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It Pays to Advertise in the Mail

THE NATIONAL POLITICAL CONVENTIONS IN THE U. S. ARE WONDERFUL SPECTACLES

(Frederic J. Haskin in Boston Traveler.)

The national conventions of the political parties which are now being planned by the national committees and their sub-committees are not only vital functions in the life of the nation and its government, but they are great spectacles, magnificent shows, stupendous exhibits and assemblages of oratorical talent, music, decoration and enthusiasm. The staging of these conventions is as complicated a matter as promoting a world's championship prize fight, and indeed the Democrats had material aid in arranging their 1924 convention at Madison Square Garden from Mr. Tex Rickard, the fight promoter. Some unkind observers referred to it as the greatest battle Tex ever staged.

A Problem.

A national convention is a problem in seating, lighting, advertising, photography, journalism, acoustics, housing, transportation, finance, and many other arts and sciences, as well as a great political function helping to determine the destiny of the nation. It is one of America's greatest shows. As many people attend as can be got into the largest available auditorium, and there have been serious suggestions for holding them in outdoor stadia, so that more could be present to view the performance. Most of the rest of the nation attends by radio.

The seating question is a very serious one. Few auditoriums seat more than ten thousand people, and there are sure to be a hundred thousand who would like to attend the convention. The delegates require about a thousand seats, and the alternates an equal number (1190 in the Democratic convention) and each delegate and alternate expects one or two seats for friends. The press requires some 250 places for active correspondents, and an indefinitely large number of editors, owners, managers and special writers, including newspapers and magazines and feature services.

The convention city has paid a good fat sum into the party treasury to secure the convention, and it must have a healthy block of seats to give to the leading citizens who subscribed to the fund. Usually each \$50 subscription to the convention fund brings a ticket to the donor, and probably half of the gallery space is assigned in that way.

All After Seats.

Then each member of the national committee of the party claims a block of seats for his party leaders. All senators, congressmen, Governors, and myriads of lesser office holders claim the right to seats for themselves or their families or friends or all three. All substantial contributors to the last campaign fund expect to be taken care of. The list of applicants grows and grows, and the ticket committee, a sub-committee of the national committee, finds its troubles growing every hour as convention time draws near. The unlucky gentlemen are constantly assailed with the threat that unless they make 10,000 seats hold 100,000 applicants, the party is sure to lose whole states in the election because important people will be offended.

The ticket committee has but one satisfaction. It knows that after the first day or two of the convention there will be many vacant seats, because the same people will not come to all sessions. Hence it gayly proceeds to issue a lot of general admission tickets, leaving it for ushers to straighten the matter out when the people arrive.

The appointment of officials to manage a convention is almost as troublesome as the tickets. A whole army of ushers, sergeant-at-arms and door tenders are needed, and political pressure is brought to bear to secure every one of these positions. Clerks for committees are equally in demand. Usually many more of these positions are filled than there is actual need of, since most of the convention helpers either work for nothing or for a nominal wage, and every appointment is presumed to make friends and votes for the party.

The radio, lighting, telegraph, photographic, and acoustic arrangements are business matters with less politics mixed into them. Immense lights must be installed so that still and motion pictures may be made inside

the hall. Renting the lights and paying the expert operators is a heavy expense. At the last Democratic convention, which lasted three weeks, the committee ran out of funds and had to abandon the spotlights the last few days.

Radio Broadcasts.

The radio plans always aim at a fair, unbiassed broadcast, but listeners often complain if the announcers say too much about one or another candidate. Photographic privileges are at a premium, especially the right to take the official picture of the opening of the convention. National committees usually refuse the cash offers for the privilege and have one picture made, of which prints are supplied to all photographic companies alike.

The food and drink concessions are often sold by the national committee. Soft drinks being a big item of revenue because conventions are held in June and usually are very warm affairs.

The program of a national convention follows time-honored custom, and, while it involves a great waste of time, it is hard to break up old ways, and there is also a feeling that the convention city having paid upward of \$100,000 to get the crowd, is entitled to a week, at least, in which to recover its money. Of course, a deadlocked convention, like the last two Democratic gatherings lasts more than a week, anyhow, but a convention like the last Republican gathering at Cleveland, with very little unsettled in advance except the candidate for Vice-President, could probably have finished its work in two days, if necessary.

A certain amount of oratory and time for many gatherings of party leaders outside the convention hall, planning for campaign work and renewing old friendships are really part of the convention. Thus the first day usually has little on the program except the speech of the temporary chairman, which is the keynote speech of the convention. The convention is in session only two or three hours that day. The second day takes care of routine committee reports on the rules and procedure and permanent organization of the convention, and the permanent chairman makes his speech, which is another general rallying cry to the party, and is addressed actually to the country at large.

Debate on Third Day.

The third day may find some real debate over the party platform, and may also find time for the nominating speeches, or part of them. If many candidates for the presidency are in the field, the nominating and seconding speeches may fill a whole day. By this time the crowding for the gallery seats is not so great, and many of the delegates will also be absent part of the time.

Balloting for the nominee seldom begins until the fourth day, and sometimes not until the fifth. From that time forward the balloting is the only business on hand, until the nomination is made. The vice-presidential nomination usually requires but little time after the head of the ticket has been selected.

Interspersed in the program each day there is music, usually some famous singer, and plenty of band music and singing by the convention. Then there are hours consumed by the "demonstrations" for the various candidates. These appear spontaneous, but while partly so are also carefully staged by the backers of each candidate. Cheers of the college football type are delivered, and leather-lunged youths lead the outbursts. Delegates and visitors march around the halls, banners are waved, and there is a great to-do.

The delegates and guests do not always know it, but the chairman or sergeant-at-arms of the convention really has much to do with controlling the length of the demonstrations, by controlling the flood lights and the bands. These are managed by a series of signal buttons on the speakers' stand, with wires leading to the bands and light stations. When the presiding officer thinks the noise has gone on long enough, a signal stops the band and cuts off the flood lights, and the crowd instinctively subsides without knowing just why.

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- 17 King and Northumberland Sts.
- 21 Queen and York Sts.
- 23 York and George Sts.
- 24 Queen and Westmorland Sts.
- 25 Brunswick and Westmorland Sts.
- 26 Charlotte and Westmorland Sts.
- 27 King and York Sts.
- 28 Saunders and York Sts.
- 31 Queen and Regent Sts.
- 32 Needham and Regent Sts.
- 34 Queen and Carleton Sts.
- 35 Brunswick and Carleton Sts.
- 36 Charlotte and Carleton Sts.
- 37 George and Regent Sts.
- 38 King and Regent Sts.
- 43 St. John and Aberdeen Sts.
- 44 Queen and St. John Sts.
- 45 Brunswick and St. John Sts.
- 46 Brunswick and St. John Sts.
- 46 Charlotte and St. John Sts.
- 51 King and Church Sts.
- 52 George and Church Sts.
- 53 Union and Church Sts.
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