



From T. H. Russell, *Life and Work of Theodore Roosevelt*, 1919

Just before setting forth on a fast-paced western speaking tour, Theodore Roosevelt opened the Fourth Liberty Loan Drive in Baltimore, Maryland, on September 28, 1918.

The Last Round-up

by James F. Vivian

Theodore Roosevelt died suddenly on January 6, 1919, in his sixty-first year. Just three months earlier, when by all observers' accounts he seemed "as strenuous as ever," Roosevelt paid his last visit to the north central plains. Roosevelt had not been in the region, which had been so familiar to him as a young man, since his last bid for the presidency under the banner of the Progressive party in 1912. Mostly forgotten today, the rapid trip west hurriedly developed in the middle of September 1918. Although taken in part to satisfy popular demand attendant on the Fourth Liberty Loan drive of World War I, the trip also demonstrated Roosevelt's desire to blunt the challenge posed by the Nonpartisan League (NPL) and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the Northwest during the closing weeks of the off-year state and congressional election campaigns.

Theodore Roosevelt Confronts the Nonpartisan League, October 1918

The NPL and IWW were American permutations of the Socialist creed. The NPL, created in North Dakota in 1915, spread like a prairie fire across the northern and central plains. It hoped to assist free-enterprise agriculture with legislated state-owned grain terminals, flour mills, and banks. The IWW, founded in Chicago in 1905, fomented a militant labor unionism among unskilled factory workers for whom the capitalist system equated with exploitation wages and grim working conditions. A series of successful strikes in about 1910 swelled IWW ranks, making it a credible force among western miners, lumberjacks, and stevedores. The NPL capitalized on recent political reforms in order to manipulate primary elections and popular initiatives, whereas the IWW shunned political involvement in favor of tactical labor actions. Both the NPL and the IWW, however, found it difficult to adapt to the patriotic fervor in the country that developed after the United States declared war on the Central Powers on April 6, 1917. Soon the NPL and the IWW were accused of interfering with or opposing the war effort.

Roosevelt joined the accusers. "It may be the highest duty to oppose a war before it is brought on," he had written in 1900, "but once the country is at war, the man who fails to support it with all possible heartiness comes perilously near being a traitor."¹ By the end of August 1918, however, Roosevelt had committed himself to only one appearance on behalf of the Liberty Loan effort and was intent on limiting his participation to no more than three cities close to his Long Island, New York, home. During the next few days, he refused invitations from Philadelphia and Kansas City, Missouri. "I wish to make only a few speeches," he informed a friend in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on Septem-

ber 4, "and just where they are to be made I am not yet able to say." He wrote that he would be "going over the matter very carefully" in a few days with Will H. Hays, chairman of the Republican National Committee.²

By mid September, as a result of several recommendations, appeals, and pressures directed at him, Roosevelt reversed his public plans from a few brief appearances in nearby cities to a series of demanding commitments across distant "states where I have not recently spoken." First came a letter from Gifford Pinchot, a trusted advisor heading a special farm-study group, who emphasized the importance of the farmers' votes in the Midwest and plains states if the Republican party were to retain command of the national electorate. In 1916, with President Woodrow Wilson seeking re-election, the Democratic party carried every state west of the Missouri Valley except South Dakota and Oregon. Pinchot emphasized to Roosevelt that Republicans sorely needed an able and prominent spokesman to present attractive, useful policies. Porter J. McCumber, North Dakota's senior senator and a farmer in his own right, had been mentioned, Pinchot wrote; but without assistance his lone voice probably lacked the requisite stature.³

The next day, September 5, Roosevelt kept an appointment with Thomas A. Marlow, Republican national committeeman from Montana since 1911. The cracks in the party structure that had been caused by the Taft-Roosevelt political quake in 1912 had not been fully repaired. Nevertheless, Marlow talked of a "completely reunited" Republican party and its "excellent" prospects for unseating Democratic incumbent Senator Thomas J. Walsh and for electing the state's two representatives. He believed that Roosevelt could accomplish "an immense amount of good" should he consent to visit the Northwest and simultaneously help thwart Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin's third-party challenge. Rankin, whose anti-war vote in 1917 had cost her the Republican nomination to a second term, announced an independent bid for the Senate with strong NPL support. Marlow also urged Dr. Oscar M. Lanstrum, the party's nomi-

1. Albert B. Hart and Herbert R. Ferleger, eds., *Theodore Roosevelt Cyclopedia* (New York: Roosevelt Memorial Association, 1941), 631; William H. Harbaugh, *Power and Responsibility: The Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1961), 504-505. The author gratefully acknowledges the research support provided by the Graduate School, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

2. Thomas J. Preston, Jr., to J. M. Stricker, September 3, 1918, Reel 291, Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. [Roosevelt Papers]; Roosevelt to A. P. Moore and G. W. Pepper, September 4, 1918, J. M. Stricker to M. Andrews, September 4, 1918, Reel 407, Roosevelt Papers. Preston was chairman of the National Security League, a patriotic organization with strong Republican ties, and Stricker was Roosevelt's private secretary.

3. Gifford Pinchot to Will Hays, September 4, 1918, Hays to Pinchot, September 10, 1918, Reel 291, Roosevelt to G. W. Pepper, September 16, 1918, Reel 408, Roosevelt Papers; M. Nelson McGahey, *Gifford Pinchot* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1960), 269-270.

4. T. A. Marlow to Roosevelt, September 14, 1918, Reel 292; J. M. Stricker to T. A. Marlow, September 19, 1918, Reel 408; Will Hays to Roosevelt, September 19, 1918, Reel 292, Roosevelt Papers. See also Jules A. Karlin, *Joseph M. Dixon of Montana*, vol. 2 (Missoula: University of Montana Publications in History, 1974), 3-4, and Joan Hoff Wilson, "'Peace is a Woman's Job . . .': Jeannette Rankin and American Foreign Policy: The Origins of Her Pacifism," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 30 (January 1980): 39.



At Minneapolis, on his return from the West in September 1918, Roosevelt spoke to five thousand munitions workers on behalf of the Liberty Loan drive.

nated alternative to Rankin, to press the same appeal with Chairman Hays in a separate private conference.⁴

In the meantime, Hays had received some "very pronounced" findings from a party agent who had spent three weeks in Minnesota and the Dakotas, and Roosevelt had prepared his latest weekly editorial to the *Kansas City Star*. Entitled "Good Luck to the Anti-Bolshevists of Kansas," the editorial revived the tentative attack on the NPL he had ventured in October 1917.⁵ Congressman Addison T. Smith of Twin Falls, Idaho, and E. T. Peterson, the editor of the *Wichita, Kansas, Beacon*, both wrote Roosevelt, expressing their personal thanks for the piece. Smith asked permission to insert it in the *Congressional Record* for broadcast distribution; the Republican Congressional Committee would disseminate it "wherever the Non-Partisan League is getting a hold." Smith noted that in Idaho the NPL had secured the nomination of its candidates on the Democratic ticket while also

5. H. G. Hogan to Roosevelt, September 18, 1918, Reel 292, Roosevelt Papers; Robert P. Wilkins, "Theodore Roosevelt and 'Dacotah': A Mutual Disillusionment," *North Dakota Quarterly* 26 (Spring 1958): 62-63. Roosevelt's contract with the *Star* dated from September 1917.

endorsing the re-election of William E. Borah, the incumbent anti-war Republican senator. Glad to be of any "assistance in the warfare on the non-Partisan League and all other agencies of anti-Americanism or bolshevism," Roosevelt approved Smith's request.⁶

Peterson explained his decision to set the *Beacon* against the NPL. The League, Peterson wrote Roosevelt, threatened no important inroads in Kansas, where both Republicans and Democrats opposed it. But he feared for the NPL's continued success to the north and west and enclosed four "insidious" pages from the September 9 issue of the weekly *Nonpartisan Leader*, the NPL's official voice, to illustrate his contention. The longest selection assayed Roosevelt's post-presidential dealings with Europe's "autocratic" heads-of-state, notably Kaiser Wilhelm II. Roosevelt's deportment and amiability, the *Leader* concluded, hardly conformed "to a strict standard of real patriotism and true democracy." Worse, according to a plausible rumor that Peterson had received from an informed but unnamed source, the Wilson Administration seemed to have "warmed up" to the League.⁷

His honor and reputation affronted, Roosevelt shed whatever slight hesitation lingered. He readied for action, virtually ignoring the flu epidemic, which had reached its most virulent phase. A plain reading of the League's press, Roosevelt approvingly replied, made it "perfectly evident that the Administration has struck hands with the non-Partisan League." Indeed, Roosevelt added, confirmation of this development did not stop at the tacit endorsement given the NPL by certain White House staff, notably George Creel, head of the Committee on Public Information. Roosevelt claimed in a cryptic closing comment to "have every direct evidence as to the alliance."⁸

6. A. T. Smith to Roosevelt, September 19, 1918, Reel 292; Roosevelt to Smith, September 24, 1918, Reel 408, Roosevelt Papers. Burton L. French, the second Idaho congressman, later requested the same permission for use in his own re-election campaign, B. L. French to Roosevelt, September 28, 1918, Reel 293, Roosevelt Papers.

7. E. T. Peterson to Roosevelt, September 12, 1918, Reel 292, Roosevelt Papers; *Nonpartisan Leader* (St. Paul, Minnesota), September 9, 1918.

8. Roosevelt to E. T. Peterson, September 19, 1918, Reel 408, Roosevelt Papers. Wilson's actual relations with the NPL, based more on interesting possibilities than firm bonds, are explored in Seward W. Livermore, *Politics Is Adjourned: Woodrow Wilson and the War Congress, 1916-1918* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 153-158; and Edward C. Blackorby, *Prairie Rebel: The Public Life of William Lemke* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 79-80.

On September 14, Marlow happily confirmed receipt of Roosevelt's telegraphed promise to speak in Montana on Saturday, October 5.⁹ Five days later, on September 19, a batch of messages established an itinerary for the week lying between a speaking engagement in Baltimore, Maryland, on September 28, sponsored by the National Security League, and his appearance in Montana. Roosevelt would be in Columbus, Ohio, on September 30, Wichita on October 2, and Kansas City on October 3. Host groups made all local arrangements, understanding that Roosevelt refused to deliver more than one main address at each point and preferred a short rest during the day. The itinerary remained fixed despite numerous requests in every state crossed and some adjacent ones for additional visits. Although disappointed that Idaho had been omitted from the tour, Congressman Smith volunteered a note of encouragement, reiterating his heightened concern over the NPL's studied exploitation of the two-party system.¹⁰

Themes and rhetoric pertinent to the Liberty Loan objective suitably dominated Roosevelt's speeches in Columbus, Wichita, and Kansas City. These were extemporaneous statements, well practiced from repeated deliveries at least since the United States' declaration of war on April 6, 1917. Although his volatile temperament prevented him from completely stifling partisan comments critical of profiteers, conscientious objectors, striking workmen, and much of President Wilson's peace program, Roosevelt stressed that the victorious prosecution of the war depended on national unity, personal sacrifice, and patriotism. In a whistle-stop greeting to a reported ten thousand people gathered in Alliance, Nebraska, on October 4, Roosevelt urged support of the bond drive and remarked that in the future "no other nation must look cross-eyed at us."¹¹

Roosevelt relied on local political leaders to select the most suitable sites for his addresses. In Montana, Marlow's group chose Billings over Butte. Billings lay closer to the center of NPL activity and farmer agitation, while Butte had been

occupied by federal troops in mid September under orders to suppress a wildcat miners' strike allegedly instigated by the IWW. The speech Roosevelt presented in Billings had been drafted beforehand and mailed on September 25 to Lanstrum and former Senator Joseph M. Dixon of Missoula for comment. Dixon was Roosevelt's personal friend whose participation at Billings during the visit he thought to be of "capital importance."¹² The speech repeated several of Roosevelt's fulminations against the NPL, including a charge against comforting and aiding German spies, which he had lately introduced in "Spies and Slackers," a Roosevelt editorial published in the *Kansas City Star* the week before his departure for the West. The speech differed in the severity of its condemnation, and its most telling section had been inserted by hand, probably after he mailed it to Lanstrum and Dixon and before he delivered it. Nevertheless, Roosevelt had intended at Billings to label the NPL's leadership as treasonous, using evidence the Department of Justice had collected for prosecuting its espionage and sedition case against the IWW.¹³

During 1918, other events had focused public attention in Montana on the war effort. The reorganized Montana Council of Defense, for example, had concentrated a propaganda campaign against the IWW and NPL for their lukewarm commitment to American participation in the war. The Council's county and local branch units, called Loyalty Leagues and headed by Liberty Committees, often zealously personalized the campaign, stigmatizing anyone but an avowed patriot as an enemy sympathizer, collaborator, or worse. Public hearings proliferated across the state, casting a pall on the exercise of democratic freedoms and civil liberties. Hysteria intermittently gripped the population. A particularly ugly incident occurred in Miles City in late May, when A. J. McGlynn, an NPL organizer, suffered a brutal beating for having openly

9. T. A. Marlow to Roosevelt, September 14, 1918, Reel 292, Roosevelt Papers.

10. J. M. Stricker to J. P. Sullivan, September 19, 1918, Stricker to E. E. Violette, September 19, 1918, Reel 408; L. N. Kirkwood to Roosevelt, September 20, 1918, Reel 292; Will Hays to W. A. White, September 22, 1918, A. T. Smith to Roosevelt, September 24, 1918, Reel 293, Roosevelt Papers.

11. Livermore, *Politics Is Adjourned*, 214; *Billings Gazette* (Montana), October 5, 1918; *New York Times*, October 5, 1918.

12. K. Ross Toole, *Twentieth-Century Montana: A State of Extremes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 185; Arnon Gutfeld, *Montana's Agony: Years of War and Hysteria, 1917-1921* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1979), 73; Roosevelt to O. M. Lanstrum and J. M. Dixon, September 25, 1918, Reel 408, Roosevelt Papers.

13. Ralph Stout, ed., *Roosevelt in the Kansas City Star* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), 221-224; Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 433-437. Roosevelt's amended speech can be found in Reel 424, Series 5A, Roosevelt Papers.



MHS Photograph Archives

The Nonpartisan League's program attracted farmers—such as these who met in Wibaux, Montana, in 1917—who sought political redress of economic problems they faced on the dry northern plains.

disputed the accuracy of anti-German reports and rumors. Billings, a hub of NPL organizing activity, was not immune.¹⁴

Roosevelt's pending arrival in Billings was announced locally on September 24. The city skimped on nothing to create a memorable reception. Not only was the news widely publicized, attracting visitors from Wyoming, Idaho, and elsewhere, but the city also congratulated itself that "never in its history has [it] been decorated on so elaborate a scale." Bunting, flags, and Roosevelt posters covered practically every available space. The city center was barricaded to automobile traffic and businesses were asked to close for the afternoon. Roosevelt's old cattle brand, the Maltese Cross, had been designated

the logo for the occasion and was displayed on everything from "Roosevelt Day" banners to table napkins, bandanas, and umbrellas.¹⁵

Roosevelt reached Billings on schedule at 7:45 in the morning. Serving as an escort was a five-man delegation of city fathers and Republican leaders, including Marlow, who had boarded Roosevelt's train at the coaling station in Newcastle, Wyoming, the previous evening. Dixon and four others formally welcomed him on a bracing Indian-summer day. Roosevelt was treated to a breakfast of fresh mountain trout; a tour of the principal sights, including the sugar-beet factory; a modified rodeo staged by a company of cowboys drawn from the Miles City area; and a nostalgic "cowboy mess" at the evening meal, complete with chuckwagon and pit-roasted beef. A delegation of fifty businessmen and the Amalgamated Copper Company band represented Butte.¹⁶

14. Nancy R. Fritz, "The Montana Council of Defense" (M.A. thesis, University of Montana, Missoula, 1966), 3-4, 76-79, 84-88.

15. *Helena Independent* (Montana), September 25, 1918; *Billings Gazette*, October 3, October 6, 1918.

16. *Billings Gazette*, October 6, 1918; *Butte Miner* (Montana), October 8, 1918. Others in Roosevelt's escort were F. B. Connelly, president of the Billings Chamber of Commerce; state Senator J. F. Edwards of Rosebud County; O. M. Harvey, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee; and Joseph A. Hanlon of Billings: *Billings Gazette*, October 5, 1918.

Soon after his arrival, Roosevelt strained the prepared schedule by insisting on a visit with Paul McCormick, a successful rancher he had known in territorial days who was seriously ill. He also publicly embraced former sheriff Jack B. Hawkins, under whom Roosevelt had once served as deputy and whose two sons had also gone to war. He spent an hour extolling patriotism to massed schoolchildren, endorsed the suffrage cause before an assembled audience of women, extended special greetings to surviving neighbors and friends from his ranching days, and declared the Northern Hotel marvelously improved from the combination saloon and bunkhouse he had first patronized thirty-five years earlier. He acknowledged Marlow's efforts in suggesting the trip, praised the city on its growth and progress, and, after taking Republican officials and workers into his confidence during the early evening, departed at 7:25, pronouncing the entire day "just bully."¹⁷

His main address to an overflow crowd of more than seventy-five hundred in the city's new auditorium began at midafternoon and excluded minors. It merited national attention and underscored his admitted predilection for speaking to the Liberty Loan "always in connection with some other speech."¹⁸ In this instance, the ostensible purpose of the speech had been rendered superfluous by the fact that, as Roosevelt himself advertised, Montana's Liberty Loan quota had already been oversubscribed. Consequently, the statement shortly turned from an appeal for funds to a discussion of Americanism, loyalty, and what Roosevelt described as the public vigilance required to avert the twin dangers that were seemingly inherent in all democracies: anarchy and tyranny. Farmers' grievances were real, he said frankly, and warranted rapid amelioration. Public policy had not been adequate in the past, Roosevelt admitted, and officials at all levels could be more responsive to the agricultural sector. He suggested federal supervision of grain elevators and flour mills as a reasonable start.¹⁹

"State socialism," Roosevelt warned, offered no solution. He confessed that he had been favorably disposed toward the NPL at first and

inclined "to welcome it, to believe in it, and to cooperate with it." But the League's state convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, in March 1918 quickly changed his mind when the proceedings nearly duplicated those of the Socialist party convention. Here, Roosevelt decided, the NPL had revealed its true motives: "to acquire power by playing the game of sedition and disloyalty, by attempting to influence the spirit of greed and of class hatred." Further, it seemed to Roosevelt that the NPL's leadership threatened "this country with evils analogous to those which came from Bolshevism abroad and I.W.W.ism at home." The NPL, he exclaimed, was "trying to do what Lenine [sic] and Trotzky [sic] have done to Russia."²⁰

So serious a charge, Roosevelt continued, required proof. The IWW had recently been convicted on multiple violations of one federal statute. He then offered a facsimile of a letter dated April 5, 1917, from Arthur LeSueur, League organizer and manager of its Minnesota branch, to William D. Haywood, secretary-treasurer of the IWW. Roosevelt introduced the letter, which had numbered among the government's exhibits in the IWW trial, to document both organizations' connections to international socialism and to arraign the League, contrary to its professions, for secretly opposing the war.²¹ In a statement calculated for national quotation, Roosevelt thundered, "There is not a German abroad or a pro-German at home who does not wish success to the NPL under its present control and to the IWW." Both were "anti-American . . . they play the game of autocratic governments that are hostile to the United States, and they should be repudiated by every [proud] American." "I have come to preach today," he said in closing, "the two doctrines of straightout, unqualified Americanism which will submit neither to foreign aggression nor domestic treason."²²

Roosevelt said little about Montana, its election, or other affairs, perhaps because of its customary Democratic orientation. He averred that had it "not been for the dozen years I lived and worked in the Northwest, I would never have lived to be president of the United States," yet he endorsed candidates and party only by associ-

17. *Billings Gazette*, October 6, 1918; Kathryn Wright, "Old McCormick Home at Billings Becomes Victim of City's Growth," *Montana Magazine of History* 4 (Spring 1954): 54.

18. Elting E. Morison, ed., *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, vol. 8 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954-1957), 1242; *New York Times*, October 6, 1918.

19. *Billings Gazette*, October 6, 1918.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Helena Independent*, September 19, 1918.

22. *Billings Gazette*, October 6, 1918. On LeSueur, see Jackson K. Putnam, "The Socialist Party in North Dakota, 1902-1918" (M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, 1956), 177-178.

Here's the Letter Which Shows Townley Went Into Partnership With I. W. W. Leader to Capture the Farmers' Vote for the Socialists and Wobblies.

The People's College
 FORT SCOTT, KANSAS
 "For the education of the workers by the workers."
 April 5, 1917

EUGENE V. DEEZ, Chairman ARTHUR LEDEUR, President

ELVA A. GEORGE, Vice President
 Y. A. McCLAREN, Treasurer

LAURA L. REEDS, Secretary
 MARIAN WHEATON, Editor College News

Mr. Wm. D. Haywood
 164 W. Washington St.,
 Chicago, Ills.

*Townley's
 Right-hand man
 in full charge
 of
 Nonpartisan
 League
 Matters*

In the pentstionary for sedition
 and conspiracy against
 the United States of America

Fellow Worker:-

Have just returned from Des Moines, Iowa, and am very glad to be able to report that all of the cases there are disposed of favorably and the boys at liberty. I think the Defense Committee is satisfied with the handling of the case. Of course, it was not one in which any labor principle was involved, and, therefore, the fight was simply made to get the boys out.

My expenses for the trip were \$34.30 and if you will send me check for that it will clean the matter up.

How are you coming with the Minnesota proposition. I hope you don't start anything until the year has expired. This damned war business is going to make it mighty hard to do good organization work or good radical work of any kind, but I think the fight should be now centered against spy bills and conscription.

Have you heard from Pennsylvania with Powers of Attorney?

Yours for industrial freedom,
Arthur LeSueur

Billings Gazette, October 6, 1918, p. 5

On October 6, 1918, while journalists argued the merits or follies of Roosevelt's western tour, the *Billings Gazette* reprinted the "LeSueur Letter," which purportedly documented the NPL plan to join with the IWW and urge radical ideas and action on the farmers.

ation. He mentioned only one economic issue, the farm problem. He cited no names except LeSueur and Haywood. In all, the speech embodied his considered judgment on the NPL in the last political initiative of his life. "No patriotic American can afford to support" the NPL, Roosevelt warned, and "any politician" who identified with it "ought to be treated as discredited."²³

23. *Billings Gazette*, October 6, 1918.

No speech had been scheduled at Bismarck, North Dakota, when the Northern Pacific Railroad's train No. 4 stopped at ten o'clock the following Sunday morning. Nevertheless, a two-hour advance notice had been sufficient to muster about two thousand townspeople at the station, some of them NPL demonstrators carrying placards. Roosevelt reluctantly agreed to speak briefly from the rear observation platform. Sylvanus M. Ferris, a former partner of Roosevelt's at the

Medora ranch and now a bank president in Dickinson, stood at his side. Roosevelt recounted moments of his thirteen-year residence in the region, including an anecdote recalled from his experience as deputy sheriff. This led him pointedly to assert that there was no place in America for class warfare, social division, and callous selfishness. Farmers' complaints, however valid, did not justify the "false" and "mischievous" cures proposed by the NPL, which had yet to explain how it could sincerely represent the mutual interests of both rural and urban citizens, merchants, lawyers, and others alike. The NPL had not only affiliated with the IWW, Roosevelt told his audience, but also behaved unscrupulously in "pandering to . . . the base spirit of greed and envy and ignorance and class hatred."²⁴

Other passenger stops en route eastward, including one at Fargo, generated no important comments. By pre-arrangement, four Minnesota Republican leaders joined Roosevelt at Detroit Lakes during the afternoon, accompanying him for the journey into Minneapolis where he was met by the Liberty Loan committee. Roosevelt's original itinerary had him returning directly to New York City by October 9. On September 27, however, on the eve of his departure, Minnesota's Republican leadership convinced him to spend October 7 in the Twin Cities. The NPL had targeted the state in its expansionist drive, running a broad slate of candidates headed by pacifist Republican Congressman Charles A. Lindbergh for governor.²⁵

No fewer than five separate speeches filled Roosevelt's long day there. Throughout, he wore a lapel service pin blinking five stars for the four sons and one son-in-law in uniform and a black armband for the son, his youngest, who had been killed in combat the previous July. In two morning speeches, one to the Civic and Commerce Association and another before 5,000 munitions workers at a local factory, Roosevelt denounced doctrinaire socialism because it lacked a pragmatic potential for respecting the

24. *Bismarck Tribune* (North Dakota), October 7, 1918. Ferris joined Roosevelt at the Dickinson passenger stop and accompanied him to Fargo. *Recorder-Post* (Dickinson, North Dakota), October 11, 1918; and William B. Hennessey, comp., *History of North Dakota* (Bismarck: Bismarck Tribune Company, 1910), 52, contains a contemporary biographical sketch.

25. *Fargo Forum* (North Dakota), October 7, 1918; *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 7, 1918; A. A. D. Rahn to Roosevelt, September 27, 1918, Reel 293; Roosevelt to Stricker, October 3, 1918, Reel 408, Roosevelt Papers.

common good, especially in the United States where all experience ran counter to it. During the afternoon, he launched another attack on the NPL, this one before Republican party workers and friends. He again cited the LeSueur-Haywood letter to connote the "hand and glove" relationship between the League and the IWW. Those attracted by the NPL's artful lures, he said, although doubtless well-intentioned, should know they had been misled and gulled. Loyalty, according to Roosevelt, had become the leading issue in the campaign; "let's insist that this is a nation," he said, "not a polyglot boarding house." He endorsed the entire "regular" Republican ticket. Before his evening departure for Chicago and thence to his New York home, Roosevelt presented two abbreviated versions of his standard Liberty Loan appeal.²⁶

Some political figures, notably in South Dakota and Illinois, hoped to interest Roosevelt in a second western swing before the November elections. It was not to be. Americans south of New York and west of the Allegheny Mountains had seen the colonel for the last time. At home on November 6 he wrote the introduction to his last book, *The Great Adventure*, a collection of recent, modestly revised editorials whose opening chapter again denounced the NPL leadership as "anti-American to the core."²⁷ Five days later, when the armistice finally halted the destruction of Europe, Roosevelt took ill and was not to leave the hospital until Christmas.

Reactions to Roosevelt's foray divided significantly. Predictably, his hosts and admirers, if they felt it necessary to respond at all,²⁸ agreed with the *Minneapolis Tribune* that the tour had been "for the good of the state and community." Roosevelt had appeared "as a stalwart American citizen

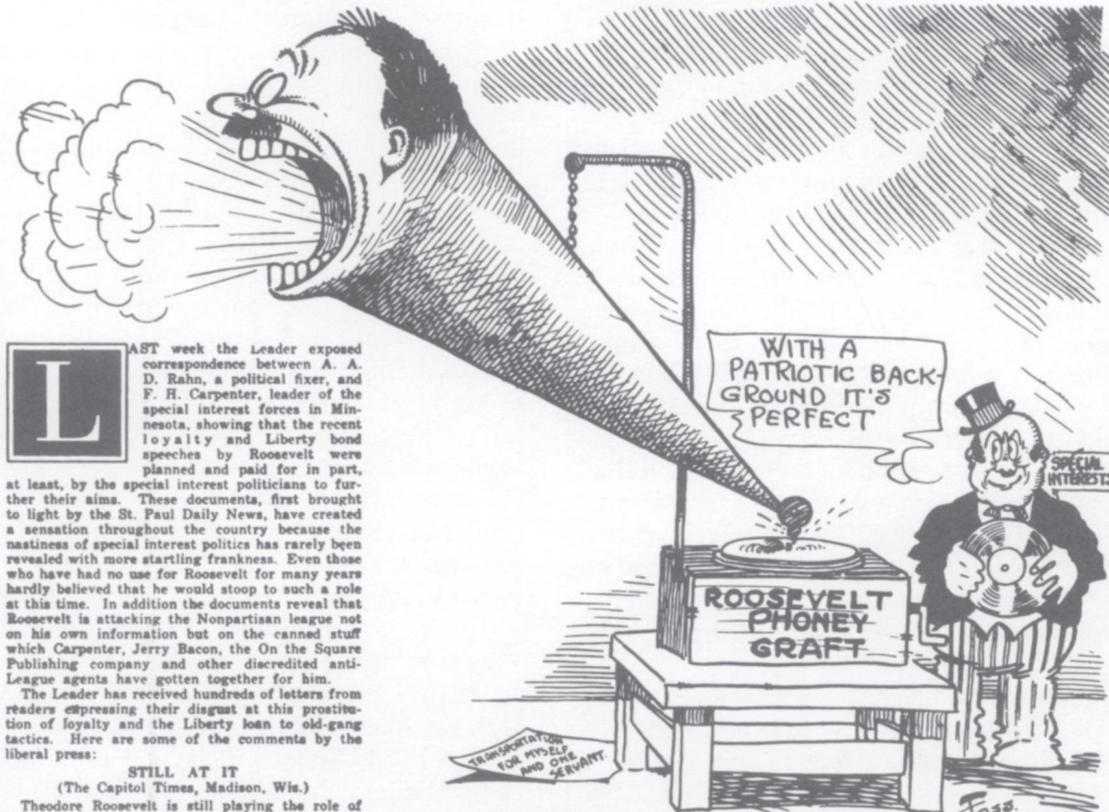
26. *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 8, 1918.

27. W. H. King to Roosevelt, October 10, 1918, Reel 295; Roosevelt to Medill McCormick, November 1, 1918, Reel 409, Roosevelt Papers; Theodore Roosevelt, *The Great Adventure: Present-Day Studies in American Nationalism* (New York: Scribner's, 1918), 41.

28. Several Montana and North Dakota dailies summarized Roosevelt's remarks, sometimes at length, without adding editorial comment: *Butte Miner*, October 6, 1918; *Bismarck Tribune*, October 7, 1918; *Minot Daily News* (North Dakota), October 7, 1918; *Fargo Forum*, October 7, 1918; and *Grand Forks Herald* (North Dakota), October 6, 1918.

Roosevelt Exposure Causes Sensation

Unassailable Evidence That the Anti-Farmer Interests Were Using Roosevelt, the Liberty Loan and Loyalty for Base Ends Is Hard Blow for Gang



LAST week the Leader exposed correspondence between A. A. D. Rahn, a political fixer, and F. H. Carpenter, leader of the special interest forces in Minnesota, showing that the recent loyalty and Liberty bond speeches by Roosevelt were planned and paid for in part, at least, by the special interest politicians to further their aims. These documents, first brought to light by the St. Paul Daily News, have created a sensation throughout the country because the nastiness of special interest politics has rarely been revealed with more startling frankness. Even those who have had no use for Roosevelt for many years hardly believed that he would stoop to such a role at this time. In addition the documents reveal that Roosevelt is attacking the Nonpartisan League not on his own information but on the canned stuff which Carpenter, Jerry Bacon, the On the Square Publishing company and other discredited anti-League agents have gotten together for him.

The Leader has received hundreds of letters from readers expressing their disgust at this prostitution of loyalty and the Liberty loan to old-gang tactics. Here are some of the comments by the liberal press:

STILL AT IT

(The Capitol Times, Madison, Wis.)

Theodore Roosevelt is still playing the role of betraying the progressive movement.

He betrayed the progressive movement in 1912. He unscrupulously ditched the progressives in 1916.

He is evidently getting ready to do the same thing in 1920.

In a speech Saturday night Roosevelt took occasion to denounce the great democratic movement that is now sweeping the wheat fields and prairies of the Northwest.

One of the great forces in this country today for bringing the common people together for intelligent and constructive political action is the Nonpartisan League. It is one of the greatest hopes for bringing redress to classes that have been exploited by sordid business aggregations, organized themselves to the highest power.

Because of the tremendous success of the organization it has incurred the opposition of those who thrive on the abuses which the League plans to eliminate. Wealth and privilege in the Northwest are seeking to smash the League by a black campaign as has ever been waged against any organization.

Roosevelt admits that there are many wrongs to be righted among the farmers of the Northwest. He admits that there are abuses which should be stopped. But when the first serious attempt is made for a movement to remedy these wrongs he proceeds to throw bricks at the plan.

Roosevelt has always done that. He has done nothing but place obstacles in the way of men who have fought the REAL battles of democracy in this country. With all his grandiloquent trumpety and noise about being progressive we have always felt that Roosevelt was a reactionary at heart. Great democratic movements initiated by others never gained the attention of Roosevelt until the momentum was such as to make them attractive political possibilities.

What remedy has Roosevelt to offer for the

This is the way the Roosevelt speeches against the farmers' Nonpartisan League appear to Cartoonist Foss. The documents exposed by the Leader last week show Roosevelt as getting his material direct from the old anti-farmer gang politicians of the Northwest. He is just a big horn bellowing out the lying records which the old gang put on the machine. Very honorable employment for an ex-president, isn't it? The simple truth is that Roosevelt wants a third term and he thinks the special interests are going to be strong enough to give it to him. Honor and truth don't cut much of a figure in the "big object." By its rapid development and its uncompromising stand against the special interests, the League, of course, threatens a special interest victory in 1920 and so becomes the most hated enemy of the third-term hunter.

wrongs that have been committed in the Northwest? Or is he the same egotist who will proclaim that his election as president in 1920 will solve the ills of the farmers?

Our guess is that the farmers long ago discovered that the progressivism of Theodore Roosevelt has been a thin veneer.

If Roosevelt thought for a minute that he could drive the League into his political preserves in 1920 he wouldn't be out attacking it. He never overlooks any political windfall.

Meanwhile it is becoming more and more evident that Roosevelt is to be the candidate of those interests which are against all such democratic movements as have been instituted by the farmers of the Northwest.

THE FALLEN LEADER

(The Grand Forks (N. D.) American.)

Theodore Roosevelt is himself a wealthy man, owning a manorial estate on Long Island and living in the style of an old English squire. How shameful a thing, then, that Colonel Roosevelt should accept contributions from the big financial interests for his speaking tour.

The documents printed in yesterday's American show the close relation between Colonel Roosevelt and the reactionary interests of Minnesota—the same interests that are striving to defeat Governor Frazier in North Dakota. Correspondence between

a Minneapolis millionaire and his lobbyist disclosed the arrangement to bring the ex-president to Minnesota under the camouflage of making a Liberty loan speech. From the moment he arrived in Minneapolis, Colonel Roosevelt was arm-in-arm with the Republican gangsters. Instead of uniting the people by Liberty loan speeches, he sowed dissension by attacking the right of the farmers to organize.

The St. Paul Daily News says: "We should remember that Colonel Roosevelt belongs to a by-gone era when such activities were considered entirely proper, when ANY scheme for achieving the limelight was considered respectable, when no occasion was thought inopportune and no subject too sacred for partisan campaigners to use."

The New Northwest of Missoula, Mont., sees a close connection between the failure of Roosevelt to see real democratic movements at home and his previous lurid praise of what the kaiser stood for:

"Colonel Roosevelt seems to be lacking in intellectual charity. He himself failed to see behind the splendor and pomp of the imperial palace at Berlin. With eyes blinded to all these great outstanding facts the colonel returned to his own beloved America to assure his countrymen that the kaiser represented the greatest power for peace in the world."

Nonpartisan Leader, October 28, 1918

During October 1918, the *Nonpartisan Leader* made it clear in editorials such as this one that it considered Roosevelt's Liberty Loan tour to be a sham.

loving his country” and “left behind a clearer perception of duty, a better heart to tackle the right and to combat the wrong.” The Montana Loyalty League, thrilled by what the *Billings Gazette* termed his “intense Americanism,” printed 125,000 copies of a five-page handout featuring an abridged verbatim text of the Billings speech. The *Helena Independent* listed fifteen NPL candidates who had survived the primaries, recommending that they be purged from the Republican column and inviting Democrats to adopt a similar course.²⁹

Others, however, including some within Roosevelt’s close circle, were skeptical. Gifford Pinchot, for example, doubted the wisdom of mounting a frontal assault on the NPL in its own domain. The movement had grown out of undeniable hardships and had produced a “thoroughly sound” platform. A charge of disloyalty, Pinchot elaborated, seemed ill-advised since no federal indictment had ever been filed against the NPL and most attacks were traceable to “business interests.” He suggested that Roosevelt had risked “much harm” to Republicans, alienating “many thousands” of votes in an apparent defense of “a very restricted number” of local businesses.³⁰

The NPL press concurred in this view, yet for entirely different reasons. Roosevelt had not quite returned to the comforts of home when the independent *St. Paul Daily News* published two letters filched from the internal correspondence of the Minnesota Republican organization. Both dealt with Roosevelt’s visit to Minneapolis, describing possible arrangements for his schedule and a suitably patriotic reception. These involved ingratiating the Adjutant General in order to parade the National Guard and a company of regular army recruits, persuading Roosevelt to speak to the loyalty issue, and defraying his expenses back to New York City. To suspicious League interpreters, the letters merely validated the mutual, undemocratic collusion that existed among supposedly public institutions, vested interests, and the major political parties.³¹

Everywhere the NPL seized the editorial offensive, often duplicating the letters in the same prominent way the opposition press had

reproduced the LeSueur-Haywood exhibit. The fact that the Republican party correspondents included a wealthy lumber dealer and his brother, the chairman of the Minnesota Liberty Loan committee, supplied the League with a dramatic opportunity to magnify its favored theme: Big Business “reactionary interests,” under the “camouflage of . . . a Liberty Loan speech,” the League charged, had been deliberately “gunning for the NPL.” The *Grand Forks American* thought it “shameful” that Roosevelt should join “arm-in-arm with Republican gangsters” to sow “seeds of dissension by attacking the right of farmers to organize.”³² The *Fargo Courier-News* called Roosevelt “a pitiful figure” since becoming “the recognized spokesman of the reactionaries,” “the beneficiaries of special privilege, the lynchers, the mobbists and the profiteers.” In his “lost leadership,” the *Fargo* paper continued, the former president “had set himself up as the boss of the anti-Wilson, anti-progressive elements in the United States.” The *Montana Leader* dismissed Roosevelt as one of the most prominent minions of the “copper crowd,” performing a “usual cave-man tirade against all progress.” It reiterated its support for Wilson, “the scholarly, patient, world-statesman [who] excites the contempt and jealousy of all vain-glorious, pot-hunting politicians.”³³

Throughout the rest of October until the elections, the pace-setting *Nonpartisan Leader* exclaimed that Roosevelt’s “true colors” had been unfurled. Roosevelt had planned to compromise the NPL; instead, he succeeded in exhausting his progressive credentials and demonstrating himself “a reactionary at heart,” eager to “besmirch with disloyalty honest and patriotic citizens” like League members. Even non-admirers, the *Leader* claimed, “hardly believed that he would stoop to such a role” or cater so willingly to “discredited anti-League agents.” Further, the *Leader* triumphantly observed, the disclosure out of St. Paul attested to the “nastiness of special interest politics.” Of the three major news wires, only Hearst’s sympathetic International News Service distributed the story; both the Associated Press and the United Press allegedly boycotted it.³⁴

Roosevelt stood mute before the furor, even though his associates in the region mailed him selected “sensational” samples for his informa-

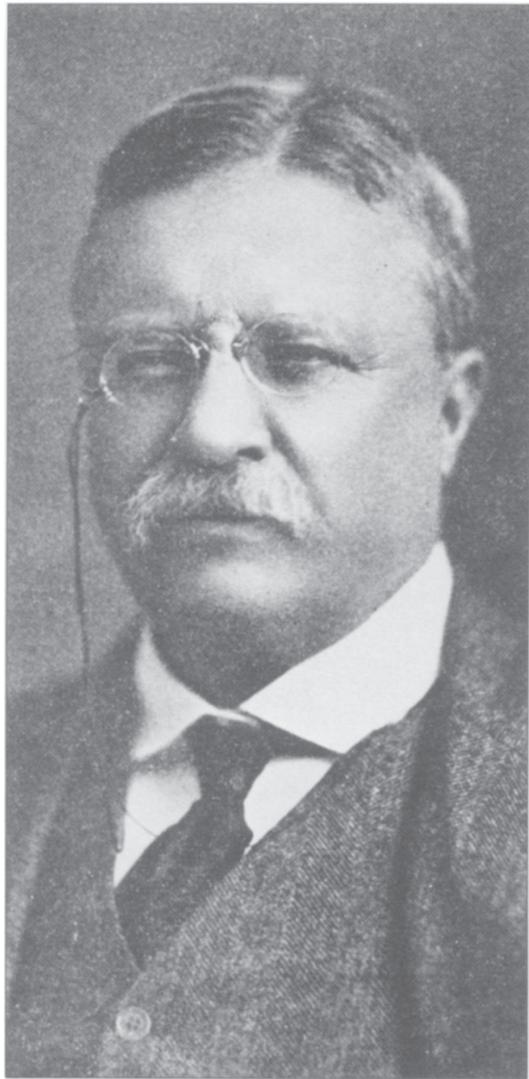
29. *Minneapolis Tribune*, October 9, 1918; T. A. Marlow to Roosevelt, October 12, 1918, Reel 295, Roosevelt Papers; *Helena Independent*, October 8, 1918.

30. Gifford Pinchot to Roosevelt, October 16, 1918, Reel 296, Roosevelt Papers.

31. *St. Paul Daily News*, October 8, 1918.

32. *Grand Forks American* (North Dakota), October 10, 1918.

33. *Courier-News* (Fargo, North Dakota), October 11, 1918; *Montana Leader* (Great Falls), October 12, 1918; *Montana Nonpartisan* (Great Falls), October 26, 1918.



This photograph of Theodore Roosevelt at Columbus, Ohio, on September 26, 1918, was probably the last one taken of him before he died.

tion.³⁵ Privately, however, Roosevelt yielded nothing. He rejected Pinchot's argument for NPL integrity, he bolstered several state committeemen by letter, and he suggested to Chairman Hays that someone at Republican headquarters should be assigned to track "ultra-radical publications" like the League's papers in order that

34. *Nonpartisan Leader*, October 21, October 28, 1918.

35. S. R. Maxwell to Roosevelt, October 15, 1918, Reel 296, Roosevelt Papers.

36. Roosevelt to Will Hays, November 18, 1918, Reel 410; Roosevelt to John L. Amory, October 28, 1918; Roosevelt to F. B. Curtiss, October 15, 1918, Reel 409, Roosevelt Papers; Morison, *Letters*, vol. 8, 1379-1380, 1386-1387, 1391-1392.

their socialist bent might be cited "by chapter and verse." The NPL leadership, he insisted, was "rankly disloyal" and "against all Republicans." "Every one of my old ranchmen and cowboys, without an exception," he confided to Hays, "have told me that the . . . League represents the very worst type of Bolshevik movements in their states . . . and misled a number of excellent farmers." "We may lose by opposing" the NPL, he allowed, but "we are absolutely certain to lose if we fail to oppose it."³⁶

Republicans and the League both anxiously awaited the election returns. "The west has come back with a jump," Roosevelt wrote joyfully, devoting part of an editorial to the defeat of "Townleyism in agricultural districts and I.W.W.ism in labor circles."³⁷ It was true. Except for isolated local and state victories in Montana, where voters elected twenty-one Leaguers to the legislature, and in North Dakota, where the NPL achieved hegemony, Republicans generally staged a remarkable recovery in 1918, enabling the party to gain majority control of Congress. Montana Republicans took charge of the legislature for the first time since 1907. In fact, the election, falling as it did within a week preceding the armistice in Europe, was widely interpreted as a rejection of Wilson's domestic and international leadership. Roosevelt himself lent credence to the viewpoint.³⁸

Stunned and disappointed, the *Nonpartisan Leader* required the balance of November to absorb the "almost inconceivable" outcome. It refused to believe that aspersions of "American imperialists" like Roosevelt accounted for the results, although it conceded that they likely played a part. Rather, the *Leader* blamed the "bad campaigners" among Wilson's staff and spokesmen, his advisors' poor counsel, the unprogressive blocs attached to the Democratic party, and finally the president's own ineptness in publicly calling for the election to Congress of any and all Democrats. This tactical "mistake" cost Wilson some of his liberal credentials, the *Leader* decided, evidently having forgotten about Wilson's aborted western tour that had been planned for late summer 1918. The NPL would continue to support the president, the

37. Roosevelt to Henry C. Lodge, November 14, 1918, in Morison, *Letters*, vol. 8, 1392-1393; Stout, *Roosevelt in the Kansas City Star*, 266.

38. Livermore, *Politics Is Adjourned*, chapter 15; Karlin, *Dixon*, vol. 2, 4; Gutfeld, *Montana's Agony*, 100-101.

paper reported, not because of his being a Democrat, but because of “peace, and economic and reconstruction policies.”³⁹

Roosevelt and the NPL were at loggerheads. Conciliation was impossible, even had it been tried. To Roosevelt, the NPL represented a clear and present danger to the Republic. Confronted by a skillful anti-party movement whose fortunes depended on exploiting primary elections and obtaining control of the locally dominant party apparatus to effect its program, Roosevelt evoked an exaggerated comparison and judged the League a nascent revolutionary force.⁴⁰ He could not understand how the Wilson Administration could abide the NPL, perhaps even embrace it, except that immediate and narrow economic interests might benefit.⁴¹ Roosevelt believed that the NPL was a subversive group intentionally attempting to manipulate established parties for radical and possibly ulterior objectives. He recommended its repudiation, while hinting at the likelihood of suppression.

For its part, the NPL thought itself as no more than a popular pressure group that was trying to advance a basic program irrespective of party. It believed its reform cause was still in the ascendant and was destined to powerfully influence the course of American economic and domestic policy. In March 1919, after again analyzing election tallies from the previous November, the *Nonpartisan Leader* perceived that opposition

victories in Minnesota and South Dakota occurred because many Democrats had voted for Republican candidates. Mistakenly, the *Leader* attributed these losses to Republican disorganization and weakness, not to the League’s vulnerability to fusion tactics.⁴²

Among other national leaders, former president William Howard Taft’s evaluation proved more discerning. In an interview given to an NPL reporter in Bismarck in February 1919, Taft admitted to his limited examination of the League and cursory knowledge of its program. He could offer no proposals for solving the farm problem to compete with those the League advocated, except to say that farmers should welcome others’ assistance. He, like Roosevelt, also described the NPL as “a class movement and therefore un-American.”⁴³

Unlike Roosevelt, however, Taft thought it “too strong” to brand the NPL an extension or affiliate of the IWW. The NPL, he said, compared more closely to the agrarian Populists of the 1890s. This vital difference in premises prefigured a contrast in remedies. Although balking at prophecy, Taft postulated that “ten years from now the name of the NPL will be anathema,” less because of repudiation than removal. A numerical minority everywhere, the NPL could not function successfully as a separate entity if both Republicans and Democrats purposely cooperated and combined against it.⁴⁴

A general strategy had emerged with which to frustrate the NPL in the 1920 elections. It worked. In Montana, North Dakota, and elsewhere, fusion tactics altered the campaigns from the usual Republican/Democratic contests to emotional, often heated pro-League/anti-League struggles. Except in individual instances, anti-League sentiment prevailed, until by 1922 the NPL no longer represented a coherent force.⁴⁵ The object—to wreck the League—remained the same as Roosevelt had defined it. The distinction lay in the method of accomplishing it. 

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39. *Nonpartisan Leader*, December 2, 1918. Wilson’s cancelled western tour is examined in Livermore, *Politics Is Adjourned*, 206-209.

40. Samuel P. Huntington, “The Election Tactics of the Nonpartisan League,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 36 (March 1950): 631-632.

41. Roosevelt to R. A. Pope, November 12, 1918, in Morison, *Letters*, vol. 8, 1391.

42. Blackorby, *Prairie Rebel*, 83; *Nonpartisan Leader*, March 24, 1919.

43. *Nonpartisan Leader*, March 3, 1919. Taft, who well remembered Roosevelt’s controversial trip, faced a small but noisy demonstration during the regular passenger stop at Bismarck while en route to Seattle. *Fargo Forum*, February 14, 1919.

44. *Nonpartisan Leader*, March 3, 1919; Huntington, “Election Tactics,” 631-632.

45. Michael P. Malone and Richard B. Roeder, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 220; Gutfeld, *Montana’s Agony*, 134-135; D. Jerome Tweton, “The Anti-League Movement: The IVA,” in Thomas W. Howard, ed., *The North Dakota Political Tradition* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1981), 96-100; James F. Vivian, “‘Not a Patriotic American Party’: William Howard Taft’s Campaign Against the Nonpartisan League, 1920-1921,” *North Dakota History* 50 (Fall 1983): 4-10.

In the interest
of a square deal
for the farmers

The Nonpartisan Leader

A magazine
that dares to
print the truth

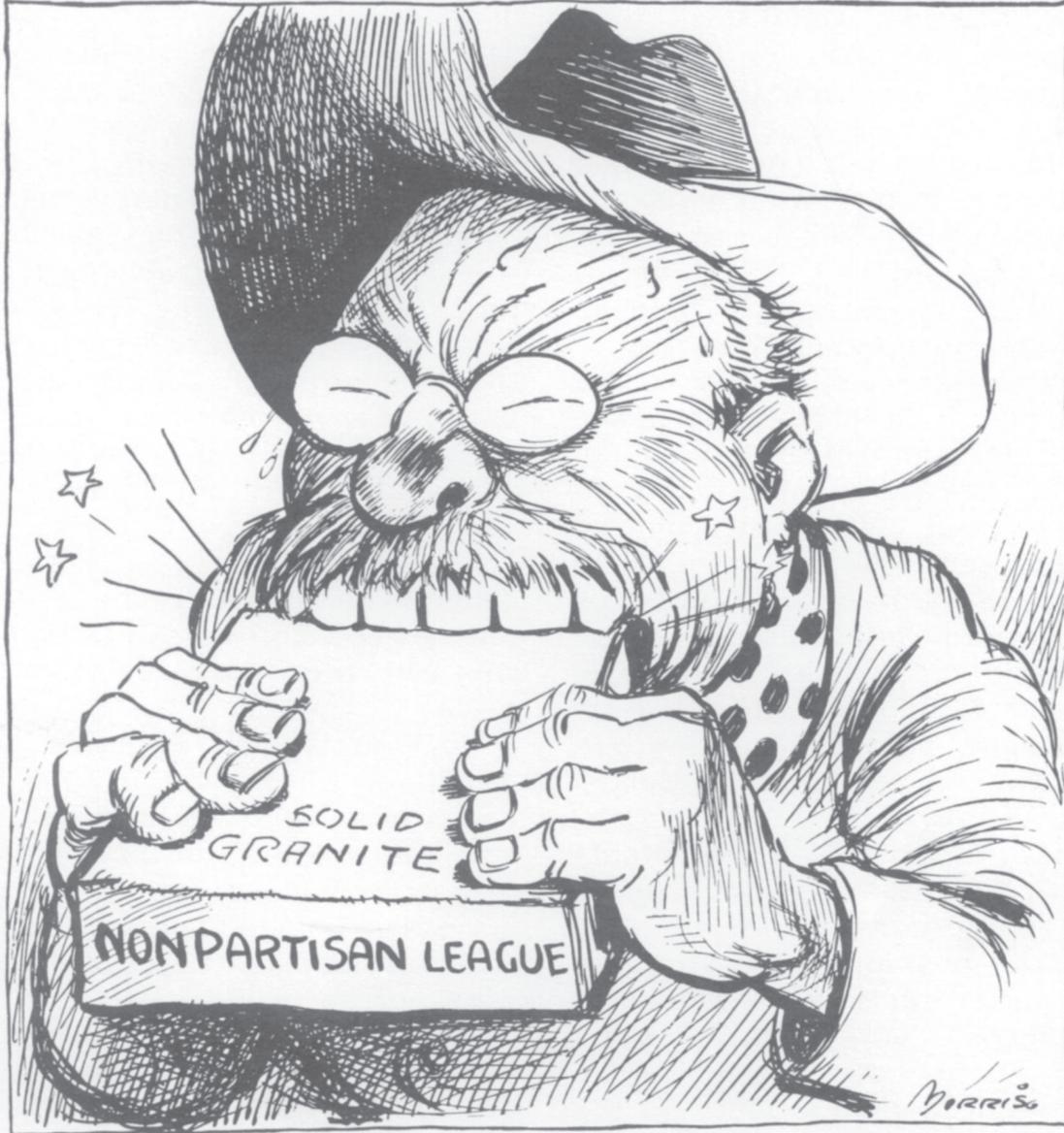
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BITING ON LEAGUE GRANITE



Ever try biting on granite? Well, it's the most unsatisfactory kind of stuff to bite on in the world. You not only fail to make any impression but you set your teeth on edge in nerve-racking fashion. Yet, as Cartoonist Morris here shows, that is just what Roosevelt has been trying to do. Thoroughly scared by the growth of the Nonpartisan league, the special interests ordered him to

—Drawn expressly for the Leader by W. C. Morris
come West to chew up the League. They paid his freight bill and possibly a good deal more, besides promising a third term. But the western farmers who signed up with their brother farmers to fight for better conditions are as hard as granite. The teeth that chewed up the Progressive party have no effect on their common purpose.

On November 25, 1918, the *Nonpartisan Leader* predicted that the "teeth that chewed up the Progressive party" would not dent the NPL.

Nonpartisan Leader, November 25, 1918