

The Wisconsin State Journal

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The Rows Hoed and to Be Hoed

This week's Wisconsin primary election proved—among other things—that political contests are won by hard work. It also proved that when individual hard work is coordinated, through some form of political organization, victories can be won even against tough odds.

By and large, The State Journal is well satisfied with the 1950 primary election. Voters in both the Republican and Democratic columns nominated, in most cases, candidates who fairly represent the principles and who will work for the goals sought by the two parties.

That makes the task of the voter easier in November.

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Don't Get Cocky

The primary results should make neither Republicans nor Democrats over-confident about what will be the outcome of the general election.

In the primary, more voters cast their ballots in the Republican column than in the Democratic, but that is traditional in Wisconsin.

If GOP workers become overly-impressed by their numerical superiority in this week's vote, and let down in their work and their efforts to elect their ticket, they will be making a mistake.

They should, as a matter of fact, observe soberly that Democrats increased their share of the total primary vote from about 18 per cent two years ago to about 28 per cent in 1950.

On the other hand, Republicans need not become panic-stricken by this development, nor should the Democrats rely on these figures as an indication of Fair Deal victory in November.

An increase in the size of the Democratic primary vote was forecast. It was as certain as the flowers in spring, and the reason is not hard to find. The Democrats staged a red-hot four-way U. S. senatorial contest. In addition, Democrats had twice as many county and legislative slates in the field this year as they had two years ago. The increase in the number of voters attracted to the Democratic ballot was automatic.

November, however, is another story.

Victory will go to the party—and the candidates—who do the most work and do the best job of telling their story to the voters in language they understand.

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Two Examples

Dane county saw two excellent examples of the way in which hard work and personalized campaigning pays off in politics.

In the second assembly district, William Proxmire defeated the vet-

eran John Blaska in the Democratic primary. Blaska is a well-known farmer and a familiar name to the county's voters, but he was too busy with his farm work to do any campaigning.

Proxmire has lived in his assembly district only 18 months, but won the nomination by spending every waking hour at the job of cornering votes.

In the third Dane county assembly district, the veteran Rudy Roethlisberger was defeated for the Republican nomination by Mrs. Mildred Ryerson, a housewife. Roethlisberger staged a good campaign, but Mrs. Ryerson's was better, for it was a campaign in which her many friends joined in a door-to-door, house-to-house, telephone-to-telephone job of "selling" her as a candidate.

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Fun With Figures

The rather unusual interpretation put on the election by the Capital Times is intriguing.

The Times, naturally, bears a strong prejudice against Walter Kohler, who was endorsed by Republican party workers as their candidate for governor. The Times adds the votes that were cast for Len Schmitt, who opposed Kohler in the GOP primary, to the total vote cast for the Thompson and Greene, the two Democratic contenders, and says that these were "anti-Kohler" votes. The Times thus contends that there were 300,000 "anti-Kohler" votes, with only 256,000 for him.

Well, that's one way of looking at it. But let's apply the Times' logic and arithmetic to two of its own candidates—Carl Thompson and Tom Fairchild.

Thompson drew about 125,000 votes. The other three candidates for governor drew a total of 431,000 votes. Therefore voters, according to the Times' own argument, cast 431,000 "anti-Thompson" ballots.

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To apply Capital Times' mathematics to the Fairchild senatorial candidacy would make it even more embarrassing.

Mr. Fairchild attracted 56,000 votes. The five other major candidates for the U. S. senatorial nominations attracted a total of 492,000 ballots. These—by the Times' standards—were "anti-Fairchild" votes.

And if one wanted to carry this to the Times' extreme, it could be pointed out that Fairchild received only 56,000 votes while his three Democratic opponents polled a total of 104,000. Fairchild got only about a third of the total Democratic votes cast, and thus represents a minority in that party.

All of which goes to show you can "prove" anything with figures.