

UPTON SINCLAIR OUT FOR GOVERNOR

Starts Energetic Campaign in California and Scares Both Parties.

RUNS AS A DEMOCRAT

Liberals in Republican Party Running Out—Rolph Seeks Renomination.

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LOS ANGELES, Calif., March 29.—Upton Sinclair is throwing a scare into each of the major parties in California by the aggressive manner in which he is bidding for the Democratic nomination for Governor.

Republicans profess to hope Sinclair will be nominated because they think he will be easier to defeat, but underneath they are nervously muttering over defections from party lines and whispering that perhaps it would be safer, after all, to take their chances with a conservative Democrat who is not committed to a radical program of reform that goes under the name "crusade."

Sinclair proposes to "take the wild beast of greed by the beard." He would "return the unemployed to the land," and establish land colonies "run by the State under expert supervision." He favors State control of industrial production, beginning with absolute necessities, but eventually evolving into a complete industrial system, workers to be paid in scrip and an end made to private control of capital.

Other features of the Sinclair platform provide for repeal of the Sales Tax Law, a State income tax beginning at \$5,000 and steeply graduated, a radical inheritance tax, general tax code revision, old age, disability and widows' pensions and division of the State into two classes on the theory that those who would benefit by the program could outvote those who would lose.

First in the Field.

Sinclair, who has been an occasional candidate for office on the Socialist ticket, has changed his technical allegiance to the Democratic party. He is the only candidate so far out in the open and whooping things up. He is printing a weekly campaign paper, making speeches wherever an audience shows its head and issuing pamphlets with both hands, including a sensational booklet which he calls "I, Governor of California." The word with which he keynotes his campaign and which he expects will give him open sesame to the voters' hearts is "Epic," which means in Sinclairesque "End poverty in California." That is his platform, and it is not at all unpopular.

Radicals of all parties, including the Republican, are being quietly urged to change their registration, if necessary, so they can vote for Sinclair at the August primaries, and not a few of them are doing so.

If the Sinclair candidacy should be successful, which is still, in spite of its virility, under the possible but not probable heading, it may mean a split in the Democratic ranks, in which event a Republican probably would win.

A full State ticket, plus United States Senator to succeed Hiram Johnson and twenty Representatives, is to be elected this year. Every office in each party will be hotly contested both at the primaries and election. For the first time in a generation the Democrats have a chance to seize control of the State government.

New Tax Proposed.

When California balanced its books in 1933 for the fiscal year it was way in the red, so the Legislature slapped on a 2½ per cent sales tax. This tax has, for five months, produced an average monthly revenue of \$4,000,000. Another fiscal period portends and the State is still more than \$30,000,000 to the bad. A 50-cent ad valorem property tax is being seriously advocated as a further means of balancing the unruly budget and a roar of protest is arising from all quarters.

A large part of the sales tax revenue comes from Los Angeles and the South, 75 per cent of it from a few large centres of population, and the same would be true of the proposed new tax. Already consumers are paying a 3-cents per gallon gasoline levy, besides heavy business and special license fees, so that the additional burden looks to many conscientious observers like the proverbial last straw. If it is imposed there may be a tax strike. If it is not imposed California will continue to shoulder a heavy and growing burden of indebtedness.

Records indicate a greatly improved condition of individual solvency by the increasing number of property redemptions from tax foreclosures—20,000 in January and February, with March holding its own. The levy of any further substantial tax for State purposes will, it is feared, slow down this redemption movement, embarrass cities and counties, and in the end result in more loss than gain.

The temper of the public on piling up new expense was evidenced in the special school bond election recently held in Los Angeles to authorize a \$20,000,000 issue for public school rehabilitation and to bring the structures into line with a new building code adopted after the earthquake of a year ago. The bonds lost by a substantial vote and thousands of pupils must continue indefinitely to occupy tents and bungalow shacks in lieu of class rooms.

This question of finance will be one of the main issues in what promises to be a brace of the most hectic State elections California has experienced for some time—primary Aug. 28 and regular election Nov. 6.

The Rolph administration, contemporary with the worst years of the depression, has transformed a healthy treasury surplus into a big deficit and is under heavy fire. Governor Rolph, seeking "vindication," wants to be a candidate for re-election. He has a formidable political machine, but his health is bad and physicians and friends warn him that the gruelling contest that impends may prove beyond his strength, with the primary result very much in doubt.