

ODELL HAS SMASHED THE PLATT MACHINE

Senator Malby Tells of a "New Era" in Republican Politics.

Senate Caucus "Uninfluenced by Domination from Within or Dictation from Without"—Mr. Platt Denies He Was Ignored.

Special to The New York Times.

ALBANY, March 13. — That Senator Platt's autocratic power over the Republican organization of the State has been brought to an end hardly admits of a doubt in view of the further testimony obtained to-day as to how the caucus agreements on the Mortgage Tax and Excise Tax bills were brought about.

The dominant figure in the Senatorial caucus, next to Gov. Odell, was Senator Malby. Senator Malby has throughout his career in the Legislature been regarded as pretty much of an independent. Owing to the fact that this year he was made Chairman of the Finance Committee through the influence of Senator Platt, who opposed Elon R. Brown of Watertown, the Governor's candidate for the place, he has been classed as a Platt Senator. When, therefore, Senator Malby declares that the action of the Senatorial caucus was taken without regard to Senator Platt's views and without knowledge of them, so far as he is informed, the evidence on that point would seem to be conclusive.

Senator Malby did make such a declaration to-day. He was asked from what source the excise increase proposition originated.

"I presume I am as much responsible for it as any one," he replied. "When we met in conference the Governor made an address in which he set forth the situation which confronted the Republican Party. The party, he said, was pledged to the abolition of direct taxation and to the improvement of the canals. These pledges must be kept. The question was how best to fulfill them. He said he was not much concerned as to the manner in which the pledges should be redeemed, but that he considered the obligation to redeem them somehow imperative if the party was to hold the trust of the people of the State. He said he had offered his suggestions on the subject, and he was now desirous of hearing from the Republican Senators. Whatever they agreed upon as the best method of accomplishing the result which must be accomplished would be satisfactory to him.

NO DICTATION IN CONFERENCE.

"There never was a conference which was so free from any outside dictation. Every man present felt that he could express his views and have them considered absolutely on their merits. There was great freedom of expression. The result of it was that when conclusions were finally reached every man present felt that these conclusions represented the best judgment of all those who made up the conference.

"It was I who made the suggestion in the conference for an increased excise tax. As a basis on which to do business it was suggested by the Governor that every Senator who had any recommendations to make should make them, and then each could be discussed and the consensus of opinion upon them determined.

"I said, 'Well, since it is agreed that we must tax something to raise the needed revenue for the expenditures of the State and canal improvement, why not begin on rum? That was one of the luxuries of life. I said, and could bear an increased burden with less hardship to the taxpayers than anything else I knew of. So we discussed that. There was some opposition, of course, but the sentiment in favor of the proposition was pretty much one way.'

"There seems to be some mystery about Senator Platt's attitude with regard to the excise tax. Was he consulted about the action of the conference?" Senator Malby was asked.

"Senator Platt may have known that such a proposition was under consideration, but neither Senator Platt nor any one else knew that there would be such speedy action. The caucus acted on its own responsibility. Its conclusions were its own, uninfluenced by either domination within or dictation from without.

"That marks a new era in Republican politics in the State, does it not?"

"Not only new, but refreshing," was the Senator's reply.

Speaking of the proposed Mortgage Tax bill, Senator Malby said he thought it would prove its own justification. There ought not to be a tax on mortgages at all, he believed, but since it was impossible for them to avoid some tax it was best for all interests concerned that the tax should be uniform, and as low as possible.

"It is my judgment," he said, "that the localities will receive as much from mortgages under the proposed bill as they now receive. In my county, St. Lawrence, the total assessment of personal property is \$5,000,000. Yet we have \$11,000,000 of mortgages recorded. This is conclusive proof that the bulk of the mortgages escape taxation under the present system. When a tax is collected on all of them, as it will be under the proposed bill, the localities under the proposed equal division between them and the State, will receive an amount, according to my belief, which will be in excess of that which they now receive."

A second statement from Senator Platt in the Washington dispatches to-day—this time to the effect that he had been consulted about the proposed increase in the excise tax and had indorsed it—completely befuddled Republican Senators who are still solicitous that he should not suspect their loyalty.

PLATT MEN IN A QUANDARY.

When the Senator was quoted in the Washington dispatches yesterday to the effect that he had not been consulted about the Excise bill and did not approve of it, those who have been closely allied with him in the past took their cue from the interview and endeavored to put all the responsibility for what had been done on the shoulders of the Governor. It evidently did not occur to them that in making the acknowledgment they did they were admitting that the Governor had been able to force the adoption of his policies in opposition to the wishes of the Senator; admitting, in effect, that the Governor and not the Senator is now the real power in Republican politics in the State.

Apparently all they thought about was that if the Senator was to take issue with the Governor they would be safer on the Senator's side. Having felt the Senator's power in the past, it is difficult for them to realize that any one mightier than he in Republican councils has arisen, or rid themselves of the dread of his possible anger.

When the Senator showed to-day that he was desirous of getting in out of the wet himself, they were at a loss what to say. Of course, for publication they had nothing to say, not a word, but when asked confidentially for an explanation of the muddle they put forth the most ingenious theory. Here it is in the language of one of them:

"Of course, we all know that Senator Platt has been opposed to an increase of the excise tax, but Odell has been giving him so much trouble of late that he saw in the Governor's determination to have such a tax an opportunity to bring about indirectly what he could not bring about directly without a split in the party. He believes that in adopting the policy which he has Odell is riding to political suicide in an automobile, and is not anxious to stop him."

One of the astute Republican politicians here to-day sized up the existing situation in this way: "Gov. Odell is now the guiding mind in the Republican Party of the State; there is no controlling mind."

The personal regard in which Senator Platt is held by a majority of the members of the Legislature is unaltered by anything which has occurred in the past few days. Personally they have as warm an affection for him as ever. But the day of their political subservency to the senior Senator is generally admitted to be at an end. He will be consulted as before by the Governor.

and the other leaders, and whenever his advice seems good it will be taken, but consultation with him hereafter will be a courtesy.

A joint hearing on the Excise bill will be given in the Senate chamber next Wednesday and it is expected that it will bring to Albany the biggest crowd of the year.

The Mortgage Tax bill is still in course of preparation. It will not be ready for introduction before next Tuesday or Wednesday.