefit, through jobs in processing food. Thus, full recovery might be effected.46

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44 Omaha World Herald, October 27, 1936.
45 Omaha Bee-News, October 28, 1936.
46 Ibid.
On Wednesday in a radio address, he criticized the administration for destroying the individual rights and liberties of our people. The attack on the Supreme Court by the President and Senators could destroy the constitutional guarantees of protection. He asserted: "Every attack upon our constitutional system is an effort to put in the government more power over the people." Since our individual liberties are being surrendered to the bureaucrats, he urged: "Only vigilance of an aroused and understanding citizenship will prevent America going the whole way toward complete loss of individual freedom."

In another major radio address, October 29, he outlined his philosophy on the major issues of the campaign. In his opinion, the Social Security Act had good purposes and aims, but no law drafted in a few weeks could adequately protect one hundred twenty-five million people. He found, in checking the 1930 census, only 22.6 per cent of the entire population would be eligible to receive the benefits. All professional people, farmers, domestic workers, government employees, and teachers were not covered. In checking the records

47Omaha World Herald, October 29, 1936.
48Lincoln Star, October 29, 1936.
49Omaha Bee-News, October 30, 1936.
50Ibid.
further, he discovered that it would be 1939 before any workers would receive benefits.\footnote{Ibid.} To illustrate the shortcomings of the system, he took a one hundred dollar salary. Paying for thirty years, the person would receive forty-two dollars and fifty cents a month. The government, Simmons contended, turns the money into loans, which means one has I.O.U.'s based on loans backing his monthly contribution.\footnote{Ibid.}

Robert Simmons then proposed five steps toward preventing war: One, immediate decentralization of the power of the federal government; two, prevention of war profiteering by American businessmen; three, an adequate national defense, which had already been increased to a deterrent capacity; four, promotion of a plan of world disarmament; and five, a plan for non-intervention and non-interference with other nations of the world.\footnote{Grand Island Daily Independent, October 30, 1936.} Although he did not want any American boy to go to war, yet he did not favor drifting until war was upon the nation. The federal government, he maintained, could adopt sound foreign policies which would keep us at peace and prevent wars. In summary, he said: "These policies I promise to work for in the United States Senate as a senator from Nebraska."\footnote{Omaha Bee-News, October 30, 1936.}
Speaking on the radio on Friday, Simmons promised the farmers he would return control of the farm policies to the farmers. He also believed the federal government could levy a direct tax on real and personal property. Because of the constitutional limitation that required direct taxes to be apportioned among the states on a population basis, if a direct tax were imposed, Nebraska, having one per cent of the total population in the United States, would pay three hundred forty million dollars.  

Saturday afternoon, in Syracuse and Crete, he reminded the people that as a Congressman, he had voted for legislation taxing the high income groups. Now, in his opinion, the Social Security Act was a tax taking one dollar out of every hundred. He also believed the income tax, while increasing the rates of the wealthy on their ability to pay, did not provide sufficient exemptions for those with small incomes. In Crete, he described two types of "relievers"—one political, the other a real relief case. The men and women who honestly could not find jobs, but were willing to give an honest day’s work for their pay had nothing to fear from the Republican Party. Those persons on political relief, however, would be removed. To show the pledge of the Republican presidential

55 Ibid., October 31, 1936.
56 Omaha World Herald, November 1, 1936.
nominee, Simmons said: "Governor Landon has pledged to take relief out of politics, and to take politics out of relief."57

On Saturday night, the Republican nominee closed his personal campaign at Nebraska City, opening his speech with the following question; he asked:

The experiments of this national administration have touched every phase of public life, save one, that of economy in governmental expenditures. Isn't it about time to try that experiment?58

Franklin Roosevelt had promised to balance the budget in two years; the current year, the budget was $8,250,000,000. If the nation were to have a balanced budget, Simmons argued, there would have to be a similar amount in revenue. Even during the years of prosperity from 1923-29, the federal government raised only $4,000,000,000 in revenue. To raise revenues would necessitate an additional tax increase.59

He concluded that by not balancing the budget, the administration was admitting recovery was not accomplished.60

From November 1 to the election day, November 3, the candidates pushed hard, in final bids for votes. Robert Simmons closed out his campaign on Monday evening in Lincoln.

57Norfolk Daily News, November 2, 1936.
58Omaha Bee-News, November 1, 1936.
59Ibid.
60Lincoln Star, November 1, 1936.
After a parade of seventy cars toured the downtown section, a rally was held at the Hotel Lincoln. In his speech, also carried on radio, he mentioned the increasing national debt which would not be paid by increasing the taxes of the rich. At the present time, the federal government obtained 34 per cent of its revenue from customs, 18 per cent from income taxes, and 20 per cent from excises. If the wealthy paid even one-half the individual income tax, that would be enough to run the government only four months. The next step would be for Congress to levy taxes on homes. In order to prevent a real estate tax on homes, he urged the voters to vote for the Republican Party and new leadership under Alfred Landon.

Senator Norris, meanwhile, had been interviewed by H. D. Kaltenborn, a commentator for CBS. In a radio broadcast, the commentator interpreted Senator Norris as having said he did not think he could win. Senator Norris maintained his actual words had been: "I am not certain of being selected." The press, particularly the Holdrege Citizen and the Falls City Journal, translated the report

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61 Ibid., November 3, 1936.
to mean the Senator was voicing his defeat. Kaltenborn disavowed and denied the report as an outright distortion.

Many people listening to the commentator on the air, however, had received the same impression.

Norris always closed his campaigns with a speech in McCook on election eve. The 1936 reception had been planned for out-of-doors at the city park, with a parade including several bands. But with snow falling, the reception was moved inside the Temple Theatre. Loud-speakers were wired outside to handle the overflow crowd. In the speech, Norris described the President as "the greatest statesman in the history of the world." Touching upon the banking system, income and inheritance taxes, and defending the administration's farm policy, he appealed to the audience to support the President. Deploiring the political scene in Nebraska, he reviewed his legislative record. In summary, he reminded the voters the choice tomorrow was theirs.

Terry Carpenter was the only candidate to close out his campaign in Omaha. In a radio address on Monday evening, he urged all Democrats to vote a straight party ticket, stating:

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64 Holdrege Citizen, November 2, 1936.
65 Falls City Journal, November 2, 1936.
66 Lief, loc. cit.
67 McCook Daily Gazette, November 3, 1936.
68 Ibid.
The people are going to send Terry Carpenter, the Democratic nominee, to the U. S. Senate. We in Nebraska think that Nebraska should no more be a one-man state than the United States should be a one-man government. 68

The addresses were over; loud speakers had become silent, and the promises, charges, and counter-charges of candidates were being weighed in homes throughout Nebraska on the evening of November 2, 1936. The senatorial race had aroused sufficient interest among Nebraskans to push the national campaigning into the background, but Alfred Landon and Franklin Roosevelt had been far from idle during the period preceding the election.

The President had made three campaign tours in 1936. The first had been a short trip to West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The second had been more extensive, covering eleven states in the western section, including Nebraska. A third tour, New England, wound up his campaigning, except for a final address from Madison Square Garden in New York City and a radio speech on November 2.

In all of his addresses, Roosevelt stressed the nation's successful recovery through the administration's battle to check the deflationary spiral. He demonstrated the necessity of the unbalanced budget in restoring the purchasing power of the consumer. 69 Arguing in favor of

68Omaha World Herald, November 3, 1936.
farm cooperatives, he tried to show the mutual dependence of agriculture and industry.\textsuperscript{70}

In Chicago, he had almost been overwhelmed by crowds who cheered, shouted, and sang on his parade route to the stadium. In his speech there, he asserted that the administration, which had taken on the responsibility of protecting the American system of free enterprise, was more adequate in dealing with financial problems in the nation as a whole.\textsuperscript{71}

Taxation as a major issue was covered best in his address on October 21, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Arguing that taxes had been a subject of controversy since 1776, he pointed out that their purpose was to enable the government to serve the people in matters which individuals could not handle for themselves. Taxes, he felt, should be raised in accordance with each individual's ability to pay, and his administration had reduced taxes in the income brackets below twenty-six thousand dollars.\textsuperscript{72} These people, he maintained, comprised 99 per cent of the country's population.

The Republican Party, through Alfred Landon, had tried throughout the campaign to force FDR to state his proposals for the second terms, accusing the President of leading the nation into a Washington-directed

\textsuperscript{70}Ibid., p. 419.
\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., p. 483.
\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., p. 525.
dictatorship.73

By mid-October, the Republicans attempted to capitalize on Social Security, by pointing out to the worker how his money was being taken by the government. Without telling the workers that the employer matched the worker’s deduction, signs posted in offices stated: "YOU’RE SENTENCED TO A WEEKLY PAY REDUCTION FOR ALL YOUR WORKING LIFE, YOU’LL HAVE TO SERVE THE SENTENCE UNLESS YOU HELP REVERSE IT NOVEMBER 3."74 Workers were also told that they should not expect to get their money back, as Congress would probably appropriate it for some other purpose. The latter charge deeply angered President Roosevelt. He answered the opposition’s attack by explaining the two types of insurance covered, and that the employer and worker contribute equal funds toward the retirement, but that the second benefit—to unemployment insurance—was furnished entirely by the employer. In conclusion, he pointed out that the worker would receive three dollars in protection for every dollar he invested.75

In Madison Square Garden, in a speech entitled "We Have Only Begun to Fight," the President extolled the accomplishments of the administration, and welcomed the


75Roosevelt, op. cit., p. 549.
hatred of the monopolies, speculators, and class antagonists which, he asserted, were "unanimous in their hate for me." After, again, expressing his displeasure with the critics of the Social Security program, he predicted a promising future, pledging to improve the conditions of the workers and farmers, to continue the fight against monopolies, to regulate business practices, to wipe out slums, to enlarge the opportunities for youth, and lastly, to strive for world peace.

Whether candidates would get an opportunity to live up to their pledges would depend upon the balloting by the nation's voters on November 3, 1936. Among thousands of candidates across the United States, one old, but respected independent nominee awaited his state's verdict on the greatest and most daring political adventure of his career. Nebraska waited with him. Since the Nebraska senatorial race was a three-cornered race, the verdict could not be predicted. Neither party was sure of carrying the state, but the New York Times prognosticated that the state would be in the Democratic column.

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76 Ibid., p. 568.
77 Ibid., p. 572.
78 New York Times, November 1, 1936.
James Lawrence had taken a survey of the ninety-three counties, from the middle of October to the end of the month, which seems to bear out the prediction of the New York Times. Of the ninety-three counties, the following gave no reply to his letter of inquiry: Blaine, Cedar, Chase, Cherry, Colfax, Dawes, Gosper, Grant, Hamilton, Hooker, Johnson, Kearney, Keith, Keya Paha, Kimball, McPherson, Merrick, Merrill, Morrill, Nance, Sheridan, Sherman, Stanton, Thayer, and Webster. 79 The following counties responded with outright refusal, or were doubtful, to support George Norris: Antelope, Arthur, Banner, Butler, Dakota, Greeley, Garfield, Madison, Seward, Sioux, Thurston, and Washington. 80 Special concentration work was needed in Adams, Buffalo, Kearney, Burt, Frontier, Hall, Lancaster, and Wheeler. 81 The results of the survey indicated one-fourth of the counties did not submit returns, and one-eighth of the counties refused to support Norris and FDR. On a county basis, Senator Norris had more than one-half of the counties, including predominately Democratic Douglas County with an estimated voter turnout of one hundred thousand. 82

79 James Lawrence Collection MSS, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.
In addition, the registration records of Nebraska indicated that a record 600,000 votes would be cast on election day. Registrations had indicated a substantial increase for the Democrats. Illustration of the increases for the major cities listed Grand Island with 10,792 registered voters, 6,039 Democrats, 4,299 Republicans; Omaha, 128,863 registered, with the Democrats 76,691 to the Republicans 51,155 respectively. North Platte Democrats had a 1,574 majority out of 5,420; Hastings, 826 Democratic majority out of 8,795; Scottsbluff Democrats leading by 192 voters out of 5,182; and even Lincoln indicated a majority expected for the Democrats. 83

With the campaign committee survey and the voter registrations, James Lawrence wrote James Farley that he estimated the Democratic majority to be near fifty thousand. 84 In the senatorial race, the New York Times predicted out of the six-hundred thousand votes to be cast, Robert Simmons would receive one hundred seventy-five thousand to two-hundred thousand votes; Terry Carpenter, seventy-five thousand to one-hundred thousand; and George Norris, two-hundred thousand and over. 85

83 Lincoln Star, October 26, 1936.
84 James Lawrence, Lincoln, 28 October 1936, letter to James Farmley, Washington, James Lawrence Collection M&L, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.
85 New York Times, November 1, 1936.
Election Day signaled the end to the speculation; the verdict would become a reality. Reports of the newspapers indicated brisk activity at the polls on Tuesday, November 3. In Omaha, fleets of automobiles brought the voters to the polls. Observers reported more elderly people were seen at the polls. The *Omaha World Herald* estimated the returns as being one of the largest on record.

By Wednesday morning with 1,098 Nebraska precincts out of 2,031 reporting, the President, with 144,010 votes was leading Landon by 31,776 votes. In the senatorial race, with 1,093 precincts reporting out of 2,031, Senator Norris was leading with 112,475 to Robert Simmons 102,858. Terry Carpenter was trailing far back with only 42,963. Early results showed the President taking an early lead, which he never lost. In the senatorial race, Norris and Simmons were close together. With one-half of the precincts reporting, the senatorial race remained in the balance.

Final results showed President Roosevelt carried the state with 347,454 votes to Alfred Landon's 248,731 out of a total 617,066 votes. The Union Party ran a

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86 *Omaha World Herald*, November 4, 1936.
poor third with 12,847 votes.90 The President captured every county with the exceptions of (numbers represent total votes by which he lost): Arthur, 77; Furnas, 362; Garden, 10; Garfield, 47; Hall, 3,851; Hamilton, 95; Hooker, 97; Keya Paha, 274; Loup, 103; McPherson, 76; Otoe, 226; Rock, 234; Valley, 73; York, 813.91 Political observers were quite surprised when he carried even the Republican stronghold of Lancaster County by a 1,464 majority.92

Final results of the senatorial contest showed out of 617,066 votes cast, George Norris received 258,700 votes to Robert Simmons' 223,276. Terry Carpenter lost decisively with 108,391.93 Carpenter did, however, carry the counties of Banner, Box Butte, Kimball, Morrill, Scottsbluff, and Sioux by a total majority of 2,892 votes.94 Losing these six counties to Carpenter, plus 31 counties to Simmons, George Norris still won by a 35,424 majority over his closest opponent.95 The key county, which gave him a comfortable lead, was Douglas County with a 15,595 majority.96
On a percentage basis, George Norris had 43.7 per cent of the total vote; Robert Simmons had 37.7 per cent; with Terry Carpenter having 18.5 per cent. The figures indicated that if Terry Carpenter had withdrawn, the Senator would undoubtedly have received more than 50 per cent of the total vote cast. Robert Simmons could not have gained many additional votes since the Democratic Party had been supporting George Norris. The Senator had received the Progressive support of both parties, and had won his most colorful campaign.

The Democrats won the governorship, with Democratic Nominee Roy Cochran winning over Dwight Griswold by a 76,145 majority. The Democrats, riding the popularity of President Roosevelt, carried four out of the five congressional districts, losing only in the Third to Republican Karl Stefan.

Nationally, the election went down in history as one of the most smashing defeats ever dealt a major party. Not since President Monroe in 1820 had a president carried every state with the exception of Maine and Vermont. The total popular vote for F.D.R. was 27,476,673 to Landon's 16,679,538.

97 *Omaha World Herald*, November 8, 1936.
98 *Nebraska Blue Book 1936*, p. 460.
100 Roosevelt, op. cit., p. 582.
The plurality of slightly over 11,000,000 votes represented 60.2 per cent of the total votes cast.\(^{101}\) The electoral vote was 523 (46 states) to Landon’s 8 (2 states).\(^{102}\) In the House of Representatives, the Democratic Congressmen increased from 322 to 333 out of 435.\(^{103}\) In the Senate, the Democratic members swelled from 69 to 76.\(^{104}\)

The triumph of the President and the Democratic Party could be attributed to no one thing. Certainly one of the prime causes was the recovery brought about by the New Deal’s having spent twenty billion dollars.\(^{105}\) In addition, a number of contributing factors were an effective party organization under James Farley; support of the industrial workers, particularly the C.I.O.; and lastly the President’s personal appeal.\(^{106}\) The President was a master politician. In constant touch with public opinion, he was firm when he wanted to be, yet flattering to his critics when the need arose. In dealing with his opposition,


\(^{102}\)Ibid.

\(^{103}\)Roosevelt, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

\(^{104}\)Ibid.


he always attacked at their weakest points. His defense of the Democratic Party and New Deal was to answer the Republican Party's most "absurd and ridiculous charges." During his campaigning, he was always attacking the leaders or spokesmen, never referring to the rank and file or to the party as a whole. 107

Although veteran campaigner George Norris had won successfully against numerous odds, he admitted to having had some anxious moments on election night. Early returns had appeared unfavorable, and he had gone to bed believing he had lost the race. As later returns filtered in, the Senator was notified of his strengthening lead. Even the President had been worried about the election. He wrote a letter to Senator Norris telling the Senator the last thing he did before going to bed at 3:00 A.M. was to put in a special call to Nebraska, to determine if the Senator was ahead. Joyous over the win, the President commented:

I want to send you this little note to tell you that of all the results on November third, your re-election gave me the greatest happiness. 108

The Senator's first reaction to winning was a statement commending the people for supporting the President. He remarked: "I am delighted with the results. It is

107 Burns, op. cit., pp. 264-86.
108 Roosevelt, op. cit., p. 628.
particularly gratifying that Mr. Roosevelt was re-elected by such a commanding majority. He continued his praise of the Nebraska voters for seeing through the propaganda of the various opponents. There was no question but that a defeat would have hurt him deeply, but he was not cocky or arrogant about his victory. He summed up his reaction to winning by stating:

It has been a tough ordeal, and I have felt at times that it was a mistake for me to undertake it. But I have gone through it all without even a cold, despite loss of sleep, and loss of appetite.

All of the newspapers congratulated the Senator on winning. The Omaha World Herald, one of his staunchest opponents during the campaign, described Norris as an institution and a tradition. Since many signs had pointed to his defeat, the triumph represented a real, personal victory for the Senator.

Continuing the praise, the Beatrice Daily Sun viewed the election as an indication that Senator Norris represented Nebraska, and had the confidence of the people. Finally, the Lincoln Star offered the highest tribute paid

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109 Holdrege Citizen, November 5, 1936.
110 McCook Daily Gazette, November 4, 1936.
111 Omaha World Herald, November 5, 1936.
112 Beatrice Daily Sun, November 5, 1936.
by any newspaper to the Senator. Commending the voters, the Star stated:

Every vote that was placed in the ballot box for George Norris Tuesday was a vote of loyalty, a vote of faith, and a vote of affection. It was a vote that paid tribute... to the noblest of them all.113

George Norris rested after the election, and remained in McCook until the end of the year. On January 5, 1937, he would again resume his senatorial duties in Washington. Although the United States Senate and the state legislature were to convene on the same day, Norris wanted to attend the opening session of the Nebraska Unicameral, to see his personally sponsored plan in action.114

He was not able to rest long. The squabble in the Democratic Party was not solved with the Senator's re-election. The State Democratic Central Committee gave Arthur Mullen credit for the Senator's win, and commended him for exerting his influence to bring speakers into the state. The resolution read as follows:

Whereas, our outstanding leader, the Honorable Arthur F. Mullen... through his timely advice, unqualified endorsement of Senator Norris, unanswering loyalty to the President of the United States, and his unselfish generosity (Mullen contributed $10,000 to the campaign fund), we were able

113Lincoln Star, November 4, 1936.
to cement the Democratic forces into a splendid organization which not only resulted in an overwhelming majority for President Roosevelt, but enabled us to carry out his wishes in re-electing Senator George W. Norris, this being the first time in history that a candidate has ever been elected to the United States Senate on an independent ticket; Therefore, be it resolved, that the members of the Nebraska State Democratic Committee express our sincere gratitude to the Honorable Arthur F. Mullen for invaluable assistance in this campaign.115

The endorsement greatly disturbed and upset Senator Norris and James Lawrence, his campaign manager. Senator Norris described Arthur Mullen as his enemy. The two had never been in agreement until this election, and Mullen had supported Norris only after personal pressure from President Roosevelt. The Senator asserted:

How we are told that he elected me. Just what did Mr. Mullen do? So far as I know, the only time he mentioned my name was in a radio address a few evenings before the election. . . .116

Also, the Senator told the newspapers, he had been advised by friends not to accept Arthur Mullen's help. "My friends don't believe, nor do I," Norris commented, "that my cause was helped by a single vote as the result of Mr. Mullen's support."117

115Omaha World Herald, November 17, 1936.
116Scottsbluff Star-Herald, November 22, 1936.
117Fremont Tribune, November 25, 1936.
James Lawrence was even more disturbed by what people were thinking about him personally. Rumors were circulating that he had personal ambitions to take over the senate post when Norris either resigned or retired. In a letter to James Farley, Lawrence had expressed personal satisfaction with the election outcome. It meant a personal victory, because Lancaster County, a traditional Old Guard Republican area, went Democratic in the election. Now he could come to James Farley and say: "I have no desire for any political appointment. . . ." Then Mullen came out claiming the victory was due to him. In Lawrence's opinion, since Mullen did not enter the race until October, he had been a liability. From this time on, Lawrence refused to have any part in political patronage handled by the State Democratic Committee.

Terry Carpenter, in an editorial in his newspaper, the Daily Senator, was critical of Senator Norris for not wanting the Democratic Party to owe him anything, and now claiming the election as a personal victory. He described Norris as, "The Magnificent, the Invulnerable, the Untouchable." Now the Democratic Party would have to worry

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119 Ibid.

120 Daily Senator (Scottsbluff), November 27, 1936.
over whether Carpenter would follow the President or embarrass the Democrats of Nebraska.\textsuperscript{121}

Robert Simmons had conceded the election on November 4, by issuing a statement thanking his campaign aids and further stating: "We fought for a cause that we believe to be right—defeat must not prevent our giving our continued service to the cause of our common country."\textsuperscript{122} He did not state his immediate plans for the future, but it was believed that he would return to his law practice in Lincoln.

Terry Carpenter had not accepted his defeat as gracefully as Robert Simmons. Commenting on the election, he said:

\begin{quote}
Well, Roosevelt got his 'prophet,' and I have my self-respect. I found out that I couldn't kill the butcher. I am perfectly satisfied that the people by a substantial majority decided what they wanted.\textsuperscript{123}
\end{quote}

In the \textit{Daily Senator} he editorialized on the defeat:

\begin{quote}
We would have had it otherwise, but ours was an issue lost in the wilderness of Norris votes. Why not take it on the chin? Smile, brother, smile! . . . And admit as a beaten man should—that wiley old George Norris is still too tough for the new crop of politicians. The people have spoken, and since I cannot win, the decision is accepted and the incident forgotten. I'll peddle my papers for a while.\textsuperscript{124}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121}\textit{Tbid.}
\item \textsuperscript{122}\textit{Hastings Daily Tribune}, November 4, 1936.
\item \textsuperscript{123}\textit{Tbid.}
\item \textsuperscript{124}\textit{Daily Senator} (Scottsbluff), November 4, 1936.
\end{itemize}
Years later in answer to a question regarding his lack of financial support as the cause for losing the election, he replied: "Don't make any difference. Money can't do it." When probed about the determining point of losing the election, he admitted that intuition and common sense indicated he was fighting a losing battle from September on, since the President and the Democratic Party refused to support him. At the time of the defeat, he did not have any plans for the future or for re-running for the Senate. On the future he remarked: "I live for today, and I look forward into the near future." But he had gotten the political urge to enter races from his congressional career, and in his own opinion, from that time onward he felt the urgency for entering races.

The losers, as well as the winners, still had to face the itemizing of campaign expenses. All parties and candidates were required to file a preliminary report with the Secretary of State by October 26, 1936.

The Republican Party reported a fund of $63,863.86. The largest contributor was the National Republican

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125 Personal interview with Terry Carpenter on July 13, 1961.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
128 Omaha World Herald, October 24, 1936.
Committee, with $29,000.\textsuperscript{129} The J. S. Morton family and Charles Harding both contributed $1,000.\textsuperscript{130} The funds were distributed in the following manner: 20 per cent to the State committee, 25 per cent to Douglas County, 20 per cent to Simmons, 15 per cent to Chase, and the remainder to be divided and distributed among the other counties as needed.\textsuperscript{131} Robert Simmons listed his contributions as $10,063. Of this, the largest amount, $4,730, had come from Omaha for Simmons Club. All of the money had come from the State Committee, with the exception of $130. Simmons' expenditures totaled $3,931.\textsuperscript{132}

The Norris for Senator Committee reported receiving contributions totaling $8,971. Some of the large contributors were Senator Norris, $500; J. W. Patterson, publisher of the \textit{New York Daily News}, $1,000; the Labor Non-Partisan League, $1,500; Joseph Kennedy, former chairman of Securities and Exchange Corporation, $1,000; and the Progressive National Committee, $1,250.\textsuperscript{133}

The Democratic Committee listed $13,765 as the contributions received, with the expenses being $11,641.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), October 24, 1936.}
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{133} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Ibid.}

\textit{Omaha Bee-News, October 25, 1936.}
The largest contributors were the Roosevelt Electors Club, $5,500, and the National Committee, $3,224.\textsuperscript{135} The contributions to Terry Carpenter were $803, with his expenses reported as $1,250.\textsuperscript{136}

When the final figures were available, Robert Simmons reported contributions and disbursements of $6,196, including postage, telephone, and telegraph. The difference between earlier report and the later one was easily explained. With $10,063 as total contributions, and only $3,931 expenditures, he spent the additional $2,265 in the last week and a half.\textsuperscript{137} The remainder was returned to the State Committee and to individual contributors.

While Terry Carpenter reported his total contributions as $4,608 and his total disbursements as $8,512, leaving him with a deficit of $3,904.\textsuperscript{138} His largest contributors were Frank McGrath, his campaign manager, $1,750; D. C. Sturdervant, $1,000; and $600 from an unknown source.\textsuperscript{139} His largest expense items were $4,437 for radio, and advertising on billboards amounted to $2,500.\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{135}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{136}Lincoln Star, October 26, 1936.
\textsuperscript{137}Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), November 13, 1936.
\textsuperscript{138}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139}Lincoln Star, November 12, 1936.
\textsuperscript{140}Ibid.
The campaign committee of Senator Norris reported $17,392.65 as total amount contributed and expended.141 This total included $5,461.56 for postage, stationery, and telephone.142 One hundred and five contributions were returned because they were not needed. The Committee tried to return those small contributions which could be used to best advantage at home.143 Some of the larger items of expense were $500 each to John Robertson and James Lawrence for expenses, and $1,500 to John Keegan for organizing and distributing campaign literature.144 Newspaper space comprised the largest expense item. The Nebraska Press Association presented a bill for $3,539.65 for advertising; in addition, $1,183.57 was spent in various other newspapers and magazines within the state.145 How great a part campaign contributions played in the success of George Norris's candidacy cannot be measured with certainty, but the size of the fund does indicate the public esteem in which the Senator was held by many of his constituents.

With one exception, President Roosevelt's New Deal had carried all offices in Nebraska. The "Independent"

141 Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), November 13, 1936.
142 Ibid.
143 Ibid.
144 Ibid.
145 James Lawrence Collection MSS, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.
candidate, George Norris, did not really defeat the "Democratic" candidate, Terry Carpenter, since the main machinery of the national and state Democratic Party organizations were behind the former. Carpenter, playing a lonely game, undoubtedly lost votes because of lack of backing and funds. Robert Simmons, although strongly supported by the Republican Party, was unsuccessful for two primary reasons—the Republicans were still blamed for the depression, and George Norris commanded almost legendary respect throughout the state of Nebraska.

As a depressed, primarily agricultural area, Nebraska had been particularly receptive to the pledges of the New Deal in 1935-1936. Promises of alleviation of their high unemployment rate and of elevation of price controls, appealed strongly to this particular state.

The congressional record of Senator George Norris, with his reputation for unimpeachable honesty, contributed greatly to his chance for success as a candidate on any ticket. Compared to Robert Simmons, whose party was still associated with the black years immediately preceding the election, and Terry Carpenter, whose irresponsible antics alienated his own party, George Norris's personal popularity carried him to victory.

The convention activities of both parties had served to add impetus to Norris's chances for victory. The crest of New Deal enthusiasm, which enveloped Norris with the
President's endorsement, protected him from the typical independent's anonymity; and served, instead, to push Carpenter's candidacy into the background.

Throughout the hot months of July, August and September, the uncertainty connected with the Senator's petition and filing added an aura of excitement to the race which was of indisputable benefit to Norris when his intentions finally did become public. The Draft Norris movement made it appear to the public as though Norris would be doing his state a favor by running, rather than receiving favor by election. Speculation by the press lent additional publicity to his cause.

During the critical period from October 1 to election day, perhaps no single factor aided Senator Norris as greatly as did the President's personal appearance on his behalf in Nebraska. The tremendous ovation accorded Roosevelt there became associated in the voter's mind with the President's warmth and sincerity of admiration for the Senator. Added to this was the fact that Norris's opponents were forced to criticize only his age since his legislative record was invulnerable. The charges of machine control were largely ignored as political slander.

During the period immediately preceding the election the Republicans' smear campaign backfired. When Roosevelt became angered at the attacks on Society Security and on himself as a potential dictator, his answering speeches placed
the Republicans, including Robert Simmons, in an untenable position.

Throughout the country as a whole, and Nebraska in particular, the Democratic Party hopefuls had welded themselves into a solid hope for the future. Meanwhile, the GOP aspirations for defeating Senator Norris through a three-cornered split were crushed. Thus, as far as the cold statistics on the record are concerned, George Norris, in 1936, became the first successful independent candidate in this nation's history to attain the heights of a United States Senate seat. Cold statistics, however, rarely tell the whole story, and in this case, tend to obscure the true facts in one of the country's most intense and fascinating campaign dramas.
EPILOGUE

The three Nebraska senatorial candidates continued to pursue political careers after the 1936 election.

Robert Simmons practiced law until 1940, when he entered the non-political race for Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court. Having won the election, he has been re-elected to the position ever since 1940.

Terry Carpenter continued to conduct his business enterprises in Scottsbluff. Having won the Democratic nomination for governor in the 1940 primary, he was beaten by Dwight Griswold in the general election by a 130,471 vote majority. During the war years he did not enter any political contests. He waited until 1948 before he again entered a senatorial race. Winning the Democratic nomination, he lost in the general election to Republican candidate Kenneth Wherry by a margin of 63,255 votes. In 1952 he quit the Democratic Party because he was disgusted with his failure to win elections. In a personal interview, he maintained the Democratic Party was not accomplishing anything. The year, 1952, however, marked the beginning of his state legislative career. He was

1Nebraska Blue Bock 1940, p. 411.
2Ibid. 1948, p. 409.
3Personal interview with Terry Carpenter, July 13, 1961.
elected to the Nebraska Legislature from the Forty-Second District representing Scottsbluff, serving from 1952-1954 and 1956-1958.\(^4\)

In 1954, Carpenter tried to win the Republican nomination for United States Senator in the primaries. He ran third to Carl Curtis and Robert Crosby.\(^5\) In 1956, he went to the Republican convention as a delegate in support of President Eisenhower. Believing the nomination should not be a matter of automatic acceptance, Carpenter proposed to place the name of Fred Seaton, Secretary of Interior, in nomination for the presidency. In a conference between Joe Martin, convention chairman, and Terry Carpenter, the latter was assured that Seaton would accept the nomination. When the roll call was taken on Wednesday, however, just before calling the roll of the Nebraska delegation, Joe Martin announced that a certain eminent gentleman from Nebraska did not want his name to be placed in nomination. The announcement caught Terry Carpenter without a substitute. When the delegation was polled, he had no nomination; he couldn't think of a single name. The only thing that came to his mind was the name "Joe." He said it out loud, and in the excitement, Hazel Abel, head of the delegation, repeated it over the microphone. The convention chairman

\(^4\)Nebraska Blue Book 1952, p. 491.

\(^5\)Omaha World Herald, August 12, 1936.
asked for the last name. "Smith" was the only name that came to mind. Egotistically, Carpenter later remarked it was the only exciting thing that happened during the convention.6

In 1960, Carpenter entered the Republican primary, and ran third to John Cooper and Hazel Abel.7 Still politically alert, he asserted in the interview that if he had anything to do with the 1962 gubernatorial race, he would personally see to it that Governor Morrison did not win again.8 However, his health did not permit him to be active in the governor's race. After recovering from a mild stroke in 1962, he was re-elected to the Nebraska Legislature. Terry Carpenter is a successful businessmen in his own right, owning a general merchandise store, restaurant, tavern, and drive-in theater; also, managing a housing development.

Between 1937 and 1940, George Norris fought to protect his T.V.A. project. From his election in 1936, two years elapsed before the court upheld the right of municipal ownership of public utilities. His goal of

6Personal interview with Terry Carpenter at Scottsbluff on July 13, 1961.


8Personal interview with Terry Carpenter at Scottsbluff on July 13, 1961.
supplying power at low rates, without corruption, was finally accomplished.⁹

From 1940 until his death in 1944, Senator Norris was deeply involved in the war effort. In his autobiography, he listed certain steps to bring about world peace. He advocated complete disarmament of Japan and Germany because without disarmament the world could never have peace. The next step was to completely destroy all capabilities to wage war. The Senator maintained that a standing army would be needed for a short time to enforce treaty provisions. In addition, he proposed organizing an international committee with powers and facilities to investigate and enforce such treaty provisions. If violations should occur, the United States' role must be one of firm rigidity.¹⁰ A lasting peace should not require maintenance of a large war machine. But, in order to have peaceful co-existence, not only should the United States have a clear superiority, but it should be willing to fight if need arose. Senator Norris expressed confidence that a gradual disarmament could take place. He accurately forecast that all the powerful nations involved in the struggle would disarm or the world would be neutral until the first crisis arose. Large standing armies in peacetime are tempted to use

them. In order to have a lasting peace, Senator Norris advocated that the nation reach internal agreement on a peace treaty, then consult her allies to determine their wishes. He cautioned the American people that the nation would have to make sacrifices in order to insure a lasting peace. The gravest danger to our country, he felt, was not disunity with our allies, but the threat that inflation posed to the nation. The real enemy, which was within the country, could be averted by price controls.

In the midst of proposing and drafting war measures, Senator Norris had to campaign for re-election to the Senate in 1942. As in 1936, he accepted a petition to run as an independent candidate. With his busy senatorial schedule, however, he did not arrive back in Nebraska until the Friday before the election. The election results showed Norris had been defeated by Kenneth Wherry. It was the first defeat he had suffered since embarking on a congressional career in 1903. The Senator retired to McCook at the end of his term. He was kept busy answering personal correspondence and completing the writing of his autobiography which was finished eight weeks before his death in 1944.

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11 Ibid., pp. 383-86.
12 Ibid., pp. 387-89.
13 Ibid., pp. 396-400.
14 Ibid., pp. 370-71.
Although Norris was disappointed over the election results, he still believed the strength and vitality of the American people could overcome any problem through the democratic system. He remarked: "America can continue to be the bright beacon toward which the eyes of the world's oppressed and downtrodden ever will turn for inspiration and hope."\(^{15}\)

His faith in America was based on the Common Man. As long as the Common Man was the basis for our government, no force could overtake and destroy the American way of life. Just two weeks before his death, he asserted: "Unselfish faith will prove to be America's greatest resource in the difficult years ahead."\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 402.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. XII of the Introduction.
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1 In a systematic research at least two newspapers were selected for each of the ninety-three counties of Nebraska, and as many additional papers as were needed to study the 1936 Senatorial Race. The newspapers selected represent a bibliography of those newspapers most valuable to the re-search project.
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APPENDIX A
TABLE 1

AGRICULTURAL INCOME OF
NEBRASKA FROM
1929 - 1935

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Income in Millions of Dollars</th>
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<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>479.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>403.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>241.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>239.7</td>
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1William A. Spurr, Measures of Business Activity in Nebraska (Nebraska Studies in Business No. 42, Lincoln: College of Business Administration, University of Nebraska, October, 1938), p. 46.

2The above table represents the total agricultural income of the state from 1929 to 1935, and includes government payments beginning August, 1933.
TABLE II

INDEX OF GENERAL BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN NEBRASKA
(1935-37=100%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>109.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>122.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>91.7</td>
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1William A. Spurr, Measures of Business Activity in Nebraska (Nebraska Studies in Business No. 42. Lincoln: College of Business Administration, University of Nebraska, October, 1938), p. 50.
TABLE 1

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Presidential Nominee</td>
<td>Franklin D. Roosevelt</td>
<td>139743</td>
</tr>
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<td>U. S. Senator</td>
<td>Terry Carpenter</td>
<td>41212</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James Quigley</td>
<td>36882</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George Hall</td>
<td>25183</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emil Placek</td>
<td>25173</td>
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<td></td>
<td>George Norris (write in)</td>
<td>3088</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>Roy Cochran</td>
<td>112853</td>
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<td>1st Congressional District</td>
<td>Henry Ludrey</td>
<td>13983</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Foster May</td>
<td>10964</td>
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<td>2nd Congressional District</td>
<td>Charles McLaughlin</td>
<td>21926</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mabel Gillespie</td>
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<td>3rd Congressional District</td>
<td>John Havekost</td>
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<td>S. Toledo Sherry</td>
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<td>4th Congressional District</td>
<td>Charles G. Binderup</td>
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<td>5th Congressional District</td>
<td>Harry Coffee</td>
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<td>National Committeeman</td>
<td>Ed Burke</td>
<td>55538</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dan Stephens</td>
<td>43328</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Terry Carpenter</td>
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<td>National Committeewoman</td>
<td>Evelyn Ryan</td>
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1Omaha World Herald, May 22, 1936.
TABLE II

REPUBLICAN PARTY

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<td>William E. Borah</td>
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<td>Alf Landon (write in)</td>
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<td>U.S. Senator</td>
<td>Robert Simmons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Harry Palmer</td>
<td>22677</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lloyd Constable</td>
<td>5959</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clean Desh</td>
<td>3200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George Norris (write in)</td>
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<td>Governor</td>
<td>Dwight Griswold</td>
<td>85331</td>
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<td>O. S. Spillman</td>
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<td>1st Congressional District</td>
<td>Ernest Perry</td>
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<td>3rd Congressional District</td>
<td>Karl Stefan</td>
<td>21373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Congressional District</td>
<td>Arthur Denney</td>
<td>9262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Howard Churchill</td>
<td>8911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Congressional District</td>
<td>Cullen Wright</td>
<td>16922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Committeeman</td>
<td>Hugh A. Butler</td>
<td>92249</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Committeewoman</td>
<td>Minnie Fried Watson</td>
<td>85876</td>
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1Omaha World Herald, May 22, 1936.
APPENDIX C
Republicans in Nebraska in lawful convention assembled to reaffirm our faith in the republic of our fathers, and pledge undying support to the Constitution of the United States. The problems that confront the nation today far transcend the special or selfish interests of any individual or class. This is the hour when thoughtful citizens must realize again that "united we stand, divided we fall."

The hazard of the hour is a policy of public spending and taxation, accompanied by temporary handouts and doles that lull the voter to inaction while his birthright of freedom is being filched from him. Taxation is the issue of this campaign. If we do not meet the challenge—and do it now—there will be little left worth saving.

There is no "new deal" in the operation of nature's economic forces. They are as old as the ages and as immutable as time. The dollar that is wasted is gone forever; the dollar that is saved and wisely used insures economic security.

A balanced budget is a vital necessity in governmental affairs. The present White House incumbent stated it correctly when in 1932 he said, "The nation that continues to pile up deficits is on the road to bankruptcy." The Democratic Party promised in its last national platform "an immediate and drastic reduction of governmental expenditures, a budget annually balanced, and a saving of not less than 25 per cent in the cost of federal government."

The candidate, Franklin D. Roosevelt, endorsed these platform promises "100 per cent" and in a speech at Pittsburgh said, "I regard reduction in federal spending as one of the most important issues in the campaign. In my opinion it is the most direct and effective contribution that government can make to business."

These platform planks are as good as new. They never have been used except as a springboard to hoist the New Deal into office. Since then the nation has witnessed the wildest orgy of federal spending ever known in the time of peace or war. The federal budget is out of balance in the largest amount in history. The Roosevelt administration has already increased the national debt more than 10 billion dollars.
This record is a deliberate and complete betrayal of a covenant with the people that was solemnly promised "to be faithfully kept by the (Democratic) party when entrusted with power." As natural accomplishments of such a fiscal policy the New Deal president has received, or assumed, dictatorial powers unheard of in America. An unrivaled system of bureaucracy and espionage has been set up over all branches of private endeavor; the Civil Service has been prostituted by a Tammanyized spoils system; taxes have increased by leaps and bounds; the cost of living has advanced far more rapidly than the income of the consumer; unemployment has not been materially relieved; uncontrolled inflation with its baneful threat to all classes of people seems inevitable, and the future of American youth has been mortgaged for generations yet unborn.

This is the most critical hour in the nation's history.

What will the Republican Party do?

We will drastically reduce governmental expenditures and balance the budget. We will also reduce the cost of administering state government in Nebraska. We will put an immediate stop to the destruction of the American system of government through the subversive processes enumerated above.

We will provide ample relief for the worthy needy, encourage opportunity for private employment, place the administration of relief in local hands where it belongs, and remove the army of unnecessary federal taxaters from the payroll.

We will resort to the tried and true method of reducing taxes by reducing spending, while placing the government in the hands of men who know what a tax receipt looks like and what it is to meet a payroll.

We are opposed to any new forms of taxation in the state, or additional taxes in any form, and would set up a uniform system of budgeting, accounting and auditing of all governmental units. We are opposed to the general policy of dollar matching by the state with the federal government, and would limit it to projects and activities that are obviously justified and needed.

We recognize agriculture as the most important industry in America and urge the following program:
(a) We are opposed to the importation of agricultural products which will depress the price received by our farmers.

(b) Build farm-to-market roads.

(c) Take government lands out of competition with the farmer.

(d) Promote the industrial use of farm products by applied science.

(e) Lower interest rates to 3 per cent on farm and home loans of resident owners and take the farm credit administration out of politics.

(f) Facilitate economical production and increased consumption on a basis of abundance instead of scarcity.

(g) Protect farmers against distressed selling of temporary surpluses of farm crops.

To insure the more representative and intelligent selection of candidates for public office we recommend that the state primary law be amended.

We favor a just and equitable old age pension under local administration and responsibility.

We pledge ourselves to abolish the spoils system and re-establish the merit system in government.

We favor the strengthening of the state insurance department so that the policy holders will receive adequate protection.

All unnecessary white collar jobs supported by the gasoline fund should be eliminated and the money thus saved devoted to actual road building.

We believe that the future welfare of our state depends upon our youth, and therefore we pledge proper support of education.

We endorse Robert G. Simmons for U. S. Senator, Dwight Griswold for Governor and all the other Republican candidates for state and national offices.

We insist that the Nebraska state government be run from the state capital, not from Washington. We would substitute the square deal of Theodore Roosevelt for the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Convention held at Omaha, May 7, 1936. Harry Sackett of Beatrice, Chairman; Russell Matson, Secretary.
The Democratic Party of the State of Nebraska hereby declares its adherence to the ideals, purposes and principles of popular government so worthily exemplified by the great leaders of our party, beginning with Thomas Jefferson and continuing through an honored line of Democratic presidents, and now, so nobly represented in our well-loved President, Franklin D. Roosevelt. We pledge our unswerving loyalty to the present Democratic administration and to the principles underlying its legislation.

We are opposed alike to governmental absolutism and to communism. We favor the encouragement of private enterprise, and the assurance of the right to fair profits as well as fair wages and fair prices, the safeguarding of individual rights and property rights under the Constitution of the United States, and the preservation of our American ideals alike to political and economic fields. It is to save these institutions and rights from the perils created by the severest depression in history that President Roosevelt is fighting, and the battles to be waged to this end in Congress and out of Congress, the democracy of Nebraska, to the last ounce of its strength, will uphold his mighty arm.

The present national administration is the first since 1920 comprehending the problems of the entire country. We express our gratitude for this fruitful understanding of the problems of the Middle West and of agriculture.

On March 4, 1933, our nation was in a state of economic chaos. Even in its wealthiest sections, financial institutions were facing ruin. Agriculture, the basis of American prosperity and the foundation stone of Nebraska's economic welfare, faced its greatest emergency. Prices were depressed, Despair confronted the country in the face of plenty. Meeting this challenge Franklin Roosevelt acted promptly to bring to the Middle West economic parity for its basic industry. Through the triple A and its substitutes, the soil conservation bill, through crop loans, through refinancing the farm lands threatened with foreclosure, through prompt and adequate steps to offset and soften the effect of the most disastrous drought in American history, the Democratic national administration rendered incalculable service to the people of Nebraska.
President Roosevelt and the Democratic Congress had the intelligence to devise, and the courage to institute and carry into effect, measures which restored and preserved our industrial, economic, and social integrity. Agencies were erected for the relief of distressed humanity, and at the same time, the legitimate necessities of business were not neglected, with the consequence that today the living conditions among our people have been signally improved, agriculture and industry are enjoying a period of healthy prosperity, and the moral and economic future of our nation is once more stabilized.

For these services, we commend and we call upon our fellow citizens of all political faiths to join with us in supporting the man through whom this recovery has been made and the party whose representatives have loyally stood by and supported him.

We reaffirm the consistent demand of our party for severe frugality in the administration of the government of our state in keeping with the limited resources of the citizens of the state. We continue our opposition to new methods or sources of taxation. We commend Governor R. L. Cochran for his successful opposition to any new forms of taxation, and for his economical administration of the state affairs.

The soil and waters of the rivers of Nebraska constitute the state's only natural resources, and they must be preserved and guarded with the most zealous care. All legal and feasible projects designed to store water in Nebraska, and to provide irrigation and water power, have our full endorsement and support.

We commend the efforts of our national and state administrations in their comprehensive Social Security programs. We realize that thus far the legislation enacted both by the national government and by the state administration is experimental, and in common with all human handiwork may not be perfect. Nevertheless, we regard it as a movement in the right direction and invite our public officials to give due consideration to its proper development and standardization.

We deplore and condemn the extensive damage done and being done to sound and attainable measures for security of the aged, by exploiters of fantastic and unattainable schemes.

We favor such changes of the primary law as will give the political parties through their conventions a
voice in the nomination of candidates with proper safeguards to insure the representative character of such conventions.

We favor such modification of the present liquor law as will correct weaknesses in its operation which have become manifest.

Almost all our officials are elected through party organizations. Unless the parties effectively campaign, electors are not able properly and intelligently to express their will. We have had an effective organization and this convention commends particularly the loyal, unselfish and unasseenting work of the Hon. Keith Neville, retiring national committeeman; Mrs. C. G. Ryan, national committeewoman; J. C. Quigley, chairman of the state committee; George Proudfit, treasurer of the state committee; Robert Florv, secretary of the state committee; and Mrs. Jane Ketcham, vice-chairman of the state committee. They deserve the gratitude of all the Democrats of the state.

The Democrats take just pride in the record of our Governor, R. L. Cochran, and of the state executive departments, and of the legislature. All have been under the guidance and control of Democrats. We are proud of their economical administration, free from even a suspicion of any improper conduct. They have at all times been faithful to the interests of the people of the state and have given efficient and honest service. These Democratic officials may with satisfaction and pride stand on their record. Their record insures their re-election.

We gratefully acknowledge and commend the splendid work of the women of our party, and urge a continued recognition of that service.

We have witnessed with deep appreciation the erection within the State of Nebraska of an aggressive and effective organization of the younger members of the party. The eminent fitness of this organization arises from the traditions of the Democratic Party as the consistent champions of the ideals of human equality and of the constructive progressiveness.

We heartily endorse the statesman-like record of our Democratic United States Senator, Edward R. Burke. We commend him for his consistent courage and intelligence in the discharge of the duties of his high office.

To the voters of the State of Nebraska, we commend the Democratic candidates for Congress without exception, and we especially endorse the records of the four members
of the present Congress, who are now candidates to succeed themselves.

We recognize the invaluable assistance given the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt by men not affiliated with, or identified as members of the Democratic Party.

Outstanding among these is the Senior Senator from Nebraska—George W. Norris. Elected to the United States Senate for the past four consecutive terms, he has laid partisanship aside and supported wholeheartedly the Roosevelt New Deal.

For a quarter century he has pitted his matchless skill and untiring vigilance against seizure of the government by the money masters. Almost single handed, he saved Muscle Shoals for the people and laid the foundation for the Tennessee Valley Authority, through which the natural resources of the great region are being developed by the federal government for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the region.

He has sent (sic) up a similar and vastly greater project for the Mississippi Valley, in which the inhabitants of the entire west will benefit from the development of cheap transportation, flood control, soil conservation and hydro-electric power widely distributed to cities and farms alike at prices within the reach of all. He fathomed and secured passage through Congress of the amendment abolishing the short session, commonly called the lame duck session of Congress; and setting ahead by six weeks the inauguration of the newly elected president, thus reducing to that extent the lack-leadership period following changes of administration. He compelled the baring of the inner secrets of the odious power trust before the Federal Trade Commission. We recognize in him the ablest champion in the Congress of the common man, and the sternest foe of those seeking special privileges.

He has but entered upon the harvest of his lifelong efforts to protect the small business man, the farmer, and the toiler from the merciless exploitation of organized avarice. He alone can with success complete the program he is engaged upon. Able though other sons of Nebraska be, there is not among them one who can supplant him in the senatorship without confusion and irreparable loss to the cause of popular government. The need for his return to his unfinished work in the Congress outweighs all consideration
of party and party regularity and transcends all fair regard for the political aspirations, however worthy of any individual.

Convention held at Omaha, May 7, 1936. Fred M. Deutsch of Norfolk, Chairman; Robert D. Flory, Secretary.
Omaha, Nebr.
April 3, 1962

The Hon. Robert G. Simmons
Chief Justice Supreme Court
Lincoln, Nebraska.

Dear Sir:

I am making inquiry as to whether you would be willing to grant me an interview, concerning your candidacy in the 1936 senatorial election.

At the present time I am writing a thesis for University of Omaha on "The 1936 Nebraska Senatorial Contest." An interview with you would greatly enrich my research on this subject, and the information you could give me would be greatly appreciated by the history staff of the university.

I am in the final stages of writing this thesis, and if possible would appreciate an interview at your earliest convenience.

Awaiting your answer, I am

Sincerely yours,

Fredric L. Splittgerber,
8132 Riggs Lane,
Shawnee Mission, Kansas
Mr. Fredric L. Splittgerber,  
75 Mission Road,  
Shawnee Mission, Kansas. 

Dear Sir: 

I have your letter of April 3 in which you advise me that you are writing a thesis on the subject of the 1936 Senatorial contest in this State and that you want me to grant you an interview regarding that matter, assuring me that it will "greatly enrich" your research on the subject. 

However, you advise that you are in the final stages of writing this thesis. Under these circumstances, I think the enrichment would come too late. I do not care to discuss the matter. 

Yours very truly,  

[Signature]
Mr. Fredric L. Splittergerber
2546 North 63 Street
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear Mr. Splittergerber:

I am sure that I can not give you any information that you do not already
have on the 1936 Nebraska senatorial contest.

Your best bet it seems to me would be to go over to Lincoln and examine
the papers of James E. Lawrence, former editor of the Lincoln Star and the man
who managed Senator Norris' campaign in 1936. The Senator did not correspond
with FDR, Farley or anyone else in the Democratic party command during the
campaign, but Lawrence did. And his letters to leading figures in the Democratic
hierarchy are most interesting and revealing.

I am sure that if you visited Hyde Park and looked through the various
collections located there, you would gain further material. Incidentally, Professor
Robert Burke of the University of Washington is preparing a book on the 1936
Democratic campaign and he goes into the Nebraska situation.

I have gone through the Norris papers on the campaign and the most revealing
material that I found were the carbons of the letters that Lawrence sent and received
in the course of it.

You can perform a service to historians (as an aid in explaining aspects of
Nebraska politics) if you contact Terry Carpenter in Scottsbluff and see if he is
willing to discuss his campaign (or better still let you see his papers). Then when
you are in Lincoln if you contact the Honorable Robert Simmons, Chief Justice of Nebras-
ka, you can get the point of view of the Republican candidate in the 1936 campaign. In
short, if you can get access to the Carpenter and Simmons papers, I think you could do
a splendid job without traveling East. If, however, you have some financial aid and are
working on a Ph.D., why then trips to Hyde Park and Washington, D.C. would be in order.
But I do not believe they are imperative at the outset.

I will be anxious to see what you come up with. Good luck and give my regards to Professor Bonner.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Lowitt