

A Bull Moose Responds to the New Deal: Pennsylvania's Gifford Pinchot

IN PROBING the character of the New Deal era, American historians have naturally evolved conflicting points of view. The relationship of this provocative period to the Progressive era is the focus of one such controversy. Was the New Deal an extension of early twentieth century reform or "a drastic new departure," as Professor Richard Hofstadter has concluded?¹

As part of their argument, supporters of the former view cite the continuity in personnel. Some Progressive Republicans who had submitted to the leadership of their more conservative colleagues in the twenties became disenchanted by 1932, joined the Roosevelt bandwagon, and subsequently endorsed the New Deal. With equal accuracy, advocates of the Hofstadter view can refer to others who had been in the Progressive forefront, hesitated in their reaction to the Democratic rise, and ultimately denounced the New Deal and its architects. How can these divergencies be explained? Why did some Progressives regard the New Deal as fulfillment of a national need while others of their breed could register only condemnation?

The study of Gifford Pinchot, popular but controversial Republican governor of Pennsylvania, in regard to the New Deal should supply at least partial answers to these questions. His experience is a microcosm of the Progressive dilemma and affords the historian an infrequent opportunity to analyze one who stood on both sides of an issue. Pinchot had been an old Bull Moose who carried on a brief courtship with the New Deal, but, after welcoming the Rooseveltians to his state, he quickly reversed his position when he became dis-

¹ Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R.* (New York, 1955), 300-301.

turbed with parts of their program and with several of their local leaders. He had always been a maverick in Republican politics and did not step out of character in relating himself to the New Deal.

Pinchot had worked with Theodore Roosevelt in creating the reform spirit of the Square Deal, and his reputation as a courageous fighter for reform had been further enhanced by his stubborn opposition to monopolies in the famous Pinchot-Ballinger dispute. Following World War I when Progressivism was eclipsed, Pinchot, determined to carry insurgency to the most boss-ridden state in the nation, entered Pennsylvania politics.

In 1922, Pinchot successfully campaigned for the governorship on the resurrected "Square Deal" theme. To his campaign biographer, he lamented that it had become the rule in Pennsylvania for politicians either to be "financed by a machine or corporations, or stay out of politics."² Because his appeal promised correctives, it struck chords of praise in many quarters, especially among the newly enfranchised women voters. His victory, however, was more the result of factionalism in the leadership of the state's Republican Party than of any widespread sympathy for reform.

The last member of the Cameron-Quay-Penrose triumvirate, which had held the state under its iron-fisted rule since the Civil War, died in 1921. This passing of Boies Penrose created a leadership vacuum which the party organization was unable to fill; instead of an orderly selection of a successor, a three-way intraparty battle was touched off. Conservative factions headed by William Scott Vare, boss of Philadelphia, Andrew W. Mellon, millionaire ruler of Pittsburgh, and Joseph Grundy, head of the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association, competed with each other for the Penrose mantle. Pinchot alertly seized this opportunity and captured enough popular support to win the gubernatorial post. Indicative of the liberal press, the *New Republic*, in hailing his victory, minimized the significance of this party factionalism and interpreted his success only as a clear "triumph for Progressivism."³

The regulation of financial practices, mental health legislation, an annuity system for state employees, and conservation reforms which

² Henry W. Shoemaker, *The Man Who Made Good: Gifford Pinchot* (privately printed, 1923), 13.

³ "Progressivism in Pennsylvania," *New Republic*, XXXI (May 31, 1922), 5.

were advanced demonstrate not only the Progressive character of Pinchot's first administration and the basis for the *New Republic's* observation, but also identify him as an outstanding governor. Considering the granite-like opposition of the bosses, his legislative record is truly remarkable, but it did not disrupt the power of the "regulars" over the party machinery. This failure was destined to plague him because the bosses, even in their discordant state, were strong enough to strike back.⁴

Constitutionally denied the right to succeed himself, Pinchot entered the 1926 Republican primaries for the United States Senate against William Vare, who won handily. In a state where nomination on the Republican ticket was tantamount to election, the Philadelphia boss swept to victory in November, but persistent charges of corrupt campaign practices caused a political cloud to hover over his election. Again Pinchot took advantage of the opportunity to keep the bosses in check by refusing to certify Vare's election on the grounds that it "was partly bought and partly stolen." In 1929, the United States Senate finally confirmed the governor's contention by voting not to seat Vare. Thus, in defeat, Pinchot had succeeded in advancing Progressive principles against bossism.⁵

Despite the setback in 1926, Pinchot had tasted enough success to be determined to continue his crusade in Pennsylvania. Four years later, he ran for the governorship and overturned Vare's candidate, Francis Shunk Brown, in the May primaries. Party "regulars" were furious, and Vare predicted that Pinchot's November chances were a "100 to 1 shot." Corporate interests, led by William W. Atterbury, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, were equally horrified by his promise to rid the state of "utility monopolies" which, Pinchot charged, dominated the Public Service Commission to the detriment of the public. Rather than support the party nominee, Vare and Atterbury committed political treason by massing the urban voters of Philadelphia, as well as the major share of the state's corporation

⁴ The most comprehensive study of Pinchot's career is M. Nelson McGeary, *Gifford Pinchot, Forester-Politician* (Princeton, 1960). A detailed analysis of Pinchot's first gubernatorial term is found in Joseph A. Falco, "Political Background and First Gubernatorial Administration of Gifford Pinchot, 1923-1927" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1956).

⁵ An account of the Vare case is detailed in Samuel J. Astorino, "The Contested Senate Election of William Scott Vare," *Pennsylvania History*, XXVIII (1961), 187-202.

wealth, behind the Democratic candidate, James M. Hemphill.⁶ In rebuttal, Pinchot caustically noted that "they're gangsters first and Republicans as a matter of convenience afterwards."⁷ Since the Vare-Atterbury coalition with the Democrats was not strong enough to prevent a Pinchot victory in the general election, the party's "radical nominee" was again governor in the midst of a conservative era.

No sooner had Pinchot taken office than the catastrophic effects of the Great Depression began to be felt in Pennsylvania. In 1930, the state's per capita income dropped from \$797 to \$688 and was destined to sink to \$414 in 1934. Between April, 1930, and June, 1931, unemployment in manufacturing ran 18.7 per cent above normal, 22.8 per cent above in construction, and 31 per cent in mining. By the spring of 1932, 40 per cent of those usually employed in Philadelphia were out of work; Pittsburgh reported in January, 1931, that 28.5 per cent of her workers could not find jobs. In the summer of 1931, Pennsylvania had approximately 919,000 unemployed.⁸

Physical appearance gave credence to these statistics. Apple venders threatened to surpass street corners in number, and in December, 1931, Mayor Harry Mackey of Philadelphia released figures showing that venders in his city were selling 132,000 apples every day.⁹ Hobo villages added to the physical image of a state caught in the throes of a severe economic depression.

Pinchot's immediate response consisted of bitter outbursts against his own party in general, and President Herbert Hoover in particular. Faced with the fact that neither chaotic local relief measures nor state expenditures for public works could stem the tide of economic collapse, Pinchot began calling for federal funds as the only effective cure. This request thrust him headlong into a conflict with the Hoover administration. While Pinchot clamored for federal

⁶ Harris G. Warren, *Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression* (New York, 1959), 125-126.

⁷ *Time*, XVI (Oct. 20, 1930), 19.

⁸ *How Many Are Jobless in Pennsylvania?* Special Bulletin No. 33 (Harrisburg, Department of Labor and Industry, 1933), 7, 10; Gladys L. Palmer, *Thirty Thousand in Search of Work* (Harrisburg, Department of Labor and Industry, 1933), 7; *Pennsylvania's Industrial Economy: An Outline of Trends and Strategic Factors, 1929-1947* (Harrisburg, Department of Labor and Industry, 1949), 5; *Monthly Labor Review*, XXX (1931), 81.

⁹ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 14, 1930.

assistance, the President steadfastly refused to consider such proposals. Only when the pressure became too great to resist did Hoover act; he then reluctantly consented to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which at best was only intended to provide indirect relief. Pinchot referred to such conduct as Hoover's "gentle bedside language."

The Pinchot-Hoover rift, however, was more than a mere disagreement on approach; basic to their political feud was a fundamental difference in philosophies of government. Hoover endeavored to resist a program of federal aid because of an innate fear of bigness in government. He believed that the pyramiding of authority, an inevitable result of schemes such as Pinchot was suggesting, would lead to socialism, an affliction later described in his *Memoirs* as the radical school of "collectivism."¹⁰

Pinchot, on the other hand, harbored no such fears. Tempered in the crucible of the New Nationalism, he forthrightly stated in 1933: "I belong to the Roosevelt school of executives. I believe that it is the duty of a Governor not simply to do for the public welfare what the law specifically directs, but to do whatever the people need which the law does not specifically forbid."¹¹ In his opinion, economic chaos and the accompanying human suffering demanded intervention by the federal government in order to prevent further moral and physical deterioration. Since intervention was not specifically forbidden by law and since the public welfare demanded it, he argued that the President was duty-bound to act.

When action did not come, Pinchot, angered by what he regarded as stubbornness, unleashed a public attack on the President. By 1932, his anti-Hoover crusade reached a climax, and his ideas were crystallized in an article entitled "The Case for Federal Relief," written for the January issue of *Survey*. Testifying before the United States Senate Unemployment Relief Committee, he accused Hoover of failing to feed the hungry. Dramatically, he asserted, "We must feed them if they are to live." In a Baltimore speech he declared that the RFC was merely a part of Hoover's "propaganda and ballyhoo" in behalf of nonexistent federal action to stem the effects of the

¹⁰ Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover* (New York, 1952), II, 174.

¹¹ Quoted in Isidor Feinstein, "A Gentleman in Politics," *American Mercury*, XXXIX (May, 1933), 84.

Depression, and added that the Chief Executive was putting "dollars ahead of human misery."¹²

Pinchot was thoroughly convinced that Hoover was unfit for renomination to the presidency. Because of the stigma of the Depression, the Republican Party, he felt, must either replace him or suffer certain defeat. In an effort to lead the party to the former choice, Pinchot launched a series of maneuvers designed to embarrass Hoover at the Republican National Convention. First, he unsuccessfully sought to control the Pennsylvania delegation in an attempt to deadlock the convention.¹³ After this failed, he thought seriously of promoting his own candidacy. During the winter of 1931-1932, when he had been barnstorming on the anti-Hoover theme, he became convinced that public sentiment in the nation would be receptive to a Progressive candidate and that old-line Progressives like George W. Norris, William F. Borah, Hiram Johnson and Robert LaFollette would endorse him. Acting on this assumption, he asked his Bull Moose friend from Chicago, Harold Ickes, to undertake a further sampling of opinion by mail.

With their true purposes disguised, Ickes and Pinchot's secretary, Stephen Stahlnecker, went to work. They dispatched questionnaires to various national delegates, newspaper editors, and state leaders. So optimistic were their expectations that, while awaiting replies, they wrote speeches for the anticipated campaign. However, an overwhelming majority of those questioned preferred the renomination of Hoover to any alternative, and in April, 1932, Ickes relayed this sad news to Pinchot with the comment, "Republicans are going to take their licking lying down."¹⁴

Reconciled to the futility of his efforts to stop Hoover, Pinchot expressed himself through his silence during the 1932 campaign. Publicly, at least, he neither endorsed nor opposed the Republican nominee. When asked how he would vote, he usually replied "not a peep."¹⁵ In late October, an editorial in the *Pittsburgh Press* sug-

¹² Warren, 197-198; *Pittsburgh Press*, Jan. 4, and Jan. 23, 1932; Gifford Pinchot, "The Case for Federal Relief," *Survey*, LXVII (Jan. 1, 1932), 347-349.

¹³ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 14, 1930, and May 17, 1931.

¹⁴ Stephen Stahlnecker to Harold Ickes, Mar. 3, 1932; Ickes to Gifford Pinchot, Apr. 1, 1932, Gifford Pinchot Papers, Box 2003, Library of Congress, hereinafter cited as GPP. Replies to the questionnaire are in Boxes 2003-2004; program notes and a few speeches are in Box 2007.

¹⁵ *Time*, XX (Nov. 14, 1932), 14.

gested probably the most plausible reason for his reserve. After noting that other Progressives, like Norris, LaFollette, Johnson and Cutting had already declared for Roosevelt, Pinchot, it stated, could ill afford to antagonize his party because he wanted the Republican nomination for senator in 1934 and would not risk the charge of party desertion.¹⁶

Behind the mute wall, however, it was clear that the governor was sympathetic to Roosevelt. For example, he quietly passed the word to his friends to vote for the Democratic candidate for the Senate, Lawrence Rupp, instead of the Republican incumbent, James J. Davis. In September, Pinchot went further by demanding that the party's state chairman, Edward Martin, ask Davis to withdraw from the ticket on the grounds that he was involved in an illegal lottery operated by the Loyal Order of Moose. Recently, in reflecting on such political irresponsibility, General Martin observed that Pinchot possessed a keen, inquiring mind which had contributed significantly to the Republican Party, but, if he had learned to co-ordinate this ability with a proper attitude toward discipline, his impact might have been even greater. Recognizing that Pinchot's nature had been determined before he entered the political arena, General Martin suggested that had Gifford's father applied a little woodshed psychology during his youth, the fate of Pennsylvania's Republican Party in the twenties and early thirties would not have been replete with such insurgency.¹⁷

By election day many close friends of the governor had already switched over. The president of the conservation-minded Pennsylvania Parks Association wrote Roosevelt that his campaign remarks supporting conservation had made a deep impression on Pinchot's followers in the state and would definitely pull in many Republican votes.¹⁸

Despite the swelling chorus of anti-Republican criticism, the Depression, the rampant defection of Negro and immigrant blocs,

¹⁶ *Pittsburgh Press*, Oct. 28, 1932.

¹⁷ Personal interview given by Edward Martin to James A. Kehl and Samuel J. Astorino, Oct. 21, 1961.

¹⁸ *Pittsburgh Press*, Oct. 30 and Nov. 4, 1932; Ellwood B. Chapman to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 8, 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, 1932 Campaign: Pennsylvania File, Box 653, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, hereinafter cited as FDRP.

and despite the general logic of the situation which pointed to a Democratic victory, the Republicans held Pennsylvania in 1932.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the spirit of the election belonged to the Democrats. Roosevelt had made significant gains. He had carried twenty-eight counties, including such a Republican mainstay as Allegheny; even in the mighty Vare fortress of Philadelphia ward leaders were complaining that "Democracy is in the air. The people . . . are going toward the Democratic party like an ocean tide."²⁰ The magnetism of the New Deal and the influx of its "alphabet codes" to prime the economic pump were additional signs that Republican supremacy in Pennsylvania was gravely threatened.

Although dejected by the Democratic failure to carry his state, Pinchot was elated by the national victory of his friend, "Dear Franklin." In fact, Pinchot thereafter drew much closer to Roosevelt. In writing to the President-elect in January, 1933, he confirmed what his earlier silence had suggested: "If I can be of use, blow your whistle and I'll come a'running, as I said before."²¹ Roosevelt reciprocated by inviting Pinchot and his wife to the inauguration, and after the ceremonies they were included in the small circle of friends who dined with the new President at the White House.

The friendship of Roosevelt and Pinchot was not new. As a young member of the New York state legislature, Roosevelt had called on Pinchot in 1912 for help in drafting a conservation bill. Because of a philosophical kinship between them, their friendship ripened through the years in spite of rival political affiliations. Both were of the Progressive breed, having fought the Old Guard with the same kind of ammunition. Roosevelt's cries for a public mandate to drive out the "economic royalists" echoed Pinchot's Progressive campaigns against the "utility conspiracy" in Pennsylvania; and FDR's appeals for regulation paralleled Pinchot's intentions to overhaul the Pennsylvania Public Service Commission. In an unpublished statement which Pinchot probably intended to release during the 1932 race he wrote: "Roosevelt believes as I do, that the good of the

¹⁹ The reasons for this victory, too involved to be detailed here, are explored in Samuel J. Astorino, "The Decline of the Republican Dynasty in Pennsylvania, 1929-1934" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1962), Chap. 8.

²⁰ Quoted in John T. Salter, *Boss Rule: Portraits in City Politics* (New York, 1935), 121.

²¹ Pinchot to Roosevelt, Jan. 20, 1933, FDRP, President's Personal File, Box 289.

People comes first. Hoover is and always has been the errand boy of the public utilities.”²² Although this allegation is unfair to Hoover, it demonstrates the affection which Pinchot held for the New Deal boss.

This friendship spilled over into Pennsylvania politics. By 1933, the Keystone State Republicans were reeling under the impact of the Democratic steamroller. Defections among traditional Republican voters were swelling to critical proportions as an awakened Democracy, spurred on by the promises of the New Deal, pressed relentlessly for victory. In the Philadelphia municipal elections of that year, Pinchot revealed his New Deal sympathies more openly. The Vare machine was already losing its grip on the city, and Pinchot decided to strike hard at this arch foe. Entering into an alliance with Mayor Mackey, a defector from the Vare ranks, he organized the so-called Philadelphia Town Meeting Party, or “Fusion Party” as it was popularly known, to contest Vare’s supremacy. Philadelphia Democrats, including J. David Stern, publisher of the *Philadelphia Record*, soon joined the movement and secured a majority of candidates for the fusion ticket. In November, this coalition of Pinchot Republicans and New Deal Democrats won the city council and the offices of controller, treasurer, register of wills, and coroner.²³

In the meantime, the Democratic minority in the state legislature had already begun co-operating with the governor’s program. With this assistance, Pinchot secured the passage of key measures concerning child and female labor. Elated over Democratic support, Pinchot appreciatively wrote Roosevelt who, in turn, conveyed his sentiments to Democratic State Chairman Joseph Guffey: “I think you ought to know that I have had an awfully nice letter from Governor Pinchot in which he expresses his deep appreciation of the course of the Democratic minority in the Senate and House. I think our course has been the right one from all I hear.”²⁴

At the national level, Pinchot was instrumental in Harold Ickes’ appointment as Secretary of the Interior. In February, 1933, Ickes had telegraphed the governor to enlist his influence with the President-elect in behalf of the appointment. Although hesitant about the propriety of such a step, Pinchot told Ickes that “nothing could be

²² GPP, Box 2073.

²³ *New York Times*, Aug. 27 and Nov. 8, 1933.

²⁴ Roosevelt to Joseph Guffey, May 19, 1933, FDRP, President’s Personal File, Box 451.

finer than your appointment" and promised to write to Roosevelt, who later assigned Ickes the coveted cabinet post.²⁵

The following May, Ickes again sought Pinchot's support, this time to endorse the nomination of Harry Slattery as his aide in the Department of the Interior. Slattery's name had been proposed by Senator James Couzens of Michigan, chairman of the Committee on Interstate Commerce, and had the backing of Progressive elements in Congress. Long famous for his work in the conservation movement, Slattery had also gained fame for his help in uncovering the Teapot Dome swindle. He and Pinchot were good friends, and the Pennsylvania governor quickly recommended such action to FDR, who responded affirmatively. With these appointments, Pinchot was assured that his beloved conservation program was secure.²⁶ Above all, he could rest in the knowledge that the Roosevelt administration was more than willing to draw on Progressive advice and talent.

Despite this growing friendship, the elections of 1934 marked a turning point in the relationship between Roosevelt and Pinchot. The latter had long before decided that he would enter the Republican primaries against incumbent Senator David A. Reed, a Mellon-selected Old Guardsman. Early that year, Pinchot opened headquarters in Philadelphia, and soon each county in the state had its own "Pinchot For Senator" club.²⁷ His campaign against Reed, although stressing the "utility monopoly" theme, was heavily tinted with praise for the New Deal. This stood in sharp contrast to Reed's bombastic criticism of the Roosevelt program. Pinchot, in fact, campaigned primarily as a New Dealer in his appeal to Republican voters and banked on the shift in political sentiment to carry him. Supported by powerful corporate interests and the Vare machine, Reed was able to defeat the governor in a close race in May.²⁸

Pinchot was despondent over the results, not only because Republicans had deserted him at the polls, but, more importantly, because he had expected more ardent support from FDR and the

²⁵ Ickes to Pinchot, telegram, Feb. 20, 1933; Pinchot to Ickes, Feb. 21, 1933, GPP, Box 2072; also see Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes* (New York, 1953), 17 (Apr. 6, 1933).

²⁶ Harry Slattery to Pinchot, Feb. 25, 1933; Ickes to Pinchot, May 11, 1933, GPP, Box 2072.

²⁷ See the material in GPP, Boxes 574-598.

²⁸ The vote was 600,000 to 501,000.

Democratic Party's national leadership. In effect, he had presumed that the Roosevelt administration would come to his aid with appeals to those who were still registered Republicans but whose sentiments were rapidly leading them to the New Deal. Pinchot had correctly perceived this shift and exploited it with his New Dealish campaign. When Democratic aid failed to materialize, he legitimately asked why, after all the past co-operation and joint efforts, Roosevelt had remained apathetic.

In retrospect, at least, the explanation is clear. Sensing victory in 1934, the Democratic Party in Pennsylvania wanted its own state chairman, Joseph Guffey, nominated for the Senate, and knowing the friendship that existed between Roosevelt and Pinchot, the party leaders (largely under Guffey's control) feared that the President might force Pinchot's name on the ticket. As early as November, 1933, the *Philadelphia Record*, despite its co-operation with the Town Meeting Party, had called for a "simon pure" Democratic Party devoid of all Republican connections, including Pinchot, in an effort to thwart such a possibility. In December of the same year, James Farley, Roosevelt's party manager and a close friend of Guffey's, had also announced that the Pennsylvania state chairman should definitely be the Democratic senatorial nominee.²⁹

This should have been adequate evidence to convince Pinchot that Democratic support would not be forthcoming. If not, Ickes' reaction to his request of April, 1934, to speak in Pennsylvania on his behalf was an additional warning. Although favoring Pinchot's candidacy, Ickes made it clear he would speak only with the President's approval. Several days later, he sorrowfully wrote Pinchot in noncommittal terms that such a speech was temporarily, at least, unfeasible, but Pinchot said he "understood" and harbored no ill-feeling.³⁰ Obviously, Ickes was prevented from helping his friend by the pressure that Guffey and Farley had placed on Roosevelt, the pragmatic politician who generally catered to the wishes of his lieutenants in party affairs. Undoubtedly, this was the pressure that Pinchot "understood."³¹

²⁹ *New York Times*, Nov. 19 (Sec. IV), Dec. 30, and Dec. 31, 1933 (Sec. IV).

³⁰ Pinchot to Ickes, Apr. 14, 1934; Ickes to Pinchot, Apr. 24, 1934; Pinchot to Ickes, Apr. 26, 1934, GPP, Box 578.

³¹ See the discussion in James M. Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York, 1956), 199-200. Also see his more recent *The Deadlock of Democracy: Four-Party Politics in America*

The Democrats then nominated Guffey for senator and George Earle for governor. Except for another vain effort to have Roosevelt intercede in the creation of a Pinchot-Earle ticket, the governor remained relatively quiet until October 4.³² Speaking in Wilkes-Barre on that date, he surprisingly leveled a severe criticism at the Democratic ticket, Guffey in particular. The Democratic senatorial nominee, he held, was a common thief who had once embezzled funds from the federal government, and Earle, he maintained, was simply a puppet with an antiunion record. After the speech, Pinchot stated that if Guffey were elected, Reed should request that the Senate investigate his background, and in his own capacity as governor he threatened not to certify Guffey's election, as he had done with Vare in 1926.³³ Although the speech did not openly endorse Reed, it was clear to many that Pinchot preferred him to Guffey and that he was sanctioning Reed's anti-Roosevelt conduct.

This Wilkes-Barre speech came as a shock to Pinchot's friends, including Ickes and Roosevelt. The former was perplexed by this "extraordinary proceeding on Gifford's part." Reed's "reactionary affiliations" had always been repugnant to Pinchot, and they had fought each other "like two tomcats on a back fence." When Pinchot's attack against the Democrats continued, Ickes seriously thought of making an open break, but satisfied himself with the thought that "I am too fond of him and he is really too fine a man to be attacked except as a matter of ultimate necessity."³⁴

Roosevelt, too, exhibited signs of displeasure, and on October 29 Pinchot felt obliged to justify his actions to "Dear Franklin." His attacks on Guffey and Earle, he explained, were founded on the sincere belief that neither man was fit for public office. He specifically argued that the decision to place political power in Guffey's hands had severely retarded Progressive gains in Pennsylvania, and rather immodestly concluded that such a fate could have been

(Englewood Cliffs, 1963), 169-170. Writing about these events in his autobiography, *Seventy Years on the Red-Fire Wagon* (privately printed, 1952), Guffey shifts the blame to Pinchot by maintaining that the governor was dropped by the Democrats for his refusal to support a bill outlawing party raiding during a primary campaign.

³² Ickes, *Diary*, 208 (Oct. 20, 1934).

³³ A copy of the Wilkes-Barre speech is in GPP, Box 1991; also see Pinchot to M. Harvey Taylor, Oct. 11, 1934, *ibid.*

³⁴ Ickes, *Diary*, 202 (Oct. 5, 1934), 203 (Oct. 7, 1934), 208 (Oct. 20, 1934).

avoided if the Democrats had nominated him for senator. The Pennsylvania Democrats obviously "were so certain of victory that they declined to consider any coalition." In addition, Pinchot deeply resented Farley's September statement that he (Pinchot) would support Guffey; this had come "out of a clear sky," without the governor's prior approval, and amounted to a crude interference by Farley in Pennsylvania affairs. Pinchot painstakingly pointed out to FDR that he should not assume that he was opposed to his policies; he had always supported the New Deal and pledged his continued co-operation. Guffey, Earle, and Farley, he concluded, were the real enemies who would ultimately weaken Roosevelt's prestige in Pennsylvania.³⁵

Pinchot's criticism of the Democratic ticket probably had no effect on the election results in the Keystone State. In spite of his own personal eleventh-hour reaction which caused him to endorse Reed, there is no evidence to indicate that his Progressive followers could be converted to such a course. Pinchot himself had consistently denounced the Republican nominee in vehement terms until late in the campaign, and many of his friends, acting on those earlier cues, had already embraced the Democratic faith as the promise of a new reform movement. At this stage, the Democratic tide could not be stopped; in November, the party carried every major state office.

Continuing to flay Guffey, Pinchot refused to stay silent even after the election. More angered than ever, President Roosevelt dispatched a letter demanding a further explanation, and in early December, 1934, Pinchot replied with his usual theme. Guffey and David L. Lawrence (chairman of the Allegheny County Democratic Committee) had been "too long associated with the Mellons," he said, and Earle "amounts to nothing in his own right." The New Deal program was described as praiseworthy, but its implementation demanded men of higher caliber than Guffey and Earle. "A clean and vigorous Democratic Party in Pennsylvania would be welcome," but the governor reasserted that the "present set-up" could only hurt the state and Roosevelt. Reaffirming his lasting friendship with the President, he held that Farley, Guffey, and Earle were determined to force them apart: "I resented and still resent the attempt of the

³⁵ Pinchot to Roosevelt, Oct. 29, 1934, GPP, Box 1991.

Farley-Guffey-Earle combination to put me in a position of being your enemy."³⁶

Roosevelt seemed at least partially satisfied that Pinchot, although perhaps politically unbalanced, still endorsed the New Deal in general. Despite repeated attempts by Roosevelt's advisers, especially Guffey, Ickes, and Farley, to cut the bond between them, they remained friendly until the President's death in 1945. In fact, Pinchot personally campaigned for Roosevelt in his last three presidential races.³⁷ As was typical of his temperament, Roosevelt easily swallowed diverse shades of opinion, Pinchot included.

Pinchot was not as fortunate with Ickes. By 1935, Ickes was thoroughly convinced that his old Bull Moose friend had undergone a tragic and unfortunate transformation in political philosophy. The last straw came when Pinchot bitterly opposed Ickes' plan to have the Forest Service transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of the Interior. After discovering the interpretation of the Ballinger-Pinchot dispute advanced by Henry F. Pringle in his biography of Taft, Ickes re-examined the files on the case and shortly proclaimed that Ballinger was "an American Dreyfuss" who had been victimized by a Pinchot conspiracy.³⁸ Pinchot, he concluded, had never been a true Progressive and should now be considered an enemy of the New Deal who had joined the ranks of anti-Roosevelt Progressives.

In tracing the evolution of Pinchot's attitudes and actions regarding the New Deal, two somewhat incompatible generalizations come into focus: Roosevelt was recognized as a definite promise for the revival of Progressivism, and, at the same time, the leadership of his program in Pennsylvania was anathema.

FDR was primarily a politician and secondly a reformer; Pinchot's career was structured around these same qualities, but the emphasis was inverted. As a reformer he could be enthusiastic about both Progressive and New Deal reforms. This explains his personal admiration for Roosevelt, his exhortations in behalf of New Deal slogans and philosophy, and his disparaging treatment of Herbert

³⁶ Roosevelt to Pinchot, Nov. 9, 1934; Pinchot to Roosevelt, Dec. 11, 1934, *ibid.*, Box 1991.

³⁷ See, for example, the correspondence in FDRP, Official File, Box 300.

³⁸ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal* (Boston, 1957), 346-347.

Hoover. So sincere were his beliefs in these respects that he saw no inconsistency in seeking nomination on a Democratic ticket espousing a New Deal platform. This, in turn, demonstrates that Pinchot was a reformer by conviction and a politician by necessity. An idealist with limited understanding and appreciation for the art of practical party politics, he was motivated more by the desire to achieve certain results than by the methods of accomplishment.

On the other hand, an explanation for Pinchot's aversion to Democratic personnel in Pennsylvania must be more speculative. The nature of his success in the twenties suggests the skill of an opportunist; in 1934, when he recognized that his "Republican Career" was coming to an end, he sought Democratic support, which Guffey thwarted, as his only means of political survival. More for revenge and possible Republican support in 1936 than for fear of Guffey's corruption of his Progressive gains, he reverted to the GOP fold.

With equal justification, however, it might be argued that Pinchot at all times was motivated by the reform spirit. When he saw such a need, he unhesitatingly leaped into the fray without regard for the amenities of party conduct. This had been true in the Ballinger dispute and in the 1922, 1926, and 1930 battles with the Pennsylvania bosses. In the final analysis, historical perspective tends to support his contention that Guffey, Earle, Lawrence, and others were Democratic counterparts of Vare, Mellon, Atterbury, and Grundy. To him they represented the potential liquidation of his long-standing gains against political machines and monopolistic corporations. Where Pinchot had initially accepted the New Deal as a bold and promising program in social engineering, he recoiled from this position in 1934 when he concluded that its implementation in Pennsylvania was accompanied by machine politics similar in character to those that his reform spirit had been battling since the Progressive era.

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