

REFLECTIONS

It all began one Fall Day in 1951, when I received an invitation from Governor Sherman Adams to attend a meeting of a group that was to be formed, called The 100 Club, with a view toward considering the candidacy of the then NATO Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower for President of the United States. This was the very first year that the New Hampshire Primary was to be the "first in the Nation", and in which a "beauty contest" was to be held for the Presidential candidates, and for the election of Delegates, either Pledged to a candidate, Favorable to a candidate, or Unpledged.

Governor Adams informed The 100 Club that Senator Styles Bridges was soon to make a trip to Europe to discuss the candidacy and the possibility of Dwight Eisenhower running for the Presidency on the Republican Ticket. In the meantime, we were to organize in order to show support, and to give encouragement if, in fact, General Eisenhower might consider making the run. Senator Bridges made his trip to Belgium and came back with a favorable impression that the General would soon resign as NATO Commander and seek the Presidency against Robert Taft.

My assignment, as a young Legislator, was to be a Town Chairman, and organize Carroll County. From that experience, I soon became hooked on Presidential politics and participated for the next thirty years. General Eisenhower ran in New Hampshire and won handily over Robert Taft, thanks largely to the superb organization by Governor Adams and Styles Bridges. The re-election of President Eisenhower in 1956 was run mainly from the Headquarters of the Republican State Committee, and I joined the staff of the State Committee in order to work for his re-election.

In 1960, the Vice President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, showed his New Hampshire popularity by sweeping the New Hampshire Primary, with Wesley Powell as his Chairman, and I served as Chief Executive Officer for the campaign, and after the nomination, as his New England Coordinator. Nixon was defeated and many of us were very bitter about the electoral process, feeling that irregularities in Illinois cost him the Presidency. Years later, I had the opportunity to reminisce with him about that campaign, and I know he shared those same feelings, but he said at the time, to contest the Illinois election might be very divisive at a time when international crises might soon be upon us. In reflection, he was right.

In 1964, I was invited to fly to Washington and met with Senator Goldwater and Norris Cotton and, together with House Majority Leader Walter Peterson, we were invited to take charge of New Hampshire's Goldwater efforts. The very first informal polls indicated a 61% favorable rating for Senator Goldwater. However, it was all down hill from there. His national staff was hastily assembled and was long on dedication, but very short on the national issues and it appeared to be insensitive to social concerns. If commitment and organization could win a campaign, this had to be the one, as the New Hampshire volunteers worked long and hard. However, the combativeness of the conservative policies of Senator Goldwater, and the liberal policies of Governor Rockefeller soon developed an animosity between the candidates that was politically devastating, but great fodder for the national press. As the two candidates attacked each other, the void was filled by Henry Cabot Lodge, our neighbor from Massachusetts who, not only swept the "beauty contest", but took every Delegate to the National Convention.

