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# Harry F. Byrd and the Democratic presidential nomination of 1932 : party politics and the Byrd campaign

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HARRY F. BYRD AND THE DEMOCRATIC  
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION OF 1932:  
PARTY POLITICS AND THE BYRD CAMPAIGN

BY

TYSON VAN AUKEN

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
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## PREFACE

At the beginning of the research for this thesis the author thought the story of the Byrd campaign for the 1932 Democratic nomination would reveal a candidate girded with all of the partisan fervor of the typical seeker of the presidency, but such was not the case. Therefore, it has been the author's purpose to show the relationship between the Byrd campaign and his desire to maintain party unity. This double thread is carried throughout the narrative revealing the difficulty of discussing Byrd the candidate without including his role as party harmonizer.

My thanks must go to many for their help in preparing the final work. The staffs at the Virginia Historical Society Archives, Virginia State Library, University of Virginia, and the Library of Congress were most generous with their time and patience. A note of special thanks must go to Mr. Waverly Winfree at the Virginia Historical Society for his help in locating primary sources related

to the author's topic. Dr. Ernest C. Bolt, Jr., who directed the study, has been a constant source of inspiration and assistance. Others too numerous to mention have been most helpful.

## INTRODUCTION

The topical order of the thesis was selected to give the clearest portrayal of Harry Byrd's role in Democratic politics for the period immediately preceding the Democratic presidential nomination of 1932. The first chapter of the thesis explains some of the background of Byrd's political position in Virginia and the national Democratic party. The pre-convention maneuvers of Byrd in the national party are the subject of the second chapter. The third chapter is an analysis of Byrd's own campaign for the presidential nomination in 1932. In the fourth chapter, the activities of the Byrd forces at the Democratic National Convention and the Virginia State Democratic Convention are examined, and the conclusions reached during the study are the subject of chapter five.

Correspondence between Harry F. Byrd and William T. Reed contained in the William T. Reed Papers at the Virginia Historical Society Archives was the chief source for the paper. The author wrote Senator Harry F. Byrd, Jr. requesting

permission to examine his father's papers. Since the late Senator's papers are presently in commercial storage, permission to use them was denied. Fortunately, Reed kept carbon copies of the letters he sent to Byrd, making the author's task somewhat easier. Other collections of value were the Carter Glass Papers, Westmoreland Davis Papers, and the Martin A. Hutchinson Papers in the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia.

Future scholars may ultimately revise this work as other personal papers become available. The John Garland Pollard Papers and the A. Willis Robertson Papers, housed in the Earl Gregg Swem Library, of the College of William and Mary, are not yet open to the public. The family of Harry F. Byrd has not selected a depository for his papers. When these collections are opened for examination, an expansion and revision of this thesis will most likely be necessary. Robertson and Pollard were in a close political relationship with Byrd during this period, and their papers, along with Byrd's should help clarify certain details that presently remain unexplained.

CHAPTER I  
POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Harry F. Byrd was active on three different levels in the Democratic party prior to the Chicago Convention in 1932. He completed his term as Governor of Virginia in 1930 and left office with the reputation of being the finest governor of the state in many years. Byrd remained in control of state politics and few matters concerning the Democratic party in Virginia escaped his attention. At the national level in the party, Byrd served as Virginia's Democratic National Committeeman and worked to prevent discord in the party between the forces of Alfred E. Smith and the supporters of Franklin D. Roosevelt. From January, 1932 to June when the Democratic National Convention met in Chicago, Byrd and his friends campaigned to get the Democratic nomination for Harry Byrd.

To many political observers the election of 1928 indicated the end of the once solid Democratic South. The Hoover majority of that year included victories for the Republican

ticket in Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, and Texas for the first time since the Reconstruction period. The day following the election of 1928 the statue of Thomas Jefferson, patron saint of the Democratic party, at the University of Virginia was found draped in black. Within a week of the election, the Senate of Mississippi, a state that remained in the Democratic column in 1928, issued two bulletins. The first of these invited the defeated Al Smith to make his home in Mississippi where the Democratic party still survived in good health. The second bulletin demanded that the unfaithful state of Virginia give up the sacred bodies of Jefferson, Jackson, and Lee.<sup>1</sup>

The Virginia Democratic party divided in 1928 with the followers of Methodist Bishop James Cannon, an ardent prohibition leader, conducting a widespread anti-Smith campaign. The regular Democrats under Governor Byrd and Senator Carter Glass tried vainly to promote a Smith victory in Virginia.<sup>2</sup> The task of convincing Southern Democrats to vote for Smith was difficult for a number of reasons. Smith was an extreme

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<sup>1</sup>Struthers Burt, "Democracy and the Broken South," Literary Digest, CCXXVII, 4 (April, 1929), 475.

<sup>2</sup>Robert C. McManus, "Raskob," North American Review, CCXXI, 1, (January, 1931), 13, and Richmond Times Dispatch, September, 19, 1931.

wet on the prohibition issue. He was a Catholic, and the South was overwhelmingly Protestant. Smith also angered many Southerners with his big city New York background. On the other hand, Hoover was dry and Protestant which, in the eyes of many Southern voters, made him preferable to the Democratic Smith.<sup>3</sup> Byrd recognized that feeling in the Democratic party in many parts of the country would be against Virginia for not supporting Al Smith in 1928.<sup>4</sup> Byrd and the regular Democrats had made inroads toward breaking the power of Bishop Cannon in Virginia, and his role in the election of 1928 proved to be a temporary resurgence of his old political strength.

The first step in breaking Bishop Cannon's hold on Virginia politics came when Byrd defeated Cannon's hand-picked candidate for governor, G. Walter Mapp, in 1925.<sup>5</sup> Cannon took advantage of Southern prejudices to construct a coalition of Republicans and fundamentalist Democrats to defeat Al Smith in Virginia in 1928. The defeat was the result of

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<sup>3</sup>V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York, 1950), 318.

<sup>4</sup>Harry F. Byrd to William T. Reed, March 17, 1932, William T. Reed Papers, Virginia Historical Society Archives, Richmond Virginia.

<sup>5</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, October 18, 1931.

Smith's Catholicism, wetness, and urban background rather than Cannon's political power.<sup>6</sup> The next political test for Bishop Cannon came when the Byrd Democrats chose John Garland Pollard to follow Byrd as governor. The election was held in 1929 and indicated the extent of Byrd's power in Virginia. Cannon hoped to mold his coalition force of Republicans and fundamentalist Democrats into a majority for Dr. William M. Brown. The election proved to be the end of Cannon's political influence in Virginia. Pollard defeated Brown easily and the large vote was an approval of Byrd's term as governor as well as a repudiation of Bishop Cannon.<sup>7</sup>

While Byrd was Governor of Virginia, he was able to consolidate his political leadership in the state. He instituted a program of government reorganization that brought him national recognition and increased prestige in the higher echelons of the Democratic party. The reform program was vast in scope and left Virginia with a more efficient state government. The Constitution of Virginia was revised and

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<sup>6</sup>New York Times, February 22, 1931.

<sup>7</sup>Alvin L. Hall, "Virginia Back in the Fold : The Gubernatorial Campaign and Election of 1929," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXXIII, 3 (July, 1965), 280, 291-30, and Virginus Dabney, Dry Messiah : The Life of Bishop Cannon (New York, 1949), 210-13.

eighty-five state agencies were merged into twelve departments. The tax structure was reorganized and tax sources were segregated so that money was collected for specific purposes with tax collection made the responsibility of one separate government department. New highway construction was paid for as the roads were built, and school appropriations were increased. The changes saved the state enough money so that no new taxes were required, no bonds were issued, and many taxes were reduced.<sup>8</sup> The success of the Byrd program brought Byrd national recognition and assured his dominance of the Virginia political structure.

At the national level, government and private finances had been thrown into chaos by the stock market crash in 1929 and the depression that followed. Every state in the Union was forced to turn to deficit financing with the exception of Virginia. State Comptroller E. R. Combs, a strong Byrd ally, reported that Virginia ended the fiscal year of 1931 with a surplus of over one million dollars in the general fund.<sup>9</sup> The Virginia financial establishment endured the

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<sup>8</sup>Walter Davenport, "States Righted : How a Sincere Young Man Set a New Fashion in Government," Colliers, LXXXIX, 23 (June 4, 1932), 45.

<sup>9</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, October 22, 1931.

national crisis so well that it was the only state to pay more federal taxes in 1931 than it paid in 1930.<sup>10</sup> Much of the credit for this feat went to Byrd for his government reorganization. The financial stability of the Virginia government added to Byrd's growing prestige in national politics.

Byrd was not without political enemies in Virginia. Westmoreland Davis, editor of the Southern Planter and a former Governor of Virginia, was a constant critic of Byrd's reorganization of the state government and went so far as to finance the Virginia Bureau of Research as a front for discrediting Byrd. The Virginia Bureau of Research, at first believed to be an independent organization, issued statements declaring that the Byrd administration exaggerated Virginia's industrial growth statistics, increased state expenses, and that E. R. Combs, Virginia Comptroller, failed to take advantage of discounts that could have saved the state one hundred thousand dollars. An investigation followed, and it was learned that Davis financed the Research Bureau for his own political purposes. The loss in unused discounts amounted to \$542.00, a negligible amount when a budget of millions was involved. Other charges by the Bureau were

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., January 25, 1932.

found to be false and Byrd's reputation for integrity remained intact.<sup>11</sup> Byrd was able to say with complete confidence that Davis' Research Bureau "had no effect whatever in Virginia."<sup>12</sup> William T. Reed, President of Larus Tobacco Company in Richmond and a close personal friend and political supporter of Harry Byrd, thought Westmoreland Davis was trying to stop the growing sentiment that favored Byrd for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1932.<sup>13</sup>

Byrd finished his term as Governor of Virginia in January of 1930 and returned to Winchester to continue his business as a newspaper publisher and one of the world's largest apple growers. His program as governor had made his name known in much of the country and invitations to speak flooded his small office in Winchester. In a short period after he left office, Byrd made speeches in Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina and Kentucky.<sup>14</sup> Byrd was one of a number of Southern governors who are sometimes called "business progressives" for their emphasis on government efficiency. The term progressive did not apply to this group because they did not

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<sup>11</sup>New York Times, June 28, 1931.

<sup>12</sup>Byrd to Reed, June 12, 1930, Reed Papers.

<sup>13</sup>Reed to Byrd, June 30, 1930, Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Reed to Byrd, February 25, 1930, Ibid.

favor social legislation or the limitation of business.<sup>15</sup>  
The press covered most of Byrd's speeches and generated a favorable impression of Byrd as a moderate reformer.

As Byrd's name and political record became better known, the speculation on his political future increased and the speaking invitations continued. Byrd's name was frequently mentioned, especially in the Southern press, as a possible presidential candidate in 1932.<sup>16</sup> At this early date, Byrd had no inclination to consider the possibility that he might be nominated by the Democratic party. He wrote to Reed in October, 1930 that he thought it was time for him to make a statement that he had no desire to be a candidate for the Democratic nomination. Byrd gave a number of reasons to support his withdrawal from the list of Democratic possibilities. Most important was his reluctance to call on Reed and his other friends to help finance a campaign. Byrd's wife was in poor health and his business demanded most of his attention after four years of neglect while he was governor. It was Byrd's thinking that his chances for the nomination were remote and would not be improved by conducting

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<sup>15</sup>George B. Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945 (Baton Rouge, 1967), 224.

<sup>16</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, July 12, 1931.

a campaign.<sup>17</sup> Reed, who was promoting Byrd's name at every opportunity, expressed sympathy for Byrd's position but saw no way for Byrd to avoid being considered for the nomination of the Democratic Party.<sup>18</sup>

The discussion of Byrd's political future and mention of his name as a presidential candidate would not be stopped unless Byrd issued a strong statement that he did not want to be president. The people of Virginia were happy to see that Byrd's record as governor had drawn national attention to Virginia for the first time in many years. Byrd was not only considered for the Democratic nomination, his name was also put forward as a potential running mate for Franklin D. Roosevelt and as a good prospect for a cabinet post in the event Roosevelt won the nomination and election.<sup>19</sup>

As enjoyable as the publicity was for Virginians, few people outside the state in 1931 thought Byrd had a good chance to win the Democratic nomination. He was handicapped by being dry in his views on prohibition and a resident of a small normally Democratic state.<sup>20</sup> Byrd realized the prob-

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<sup>17</sup> Byrd to Reed, October 7, 1930, and October 13, 1931, Reed Papers.

<sup>18</sup> Reed to Byrd, October 9, 1930, Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, September 14, 1931.

<sup>20</sup> New York Times, November 22, 1931.

lems involved if he tried for the nomination. He was hindered by the fact that he was from the South. Even there, where Byrd should have had more support than elsewhere, Roosevelt was collecting an increasing number of followers because he was thought of as the front runner. Many Southern Senators were inclined to Roosevelt at an early date because they feared the renomination of Al Smith and another split in the party as a result.<sup>21</sup> The fear of Al Smith did much to break down traditional party maneuvering and add to Roosevelt's strength.<sup>22</sup> The South of this period was not where one would expect the liberal, wet Roosevelt gaining strength as a presidential candidate.<sup>23</sup>

Discontent with prohibition was growing and many Democrats were determined to nominate a candidate in 1932 who would advocate repeal or revision of the Eighteenth Amendment. The time had come when political candidates, especially outside the South, could safely advocate an end to prohibition. If Byrd was to be seriously considered for the nomination, he had to change his views on prohibition

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<sup>21</sup>Byrd to Reed, March 26, 1931, Reed Papers.

<sup>22</sup>New York Times, July 19, 1931.

<sup>23</sup>Reed to Byrd, November 30, 1931, Reed Papers.

or be eliminated from the field of potential candidates.<sup>24</sup> The question of prohibition was an emotional issue. Every candidate for office in 1932 would find it difficult to ignore the prohibition issue. Candidates would have to make their views known, and, in most instances, those views would have to favor the wet side of the question. Byrd was no exception and in the months before the Democratic convention he made his feelings on prohibition known.

The Southern press, happy to have one of their own winning high praise, heaped an ever increasing amount of publicity on Byrd and his political actions. The Richmond Times Dispatch reprinted endorsements of Byrd for president from the Columbia Record, Chattanooga News, Elizabeth City Independent, and the New Orleans Item. In an accompanying editorial, the Richmond paper pointed out that Byrd was receiving more favorable publicity than any other Southern political leader.<sup>25</sup> In early 1932, the Literary Digest polled one hundred newspapers over the nation for the names of men most often mentioned for president in the area served by the newspaper. Thirteen papers of the seventy papers that replied to the poll put Harry Byrd's name on their list of

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<sup>24</sup> Frank R. Kent, "The 1932 Presidential Sweepstakes," Scribner's Magazine, LXXXIX, 6 (June, 1931), 623.

<sup>25</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, July 12, 1931.

potential candidates, but all seventy papers mentioned Roosevelt. The only Southerner who rated above Byrd in the poll was Senator Joe T. Robinson of Arkansas who was listed by nineteen papers.<sup>26</sup>

The build up in publicity favorable to Byrd did not induce him to declare as a candidate. Byrd continued on friendly terms with the Roosevelt and Smith factions in the Democratic party and, until mid-January, 1932, refused to make any commitments to run for his party's nomination or to support any other Democrat for the honor.<sup>27</sup> The Virginia elections of 1931 were reported as dull with no public stir over candidates or issues. The Byrd forces did well at the polls and no challenges to Byrd's political authority developed.<sup>28</sup> The uneventful election left Byrd's political base secure. Byrd's ability to gain higher office and increase his prestige in party circles would not be hampered by political embarrassment in his home state.

With his political base under control and his name drawing increased national attention, Byrd's influence in the national Democratic party grew. Any honest portrayal of

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<sup>26</sup> Literary Digest, CXII (January 16, 1932), 8.

<sup>27</sup> New York Times, December 16, 1931, and Richmond Times Dispatch, December 18, 1931.

<sup>28</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, November 4, 1931.

Byrd's role in the national party must be done in the light of the fact that he did become a candidate for the Democratic nomination. However, Byrd did not assume a self-serving partisan role to increase his own chances for the nomination. Rather, he worked for party unity and Democratic victory in 1932, whomever the nominee might be.

## CHAPTER II

### BYRD'S ROLE IN NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY POLITICS

Agrarian discontent in the Midwest and the depressed national economy hurt Republican chances to keep Herbert Hoover in the White House in 1932. The way seemed clear for the Democrats to win the coming election and the nomination became an important first step to the White House.<sup>1</sup> To keep the party in fighting trim, the Democratic National Committee served as a steering mechanism and a fund raising body between elections. Any candidate desiring the nomination of the party had to take great care that the National Committee did not adopt policies that would place him in an awkward position at the national convention.

John J. Raskob, a close friend of Al Smith, and Bernard Baruch provided the largest share of the funds to keep the Democratic party going in the late twenties and early thirties. For his efforts, Raskob was made Chairman of the National Com-

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<sup>1</sup>James A. Farley, Behind the Ballots (New York, 1938), 61.

mittee. Raskob hired Jouett Shouse of Kansas as a full time assistant.<sup>2</sup> At the end of 1930, the Democratic party listed debts of \$628,618.00 of which more than one-third, \$225,250.00, was owed to John J. Raskob.<sup>3</sup> Smith, Raskob and Shouse worked closely to control the direction of the Democratic party. Smith had a strong influence in the party rising from his position as Democratic nominee in 1928, and Raskob's money gave his word a lot of weight in party councils. Smith and Raskob tended to favor big business and they developed a coolness toward Franklin D. Roosevelt whom they considered too progressive and anti-business.

Since Roosevelt had been gaining strength as the possible Democratic nominee, Smith and Raskob were quietly urging favorite son candidates to enter the race and engaging in other activities to check the Roosevelt advance.<sup>4</sup>

The first public indication of conflict between the Roosevelt and Smith-Raskob forces came at the March 5, 1931 meeting of the Democratic National Committee. Raskob was determined to get a resolution from the National Committee

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<sup>2</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919-1933 (Boston, 1957), 273.

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, January 3, 1931.

<sup>4</sup>Schlesinger, Crisis of the Old Order, 283-285.

calling for a plank in the Democratic platform of 1932 advocating repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Raskob's action, if successful, would have split the party. The move was intended to embarrass Roosevelt in the Southern states where he was already in a precarious position as a moderate wet. Had Raskob's plank been approved by the National Committee, Roosevelt would be looked on as a radical wet who advocated repeal at all costs.<sup>5</sup>

The attempt on the part of the Smith-Raskob forces to force the issue of prohibition alarmed many Southern politicians who still had to contend with strong dry sentiment in their home states. Harry Byrd believed the National Committee had no right to formulate policies that bound the rank and file of the party to a particular position.<sup>6</sup> William T. Reed agreed with Byrd and thought any attempt to draw up a platform a year before the convention was absurd.<sup>7</sup> Both sides in the dispute were unwilling to give in. A public fight over the issue appeared certain when the National Committee convened.

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<sup>5</sup>Farley, Behind the Ballots, 73-75.

<sup>6</sup>Byrd to Reed, February 20, 1931, Reed Papers.

<sup>7</sup>Reed to Byrd, February 21, 1931, Ibid.

Byrd made his position clear in a speech before the North Carolina Legislature on February 24, 1931. He announced that he would oppose vigorously any attempt to fix the party's position on prohibition at the March meeting of the National Committee. Byrd believed that the policies of the party were traditionally the responsibility of the representatives of the people coming first from the precincts and then through the state conventions to the national convention where the final policy decisions were made. He further warned that any violation of the principles of representation would divide the party.<sup>8</sup> Having publicly made his position clear, Byrd then tried privately to head off the coming fight. Three days after his speech in North Carolina, Byrd wrote Senator Carter Glass asking him to use his influence to persuade the Smith-Raskob combination from presenting their resolution. He advised Glass that he understood Jouett Shouse had proxies to vote from people who had no idea how he was going to use them.<sup>9</sup> Shouse, a prime element in the Smith-Raskob group, was sure to use them to support the repeal resolution.

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<sup>8</sup>New York Times, February 25, 1931.

<sup>9</sup>Harry F. Byrd to Carter Glass, February 27, 1931, Carter Glass Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

William T. Reed, who still urged Byrd at every opportunity to become a candidate for the nomination, did not want Byrd to take a position on the repeal resolution that would bind him to any strong dry position. Reed reminded Byrd that a referendum on the question of repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, such as Byrd had discussed with him, was a solution that would leave the question to the people and could not be objected to by the wets or the dries. Reed also warned Byrd against letting the Virginia Congressional Delegation's opposition to Raskob's resolution put him in a position where he could not propose a compromise. Roosevelt, who had the most to lose from passage of the repeal resolution, wrote to Byrd expressing his concurrence in Byrd's position that the National Committee had no right to dictate party policy.<sup>11</sup>

The Democratic National Committee met in Washington, D.C. on March 5, 1931 and the much publicized platform plank was put before the Committee members. The effect of the proposal would have been to advocate repeal or modification of the Eighteenth

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<sup>10</sup> Reed to Byrd, March 2, 1931, Reed Papers.

<sup>11</sup> Roosevelt to Byrd, March 2, 1931, Elliott Roosevelt (ed.), F.D.R. : His Personal Letters, 1928-1945 (2 vols., New York, 1950), I, 180.

Amendment so that the individual states would have had control over the liquor question. The dry members of the Democratic party wanted to postpone the decision on the liquor question at least until the convention. Since public sentiment seemed to be moving toward repeal of prohibition, postponement would give the dry politicians time to change their positions in a graceful manner. The resolution brought before the National Committee would have forced the issue prematurely.<sup>12</sup> The ensuing fight over the introduction of the resolution was harmful to party unity and might have been avoided had the Committee simply accepted Raskob's resolution for consideration without taking any action on it.<sup>13</sup>

Raskob and Smith came to Washington with every intention of forcing their platform resolution through the National Committee. When the strength of opposition to the resolution became apparent to Raskob and he learned that an emotional, party shattering fight would be required to pass the resolution, he wanted to resign as Chairman of the National Committee and be re-elected as a vote of confidence. This development reached the ears of Franklin D. Roosevelt who immediately called

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<sup>12</sup>"Raskob's Bomb," Literary Digest, CVIII (March 21, 1931), 8.

<sup>13</sup>Reed to Byrd, March 7, 1931, Reed.Papers.

Byrd and said that if Byrd would oppose Raskob for Chairman, the Roosevelt forces would support him. Byrd refused to accept the offer and Raskob calmed down and continued as Chairman.<sup>14</sup> Byrd's acceptance of Roosevelt's offer would have put him firmly in the Roosevelt camp. Byrd was closer to Roosevelt at this time than he was to Smith, but he would not commit himself irrevocably to the Roosevelt campaign. His actions were designed to prevent either side from forcing the Democratic party into a position that would jeopardize the chances for victory in 1932. Byrd was convinced that passage of the Raskob platform resolution would have destroyed the Democratic party in the South and weakened the party in the election.<sup>15</sup> Byrd, fearing Raskob would try again at the next National Committee meeting to have his resolution passed, determined to resist the attempt "to the bitter end."<sup>16</sup>

The next scheduled meeting of the Democratic National Committee was set for January 8, 1932.<sup>17</sup> The Roosevelt forces

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<sup>14</sup>Byrd to Reed, March 10, 1931, Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Byrd to Reed, March 31, 1931, Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Byrd to Reed, March 27, 1931, Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, January 9, 1932.

used the time between the meetings to conduct an earnest search for political support and delegate votes. James Farley, Roosevelt's campaign manager, and Louis Howe, political strategist of the Roosevelt group, decided that Farley's annual trip to the National Elks Convention would be a good time to contact Democratic leaders across the country and present Roosevelt's case to the local party officials. Roosevelt, Howe, and Farley planned the trip to cover eighteen states in nineteen days. Farley would leave New York June 29, 1931 and end his jaunt in Seattle, Washington where the Elks were holding their convention. The purpose of the trip was to head off as many favorite son candidates as possible to prevent a deadlocked convention in Chicago. Farley met with 1,100 local and state party chairmen and leaders in the West and Midwest. In July, Farley returned to New York exhausted but enthusiastic over the reception the party officials had given his endorsement of Roosevelt.<sup>18</sup>

Roosevelt was, at this time, out in front of any other Democrat in the race for the nomination. The only possible opposition that could seriously threaten him was the Smith

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<sup>18</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 81-87, and Schlesinger, Crisis of the Old Order, 280-281.

faction in the party. Byrd, meanwhile, believed that the Smith people were pushing too hard for the wet platform resolution. If they lost the fight, which was likely if they sought a vote at the January, 1932 meeting of the National Committee, any effective opposition to Roosevelt on their part would be ended and the party would be split over the prohibition issue.<sup>19</sup>

Raskob, in an attempt to determine party opinion on the prohibition issue, sent out a questionnaire in November, 1931. This query went to 90,000 contributors to Al Smith's 1928 campaign.<sup>20</sup> The Richmond Times Dispatch was certain this would produce a showdown on prohibition in the Democratic party.<sup>21</sup> Southern Democrats viewed the poll as one more attempt by the Smith group to make prohibition the paramount issue in 1932. As Southern party members saw it, the economic issues were far more important and the Democrats should make these the basis of the campaign against Hoover. The Southerners accused Raskob of continuing a fight that could split the party.<sup>22</sup> After Raskob's poll was out, the press began to

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<sup>19</sup> Byrd to Reed, November 28, 1931, Reed Papers.

<sup>20</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, November 23, 1931.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., November 24, 1931.

<sup>22</sup> "Raskob's Liquor Questionnaire," Literary Digest, CXI (December 12, 1931), 8.

call the upcoming National Committee meeting a test of strength between the Roosevelt and Smith factions. As the meeting date drew near, many expected a fight.<sup>23</sup>

On January 5, 1932 Raskob mailed the results of his poll to the party officials.<sup>24</sup> The questionnaire mailed by Raskob had gone to Democrats who contributed to Al Smith's campaign and critics charged that the opinions expressed by this segment of the party were certain to reflect their already known bias against prohibition. The returns ran overwhelmingly against prohibition and few of the responding Democrats thought the party could ignore the prohibition issue in 1932.<sup>25</sup> Armed with the results of his poll, it looked certain that Raskob would force the question on his platform resolution at the January meeting of the National Committee.

Publicly, Raskob sent the results of his poll to party leaders and gave every indication that he was prepared to fight out the liquor issue in the National Committee.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, December 14, 1931.

<sup>24</sup>For results from Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina see Appendix A.

<sup>25</sup>John J. Raskob to Party Officials, Liquor Poll enclosed, January 5, 1932, John Garland Pollard, Executive Papers, Virginia State Library Archives.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

Privately, however, Raskob was having second thoughts. If his proposal was defeated, it would appear that the Roosevelt forces were in control of the party and any attempt to stop his nomination would be more difficult than ever. Byrd wrote to William T. Reed on December 29, 1931 and revealed that Raskob had phoned him and asked that he come to New York for consultation on the recommendations Raskob would make to the National Committee.<sup>27</sup> Byrd went to New York on December 30, 1931 and met with Raskob. When he returned to Winchester, he expressed the opinion that Raskob would not press his demands for the National Committee to recommend platform planks to the convention.<sup>28</sup> Whether Byrd was the one who changed Raskob's mind is uncertain. Since Raskob phoned Byrd and asked for the meeting, it is likely that he was uncertain as to what course to take and the meeting with Byrd convinced him not to continue with his proposals.

Raskob's decision was leaked to the press on January 6 or January 7, 1932. On the sixth the Richmond Times Dispatch was still of the opinion that Raskob's proposal to have the National Committee recommend a home rule platform plank to

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<sup>27</sup>Byrd to Reed, December 29, 1931, Reed Papers.

<sup>28</sup>Byrd to Reed, December 31, 1931, Ibid.

the convention would be brought up at the meeting. The editor said the plan had many good points but would not be the "common ground" on which the party would unite.<sup>29</sup> The next day, January 7, 1932, a news item called the Raskob plan no good and, quoting local Democrats, gave credit to Harry Byrd for engineering a compromise. The Times Dispatch further asked that the Democrats take no half way measures and said the question was repeal or no repeal.<sup>30</sup>

At the January 8, 1932 meeting of the Democratic National Committee Byrd made a motion to refer the prohibition question and other platform items to the national convention without comment by the National Committee. The motion carried easily and a fight between the Smith and Roosevelt forces was avoided.<sup>31</sup> The compromise was reached before the Committee met and Byrd received the credit for it. His attempts to bring about the party harmony needed to win in 1932 enhanced his reputation in party circles.<sup>32</sup> The National Committee selected Chicago as its convention city and adjourned.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, January 6, 1932.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., January 7, 1932.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., January 10, 1932.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., January 9 and 11, 1932.

<sup>33</sup>Farley, Behind the Ballots, 93.

The Arrangements Committee for the 1932 Convention, an arm of the Democratic National Committee, was to meet in Chicago April 4, 1932 and choose a temporary chairman for the convention. The position was one of importance since the temporary chairman would give the keynote speech and set the tone for the convention. The Smith forces wanted Jouett Shouse to have the position. Raskob and Smith represented the more conservative, big business interests in the party and were anxious to keep the more progressive Roosevelt group from gaining control of the national convention.<sup>34</sup> The Roosevelt faction was just as determined to have Alben Barkley of Kentucky as temporary chairman and keynoter.<sup>35</sup> The division of the two groups placed Byrd in a spot where he would most likely have to take sides with one group or the other. Up to this point, Byrd's position had been difficult to determine. Some papers thought he was allied with the financial interests in the party who opposed Roosevelt.<sup>36</sup> Others were sure Byrd had been supporting the Roosevelt people while managing to remain neutral in outward appearance only. These observers felt that Byrd, who had

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 103-04.

<sup>35</sup>Byrd to Reed, March 26, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>36</sup>Portsmouth Star, April 4, 1932.

been a candidate for the nomination himself since January of 1932, would be hurting his own chances if he continued to support the Roosevelt moves in the pre-convention contests.<sup>37</sup>

As the Arrangements Committee met in Chicago on April 4, 1932, the Smith forces, as expected, urged Shouse for temporary chairman. The Roosevelt supporters pushed Barkley for the position and stalled for time, hoping to gain votes for their choice. To break the deadlock and to prevent a permanent split in the party, Byrd put a compromise motion before the Committee.<sup>38</sup> Byrd had said openly that he was for Shouse, certainly a break with the Roosevelt people. When Byrd arrived in Chicago he found members of the Committee who had pledged to vote for Shouse asking to be released from their pledges. This was serious for the Smith-Raskob forces since the Arrangements Committee had been appointed by Raskob and its members were supposed to be favorable to Shouse. Byrd then realized that Shouse would be defeated. He knew this would be bad for the party. It would make the conflict in the party a matter of wide public comment since it would

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<sup>37</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, April 3, 1932.

<sup>38</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 104.

appear that "Shouse and Raskob, who had stood by the party following the dark days of our defeat of 1928, were being kicked down the backstairs."<sup>39</sup>

When Byrd saw the developments that had taken place, he decided to introduce his compromise. Shouse wanted to bring the matter to a vote but Byrd persuaded him not to do so. Byrd later informed William T. Reed that the Committee members had talked more openly to him than to Shouse and he was positive of Shouse's impending defeat if a vote was called. Byrd's compromise was to allow Barkley to become temporary chairman and keynoter and to recommend Shouse to the convention as permanent chairman. The compromise was discussed for some time by both sides.<sup>40</sup> While the discussion went back and forth, Roosevelt telephoned his supporters and declared that the Arrangements Committee had no power to recommend a permanent chairman to the convention. The Byrd compromise was changed and the word "commend" was substituted for "recommend". The compromise was passed in this form and the controversy was ended for the time being.<sup>41</sup>

Depending on their point of view, some people saw the

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<sup>39</sup>Byrd to Reed, April 5, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Farley, Behind the Ballots, 104.

compromise as a defeat for Roosevelt, and others saw it as a victory because Barkley would be temporary chairman.<sup>42</sup>

The indications for Byrd were important. It was obvious that he had been in opposition to Roosevelt's candidate. Byrd managed to arrange a compromise, but the compromise would not last through the convention where the chairmanship battle was renewed.

Shortly after the April 4 meeting of the Arrangements Committee, the Roosevelt forces decided to carry out their original plan to support someone other than Shouse for permanent chairman. They questioned whether a paid employee of the party should preside over delegates chosen by the people. Shouse was part of the Smith-Raskob group trying to block Roosevelt's nomination. Shouse, Roosevelt's group charged, let personal feelings interfere with his work in the party and they feared he would do the same as chairman of the convention. The Roosevelt people wanted Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana as permanent chairman. Walsh had exposed the Teapot Dome Scandal and had chaired the 1928 Democratic convention with integrity. At a strategy meeting held in Hyde Park June 5, 1932 the Roosevelt forces

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<sup>42</sup> Byrd to Reed, April 6, 1932, Reed Papers, and Richmond Times Dispatch, April 6, 1932.

decided to carry the battle to the convention and Walsh, who was present, agreed to try for the job.<sup>43</sup>

The nature of the Byrd-Roosevelt relationship was the subject of much speculation for some time before the events that took place in the Arrangements Committee meeting. Byrd and Roosevelt were personal friends for some years before 1932. One of the first to know for sure that Roosevelt would run for president in 1932, Byrd learned of Roosevelt's intentions when his mother and brother, Tom returned from a visit to Albany and said that Roosevelt indicated to them he would seek the office.<sup>44</sup> By early 1932, when Byrd launched his own campaign for the nomination, the Roosevelt people were urging him to join their efforts. Homer S. Cunningham, one of Roosevelt's managers, announced that Roosevelt would like to have Byrd on the Democratic ticket as his vice-presidential candidate. Roosevelt felt Byrd would balance the ticket as a dry Southerner. He also felt Byrd would help keep down factionalism in the party.<sup>45</sup>

When it became obvious that Byrd would go his own way

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<sup>43</sup>Farley, Behind the Ballots, 105-107.

<sup>44</sup>Byrd to Reed, June 30, 1930, Reed Papers.

<sup>45</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, February 19, 1932.

the Roosevelt people left Virginia to her own ends, hoping to pick up the state after the first few ballots in the convention.<sup>46</sup> Byrd was careful not to allow his name to be closely connected with Roosevelt's even before he started his own campaign in January 1932. In early October of 1931, Roosevelt was in Virginia for the Yorktown Sesquicentennial Celebration. Virginia Congressman Thomas G. Burch and State Senator W. A. Garrett talked with Roosevelt while he was in Virginia and then told the press that Harry Byrd was a "popular native son" but that no effort was being made to put him before the convention. Both agreed that Roosevelt was the logical choice "for the nomination."<sup>47</sup> Five days later, Burch, who was a political ally of Byrd, released a statement to the press saying he was misquoted about Roosevelt and that Virginia would back Byrd if he became a candidate.<sup>48</sup>

Privately, Byrd was questioning his friends about their attitude toward his candidacy. Senator Carter Glass favored Virginia Democrats endorsing Byrd for president.<sup>49</sup> Byrd had

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., February 17, 1932.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., October 16, 1931.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., October 21, 1931.

<sup>49</sup>Glass to James P. McConnell, November 17, 1931.  
Glass Papers.

been considered a supporter of Roosevelt by the Roosevelt workers and in the early phases of Roosevelt's campaign participated in the strategy meetings of the inner council. As the Smith forces became more active in opposing Roosevelt, and the chance of a deadlocked convention arose, Byrd drifted toward the anti-Roosevelt side. The possibility of the nomination going to a dark-horse candidate probably influenced Byrd's decision.<sup>50</sup> Publicly, Byrd tried to maintain the appearance of neutrality. Beginning with the Arrangements Committee meeting in April, 1932, Byrd sided with the Smith forces on nearly every question and managed to appear to be working for party harmony at the same time. The move away from Roosevelt was deliberate. In late December of 1931, William T. Reed and Frederic Scott, a Richmond financial expert and president of a stock brokerage firm, advised Byrd that they thought it was time for him to "draw away from Franklin D. Roosevelt."<sup>51</sup>

Byrd allowed his friends to start his own campaign in January of 1932, following closely his decision to separate from the Roosevelt forces. This does not mean that Byrd

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<sup>50</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 75.

<sup>51</sup> Reed to Byrd, December 24, 1931, Reed Papers.

backed the Smith forces to the hilt. He played more of a waiting game, maneuvering to see that the party did not split, and at the same time his own campaign kept his name before the public. If the convention deadlocked, Byrd would be available.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE BYRD CAMPAIGN FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION OF 1932

The publicity campaign designed to promote Harry Byrd for the Democratic nomination started, with Byrd's permission, on January 20, 1932. Shortly before the publicity campaign started, the Virginia General Assembly passed a resolution endorsing Byrd for president and calling on him to run for that office.<sup>1</sup> Roy Flannagan, a reporter for the Richmond News Leader and supporter of Harry Byrd, mailed copies of the General Assembly resolution to Democrats across the nation.<sup>2</sup> This was the first of many thousands of pieces of mail sent out to promote Byrd's candidacy.

Flannagan wanted to work for the Byrd campaign and asked William T. Reed to urge John Stewart Bryan, publisher of

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<sup>1</sup>Reed to Henry Breckinridge, January 19, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>2</sup>Roy Flannagan to Reed, January 22, 1932, Ibid.

the Richmond News Leader, to give his approval for Flannagan's continued association with the Byrd campaign.<sup>3</sup> As the Byrd campaign organized, the first Byrd-for-President Club appeared in Kentucky.<sup>4</sup> The next day, Reed, who was the driving force behind the Byrd campaign, gave Roy Flannagan permission to issue a public statement that Byrd publicity headquarters had opened in Richmond, financed by Reed and some of Byrd's other friends.<sup>5</sup> The name for a committee to handle the campaign and correspondence was suggested to Byrd and Reed by Flannagan. They approved the name and the organization was known as the Virginia Byrd Committee.<sup>6</sup>

To avoid hard feelings that might have resulted if a committee was appointed and some important person was left out, Byrd suggested that no "committee in fact" be created.<sup>7</sup> Roy Flannagan was secretary of the campaign, and with Reed's financial support, the two of them did most of the work of the

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<sup>3</sup>Flannagan to Reed, January 30, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Breckinridge to Reed, February 1, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Reed to Byrd, February 2, 1932, Ibid., and Appendix C.

<sup>6</sup>Flannagan to Reed, February 5, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Flannagan to Reed, February 8, 1932, Ibid.

Virginia Byrd Committee. Publicity was the primary objective of the campaign. If Byrd was to have a chance for the nomination, his name would have to be kept constantly before the public. Flannagan made every effort to see that Byrd got nationwide press coverage.<sup>8</sup> Byrd was encouraged by the initial response to the campaign.<sup>9</sup> The clipping service hired by the Virginia Byrd Committee daily sent up to six hundred clippings to headquarters taken from papers all over the nation.<sup>10</sup>

The Virginia Byrd Committee also made wide use of the mails to inform a number of people around the country. Mrs. J. K. Bowman of Richmond, National President of the American Federation of Business and Professional Women, provided a list of important women in business.<sup>11</sup> Reed asked Justice Louis Epps of the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals to write his friends in the legal profession and encourage them to support Byrd.<sup>12</sup> In carefully prepared letters, Flannagan asked all of the living alumni, residing outside Virginia of the

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<sup>8</sup> Reed to Byrd, February 13, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Byrd to Reed, February 27, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Flannagan to Reed, April 21, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Flannagan to Reed, February 2, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Reed to Epps, February 8, 1932, Ibid.

University of Virginia, William and Mary and Virginia Military Institute to help the Byrd campaign.<sup>13</sup> In conjunction with the mailing done in Richmond, friends of Byrd in other states provided by mail Byrd campaign materials to their acquaintances. Estes Kefauver, who was living in Chattanooga, Tennessee at the time, mailed large amounts of Byrd literature to people in that state.<sup>14</sup> John Garland Pollard, Governor of Virginia and nominal chairman of the Virginia Byrd Committee, sent a packet of campaign material to the women's editor of the Southern Planter where Westmoreland Davis was sure to disregard it or, if possible, use the material against Byrd in his magazine.<sup>15</sup> Thomas B. Stanley, a furniture manufacturer and future Governor of Virginia, had his salesmen all over the nation mention the Byrd candidacy whenever they had the opportunity.<sup>16</sup>

One of Byrd's most helpful out of state supporters was

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<sup>13</sup> Flannagan to Byrd, March 14, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Virginia Byrd Committee Financial Statement, undated, Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> John Pollard to Ella Agnew, undated letter in Westmoreland Davis Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, and Southern Planter, XCIII (March 1, 1932), 8-10, and (May 1, 1932), 6.

<sup>16</sup> Stanley to Reed, March 18, 1932, Reed Papers.

his friend Henry Breckinridge. Breckinridge was born in Kentucky and practised law in New York City. He served in Wilson's administration as Assistant Secretary of War from 1913 to 1916.<sup>17</sup> Breckinridge was a great help in the Byrd campaign, providing an outlet in New York for Byrd campaign literature and introductions to influential publishers and politicians on the national level. Breckinridge started urging Reed to use his influence with Byrd to get a campaign started as early as October of 1931. Breckinridge gave Byrd's messages and speeches to his many friends in New York before there was any certainty that Byrd would be an active candidate.<sup>18</sup> One of the first indications that Byrd was considering a campaign for the Democratic nomination was his agreement with Reed to send Breckinridge copies of his speeches and messages.<sup>19</sup> Breckinridge urged Byrd to send representatives out to present his qualifications for office to political leaders in other states.<sup>20</sup>

Breckinridge helped the campaign for Byrd in public

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<sup>17</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, December 14, 1931.

<sup>18</sup>Breckinridge to Reed, October 2, 1931, Reed Papers.

<sup>19</sup>Byrd to Reed, October 8, 1931, Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Reed to Byrd, February 19, 1932, Ibid.

in addition to what he did privately. As a former Assistant Secretary of War, Breckinridge's formal endorsement of Byrd for president was itself worth considerable publicity. On June 6, 1932, Breckinridge released to the press a well written, firm endorsement of Byrd for president. The statement emphasized Byrd's record as governor, Virginia's good financial position, Byrd's success as a farmer and business man, and the need for the Democrats to nominate a strong candidate such as Byrd.<sup>21</sup> The newspapers carried the endorsement and many added favorable editorial comments. The Portsmouth Star called the announcement effective and noted that Breckinridge was helping Byrd in New York and Kentucky.<sup>22</sup> The Roanoke Times thought the endorsement gave a true portrait of Byrd's abilities and that its style was dignified and not pleading.<sup>23</sup> Breckinridge's endorsement was the last Byrd received before the national convention met. The endorsement by the General Assembly was one of the first and in effect started Byrd's public campaign for the nomination of his party. Others included

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<sup>21</sup> Copy of endorsement by Henry Breckinridge, June 6, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Portsmouth Star, June 6, 1932.

<sup>23</sup> Roanoke Times, June 7, 1932.

Senator Carter Glass and Governor John Garland Pollard.

The Senate-House joint resolution endorsing Byrd for president passed the General Assembly January 14, 1932. The resolution stressed Byrd's ability to promote teamwork among the various branches of government and his executive ability.<sup>24</sup> In his reply to the General Assembly, Byrd gave a non-committal answer and expressed a desire only for what was best for the party and nation.<sup>25</sup> Senator T. Russell Cather of Winchester introduced the resolution which carried unanimously.<sup>26</sup> The Virginia papers reacted favorably to the action of the General Assembly, but the Roanoke Times warned that the prospects of entering the White House were not bright for a Southerner.<sup>27</sup> The Richmond Times Dispatch commented that the endorsement was more than a "complimentary gesture" and that the people of Virginia had faith in Byrd's ability.<sup>28</sup> The resolution was the work of Byrd's most enthusiastic backer, William T. Reed. Reed started out to get each member of the

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<sup>24</sup>Journal of the Senate of Virginia, 1932 (Richmond, 1932), 20-21.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>26</sup>New York Times, January 15, 1932.

<sup>27</sup>Roanoke Times, January 15, 1932.

<sup>28</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, January 15, 1932.

General Assembly to sign a resolution asking Byrd to run for the nomination. When this proved to be too much of a task, Reed waited until the General Assembly convened on January 13, 1932 and then, though not a legislator himself, had the endorsement passed by the full Legislature.<sup>29</sup>

The endorsement of the General Assembly and the insignificance of any opposition to Byrd in Virginia gave him a secure political base from which to launch his national campaign. Byrd would have to gain much more out of state support if he was to run an effective campaign. The Virginia Congressional delegation in Washington had to be won to the Byrd candidacy and their support would have to be active if Byrd was to build a large delegate count before the convention.

In early February, 1932, the Democrats of the Virginia Congressional delegation issued a statement that they concurred in the resolution passed by the General Assembly endorsing Byrd. They praised Byrd and predicted he would get a "high degree" of cooperation from the Congress if elected president.<sup>30</sup> In all, the two Senators and nine Democratic

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<sup>29</sup> Reed to Breckinridge, December 28, 1931, Reed Papers.

<sup>30</sup> Copy of undated endorsement of Byrd by Virginia Congressional Delegation, Ibid.

Representatives signed the statement for Byrd. The lone dissenter was Virginia's only Republican Representative, Menalclus Lankford of Norfolk.<sup>31</sup> The statement from Virginia's Congressman came at a time when Byrd's chances for the nomination were increased by Al Smith's announcement that he would accept the Democratic nomination. Smith said he would not seek delegate support and would be available only if the convention called him. The political observers of the time thought Smith's announcement made certain a convention deadlock between Roosevelt and Smith, forcing it to turn to a dark horse candidate.<sup>32</sup>

The fact that the Virginia Congressmen endorsed Byrd did not mean that they gave him the kind of support that furthered his chances for the nomination. Congressman Thomas Burch of Martinsville and Congressman Clifton Woodrum of Roanoke were the only Representatives who promoted Byrd with any enthusiasm.<sup>33</sup> Reed was considerably upset by the suggestion of Byrd for vice-president made by Senator Claude

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Richmond Times Dispatch, February 8, 1932, and Roanoke Times, February 9, 1932, and Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961 (Washington, 1961), 591.

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Richmond Times Dispatch, February 9, 1932.

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Reed to Woodrum, February 27, 1932, Reed Papers.

Swanson and Petersburg Representative Pat Drewry. Reed thought such talk did more harm than a clear attack on Byrd could ever do. He believed this was an indirect way for Drewry and Swanson to indicate their favor of someone else for the nomination.<sup>34</sup> Senator Carter Glass was more helpful in Virginia than at the national level.<sup>35</sup> Glass knew Virginia would support Byrd in the national convention and he was not adverse to the prospect.<sup>36</sup> According to his secretary, Rixey Smith, Glass was in favor of Newton D. Baker as his first choice for president and supported Byrd as his second choice.<sup>37</sup> If this was true Glass concealed his feelings, for he agreed to place Byrd in nomination at the convention and Glass was one of the first men to publicly suggest Byrd for president.<sup>38</sup> One of Byrd's most serious handicaps was the lack of real support from Virginia Congressmen. Reed thought Byrd's chances for the nomination would double if the Virginia Congressmen showed more enthusiasm for

<sup>34</sup> Reed to Byrd, May 23, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Byrd to Reed, May 3, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Glass to William H. Hale, November 19, 1931, Glass Papers.

<sup>37</sup> Rixey Smith and Norman Beasley, Carter Glass (New York, 1939), 309.

<sup>38</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, May 29, 1932.

his candidacy.<sup>39</sup>

Byrd also had other problems in gaining support for his candidacy. Shortly before he consented to become a candidate, he flew to New York with Charles Lindbergh to discuss politics with Henry Breckinridge.<sup>40</sup> While Byrd was in New York, the Richmond News Leader, headed by John Stewart Bryan, published an editorial urging the Democrats to nominate Newton D. Baker, a resident of Ohio and former Secretary of War under Wilson. The editorial caused some excitement because many people thought Bryan was speaking for Byrd. A quick investigation revealed that the editorial had not been inspired or approved by Byrd.<sup>41</sup> Byrd thought the editorial ruined any good effect his trip to New York had in the press.<sup>42</sup> Reed advised Byrd to be sure to inform Baker that John Stewart Bryan was no influence in Virginia politics and could not deliver the Virginia vote in the convention.<sup>43</sup>

Baker, a long time advocate of the League of Nations,

<sup>39</sup> Reed to Byrd, April 30, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, December 15, 1931.

<sup>41</sup> New York Times, December 16, 1931.

<sup>42</sup> Byrd to Reed, December 16, 1931, Reed Papers.

<sup>43</sup> Reed to Byrd, December 28, 1931, Ibid.

had recently reversed his position on the League. Some interpreted this as the beginning of his campaign for the Democratic nomination.<sup>44</sup> Baker did not do any serious campaigning, but Bryan continued to speak favorably of him in the News Leader. In a talk with Bryan on December 31, 1931, the editor assured Reed that he supported Harry Byrd's candidacy. He thought, in fact, that the editorials in his paper were helping stop the Roosevelt gains and would aid Byrd in the convention.<sup>45</sup> Of course, the Byrd people disagreed, and the editorials favorable to Baker continued. After the General Assembly endorsed Byrd, Bryan published a long editorial in which he agreed that all Virginians supported Byrd. He then went on to give a number of reasons why it was unlikely that Byrd would win the nomination, and in that case the Virginia vote in the convention should be switched to Newton D. Baker.<sup>46</sup>

Byrd, along with other candidates for the Democratic nomination, faced the powerful Roosevelt forces who built up an early lead in the race for convention votes. Reed

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<sup>44</sup>"Democratic Light Horses," New Republic, LXX (February 17, 1932), 5.

<sup>45</sup>Reed to Byrd, January 1, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>46</sup>Richmond News Leader, January 15, 1932.

confessed that he was unable to understand the Roosevelt magic. None of Reed's friends in the business world favored Roosevelt, yet he seemed to have "a wonderful hold on the political leaders in nearly every state."<sup>47</sup> Byrd thought the public was demanding politicians who were progressive in outlook and Roosevelt had shrewdly cultivated a progressive image.<sup>48</sup> The Byrd people were disappointed when Roosevelt gained the Tennessee delegates at the state convention. Cordell Hull, a Roosevelt supporter, went before the Tennessee convention and demanded the delegates for Roosevelt and got them.<sup>49</sup> A. Willis Robertson, Director of the Virginia Game Commission and soon to be elected to the House of Representatives, believed that in normal times the business interests could have stopped Roosevelt. In 1932, however, it was not enough for business to be opposed to a candidate, for business had proved itself to be as confused as everyone else over the trend of the economy.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Reed to Byrd, April 7, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>48</sup>Byrd to Reed, May 14, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Reed to Byrd, June 13, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Robertson to Reed, June 1, 1932, Ibid.

Robertson was sure Byrd's only chance for the nomination lay in a deadlocked convention.<sup>51</sup> Virginians gave little thought to a second choice for the nomination. Virginia would not support Roosevelt unless Byrd's situation in the national convention became hopeless, and then it was not certain the delegation would switch to Roosevelt.<sup>52</sup> Those Virginians who did not want Roosevelt felt that the West and South supported them and could not understand why Byrd did not gain more delegates in those areas.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the strength of the Roosevelt campaign, Byrd had to contend with the behind-the-scenes attempts of the Smith forces to make him part of a stop-Roosevelt movement. Jouett Shouse met with Byrd in New York, January 24, 1932, and urged Byrd to enter his name in the upcoming Pennsylvania primary against Roosevelt. Shouse wanted Byrd to run as a dry so that he would gain the fifteen or twenty delegates in the agricultural regions of Pennsylvania that Smith would be unable to take from Roosevelt. Breckinridge,

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<sup>51</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>  
Lynchburg News, June 11, 1932.

<sup>53</sup>  
Roanoke Times, May 21, 1932

who was present with Byrd and Shouse, was against the plan. Byrd agreed with Breckinridge and saw the plan as another attempt to link his name with the Smith group in a stop-Roosevelt movement.<sup>54</sup> Byrd's refusal to join in Shouse's scheme was consistent with his independent course designed to prevent party division.

Byrd made a number of speeches during the period from January to June, 1932. The three that drew the most attention in the press were addresses outlining his position on major issues facing the Democrats in 1932. In his speech before the Kentucky Legislature February 18, 1932, Byrd gave his position on economic issues. His Jefferson Day speech before the party hierarchy in Washington on April 13, 1932 warned the party against the influence of organized minorities and presented his plan for deciding the prohibition issue. Byrd traveled to Philadelphia on May 18, 1932 to address the Democratic Women's Luncheon Club of that city. In that talk he summarized his views on the major issues and suggested a plan of action for the Democratic party.

In Byrd's Kentucky address, he was especially critical

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<sup>54</sup>

Byrd to Reed, January 23, 1932, Reed Papers.

of the Hawley-Smoot Tariff of 1930.<sup>55</sup> The Hawley-Smoot Tariff instituted the highest tariff rates the nation had ever known.<sup>56</sup> Byrd condemned American industry for supporting a tariff that destroyed trade and then moving industrial plants abroad to escape its effects. The tariff placed an unusual hardship on farmers who could not move their means of production to escape the effects of the tariff. England, with a traditional policy of free trade, was forced to increase protection as a result of America's Hawley-Smoot Tariff. Byrd believed it would be impossible for Europe to pay her American debts if the tariff continued and trade was restricted. He also warned that the strangulation of trade by economic war often led to a shooting war.<sup>57</sup>

Byrd recommended the reduction of government expenses as the surest way to bring economic relief to the people. He did not mean a reduction in essential services of government, rather a simplification of government with an increase

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<sup>55</sup> Harry F. Byrd, "The Tariff and Agricultural Prosperity: With Specific Suggestions for Tax Relief," reprinted Kentucky Legislative Address of February 18, 1932 (Virginia Byrd Committee, 1932), 2.

<sup>56</sup> Dixon Wecter, The Age of the Great Depression, 1929-1941 (New York, 1948), 21.

<sup>57</sup> "The Tariff and Agricultural Prosperity," 2-5.

in efficiency. Excessive taxes and regulation were, in Byrd's view, harming the economy. He condemned the Federal Farm Board as a complete failure.<sup>58</sup> This agency was created by the Hoover administration to buy farm surplus and thereby support prices. The task was impossible as domestic markets collapsed and foreign markets disappeared. Farm income in 1932 dropped to one half of what it had been in 1929.<sup>59</sup>

Byrd's Kentucky speech was a reiteration of views he had held for some time. His own apple business had been hurt when twenty nations that previously had no import restrictions on apples took offense at the Hawley-Smoot Tariff and limited apple imports.<sup>60</sup> His criticism of the Hawley-Smoot Tariff was consistent with statements issued by the Bureau of Publicity of the Democratic National Committee.<sup>61</sup> Byrd was also a longtime advocate of economy in government and held the view that the people were not able to pay more taxes in their "day of distress."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 4-7.

<sup>59</sup>John D. Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 1921-1933 (New York, 1960,) 264.

<sup>60</sup>Byrd to Glass, May 24, 1932, Glass Papers.

<sup>61</sup>Thomas S. Barclay, "The Bureau of Publicity of the Democratic National Committee, 1930-1932," American Political Science Review, XXVII, 1 (February, 1933), 64.

<sup>62</sup>Byrd to Reed, June 1, 1932, Reed Papers.

The Richmond papers gave the Kentucky speech a good reception and predicted it would increase Byrd's national prestige.<sup>63</sup> Reed was pleased with the favorable press and with the reception Byrd was given by the people in Kentucky.<sup>64</sup> Byrd had indeed made a sound presentation of his views without presenting any partisan appeal for political support. There were no sensational revelations in the speech and no statements that would indicate a preference for any particular faction in the party.

The Democratic Women's Luncheon Club of Philadelphia listened to Byrd outline a plan of action for the Democratic party on May 18, 1932. He said the party platform should be clear and concise and not engage in condemnation of the Republicans. Furthermore, it should contain a restatement of the party's loyalty to the principles of Thomas Jefferson. A clear program for the rehabilitation of American business was also necessary. The control of government by vocal minorities had to be ended. The tariff was for revenue purposes only and the Democrats must lower it and arrange for reciprocal trade agreements. The methods of aiding the

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<sup>63</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, February 19, 1932.

<sup>64</sup>Reed to Byrd, February 19, 1932, Reed Papers.

farmer should be clearly stated in the platform. Finally, the platform should declare that the people be allowed to vote on prohibition.<sup>65</sup>

The New York Times reported the speech as an appeal for a straightforward Democratic platform.<sup>66</sup> Byrd was encouraged by the favorable reaction to his address.<sup>67</sup> While in Philadelphia, Byrd refused to promise a peaceful Democratic convention but did predict that no candidate would divide the Democratic party.<sup>68</sup> Again, Byrd avoided partisan politics and limited his talk to the issues.

Byrd remained quiet on the prohibition issue with the exception of his opposition to Raskob's attempt to force his wet platform plan resolution through the Democratic National Committee. Byrd was recognized as a dry and dry Southern Democrats were not expected to favor any change in prohibition.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Harry F. Byrd, "A Constructive Democratic Programme," reprint of address before Democratic Women's Club of Philadelphia, May 18, 1932 (Virginia Byrd Committee, 1932).

<sup>66</sup> New York Times, May 19, 1932.

<sup>67</sup> Flannagan to Reed, May 21, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>68</sup> New York Times, May 19, 1932.

<sup>69</sup> Wayne C. Williams, "A Dry Democrat Looks Forward," Christian Century, XLVIII, 39 (September 30, 1931), 1208.

Discontent with prohibition grew and popular opinion reflected an increase in opposition to continuing with the Eighteenth Amendment.<sup>70</sup> The American Legion, American Bar Association, American Medical Association, and the American Federation of Labor passed resolutions calling for a referendum on repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.<sup>71</sup> The Virginia Association Against the Eighteenth Amendment was formed in late 1931. The purpose of the organization was to get the prohibition question to the polls where they were certain the people would end the long dry spell. Founders of the organization were General W. H. Cocke of Claremont, former State Senator C. O'Connor Goolrick of Fredericksburg, State Senator James Barron of Norfolk, and John B. Minor of Richmond.<sup>72</sup> Virginia opinion was turning away from the tenets of Bishop Cannon, and many citizens anxiously awaited the Cavalier sound of popping corks.<sup>73</sup>

The New York Times surveyed the views of eight Democrats most frequently mentioned for the nomination and found the majority of them against prohibition. The Times took

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<sup>70</sup> See appendix B.

<sup>71</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, September 26, 1931.

<sup>72</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, October 27, 1931.

<sup>73</sup> See appendix B.

note of Byrd's silence on prohibition and based its analysis of him as a dry on the fact that Byrd always voted dry and was personally a teetoteler. The Times thought Byrd was reasonable about prohibition, as opposed to the radical or professional dries.<sup>74</sup> Byrd then was considering a speech calling for a referendum on prohibition and privately solicited the opinions of other Democrats on his proposal.<sup>75</sup> Positive the issue of prohibition would have to be faced, Reed advised Byrd to break his silence with a first class statement that would attract national attention.<sup>76</sup> Byrd had serious doubts about publicly calling for a referendum. He considered the principle of the referendum as the correct approach to prohibition, but to change his dry reputation by openly calling for one was a big political step.<sup>77</sup>

The Jefferson Day gathering took place at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C. on April 13, 1932. Byrd repeated much of what he said in the Kentucky speech and used material he would employ later in Philadelphia. The sensational pro-

<sup>74</sup> New York Times, March 13, 1932.

<sup>75</sup> Byrd to Reed, April 1, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>76</sup> Reed to Byrd, April 7, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Byrd to Reed, April 11, 1932, Ibid.

hibition statement took up three pages of the nine page speech.<sup>78</sup> Byrd reminded his audience that he voted for a prohibition referendum when he served in the Virginia Senate. He declared himself forever opposed to the evils of the saloon and did not personally call for an end to prohibition. Byrd proposed an amendment to the Constitution to be approved by referendum on the same day in all states with only the referendum question on the ballot. The original amendment would modify the Eighteenth Amendment so that Congress could then submit the question of repeal or modification of the Eighteenth Amendment to the people. Two referendum questions would be required, both to be approved by three-fourths of the states before the amendments would go into effect. Byrd opposed any plan that would allow individual states to decide the prohibition question. Byrd stated that the referendums were the only way the people could make their own views known and he opposed approval of the amendments by state legislatures or state conventions.<sup>79</sup>

Roy Flannagan, who expected considerable reaction to Byrd's speech, arranged for all of the Washington news-

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<sup>78</sup> Typescript copy of Byrd's Jefferson Day Address, April 13, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

paper correspondents to have copies of the speech in time for the story to reach the early editions of their papers.<sup>80</sup> The New York Times, however, was of the opinion that outside Virginia Byrd's plan would cause little sensation. In Virginia, where Bishop Cannon had held power for many years, the Times called the speech a major political event.<sup>81</sup> Much of the sensation was taken from Byrd's speech when Al Smith used the Jefferson Day rally to engage in a strong attack against Roosevelt, declaring that he now actively opposed Roosevelt. In an obvious reference to Roosevelt, Smith deplored attempts by demagogues to set the poor against the rich.<sup>82</sup> Byrd complained that the Smith attack on Roosevelt robbed him of the headlines.<sup>83</sup>

Virginia Congressmen displayed a mixed reaction to Byrd's prohibition plan. Congressman Pat Drewry of Petersburg, while claiming to support Byrd for president, labeled the prohibition plan as "utterly wrong."<sup>84</sup> Three other members of the delegation were against Byrd's plan but refused

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<sup>80</sup> Flannagan to Reed, April 12, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> New York Times, April 14, 1932.

<sup>82</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, April 14, 1932.

<sup>83</sup> Byrd to Reed, April 15, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>84</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, April 15, 1932.

to be quoted in the newspaper because they did not want to embarrass Byrd, whom they supported for president.<sup>85</sup>

Carter Glass was not enthusiastic about Byrd's proposal but supported it as an alternative to direct repeal.<sup>86</sup>

C. O'Connor Goolrick opposed Byrd's prohibition plan on two grounds. He thought it was a radical departure from the usual method of ratifying amendments to the Constitution by state legislature or state convention vote. Goolrick was impatient to resolve the issue and believed Byrd's plan would cause too much delay with two referendums involved.<sup>87</sup> The Norfolk Virginian-Pilot looked on Byrd's proposal as being "thoroughly muddled" and suggested that if it was the best Byrd could do he should do nothing.<sup>88</sup> The Lynchburg News was sure the drys would like the delays involved and would not like the end result of the referendums.<sup>89</sup> Amazed at Byrd's change of position, the Portsmouth Star guessed that James Barron, a Byrd supporter, told Byrd he would

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Byrd to Reed, May 3, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>87</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, June 3, 1932.

<sup>88</sup>Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, April 14, 1932.

<sup>89</sup>Lynchburg News, April 16, 1932.

face opposition in the state Democratic convention unless he changed his position on prohibition.<sup>90</sup> The Richmond News Leader gave an unenthusiastic review of the Byrd plan and went on to praise Newton D. Baker's speech before the Jefferson Day crowd.<sup>91</sup>

With these few exceptions, Byrd's views on prohibition were well received. He was astounded, as was everyone else, when Bishop Cannon and John J. Raskob announced that they agreed with his plan.<sup>92</sup> Most opinion on the Byrd plan was reflected by the Roanoke Times when it viewed the plan as "thoroughly constructive."<sup>93</sup> The Jefferson Day speech made Byrd more attractive as a candidate for the Democratic nomination. Byrd accomplished this without seriously offending any faction of the party. The dries found it difficult to oppose a referendum and most of the wets were happy because they were sure the people would end prohibition.

Byrd hoped to make a major speech on agriculture somewhere in the Midwest. Arrangements were made for him to deliver the keynote address at the Kansas State Democratic

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<sup>90</sup> Portsmouth Star, April 14, 1932.

<sup>91</sup> Richmond News Leader, April 14, 1932.

<sup>92</sup> Byrd to Reed, April 16, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>93</sup> Roanoke Times, April 14, 1932.

Convention in May.<sup>94</sup> Unfortunately, Mrs. Byrd became severely ill and the trip to Kansas was canceled.<sup>95</sup> The opportunity to make a major speech, such as the Kansas convention offered, did not come before the national convention. The Kentucky, Philadelphia, and Jefferson Day speeches were the most important position statements that Byrd made during the campaign. In them, he outlined his beliefs with dignity and avoided embarrassment to himself and his party.

Byrd's attempts to gain out of state support for his candidacy met with frustration in almost every instance. Governor Max Gardner of North Carolina favored Byrd for the Democratic nomination and attempted to get the North Carolina delegates for him.<sup>96</sup> Reed was not satisfied with Gardner's effort and insisted that Byrd demand more activity on Gardner's part.<sup>97</sup> Byrd suggested that Reed write on his behalf to Josephus Daniels, Governor Gardner, and other political leaders

<sup>94</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, May 14, 1932.

<sup>95</sup> Byrd to Reed, May 14, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>96</sup> Byrd to Reed, March 24, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Reed to Byrd, March 25, 1932, Ibid.

in North Carolina and ask that North Carolina either endorse Byrd or send an uninstructed delegation favorable to him to the national convention.<sup>98</sup> Gardner wrote Byrd on May 16, 1932 and explained the situation in North Carolina. He reported that Josephus Daniels and other politicians were urging a delegation instructed for Roosevelt and the best Byrd could hope for was an uninstructed delegation.<sup>99</sup> Reed had a number of telegrams and special delivery letters sent to North Carolina politicians before the state convention. Yet the work by the Byrd people ended in failure, with North Carolina voting for Roosevelt.<sup>100</sup>

The same pattern occurred in other states when Byrd tried to gain delegate votes. In spite of the efforts by Reed and Byrd to capture the delegates of West Virginia and Arkansas, they went for Roosevelt and the support for Byrd did not materialize.<sup>101</sup> The Roosevelt forces were winning an impressive amount of support in Southern states. The

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<sup>98</sup>Byrd to Reed, May 10, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>Byrd to Reed, May 16, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Reed to Byrd, June 15, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Byrd to Reed, January 15, 1932, and April 2, 1932, Ibid.

lack of delegate support made Byrd's prospects look poor, but the chance of a deadlocked convention kept him in the field.

The publicity campaign of the Virginia Byrd Committee received a considerable boost when Collier's magazine agreed to publish two articles for Byrd. The arrangements were completed by Byrd when he went to New York following his speech in Philadelphia on May 18, 1932. It was agreed that Walter Davenport, a Collier's reporter who did stories on most of the Democratic candidates, would do a story on Byrd's political achievements and that a signed article by Byrd would appear in Collier's a week before the Democratic convention.<sup>102</sup>

The Collier's article by Davenport, June 4, 1932, emphasized Byrd's record as Governor of Virginia and explained his government reforms in detail. The reporter gave particular attention to the fact that Governor Russell of Georgia and Governor Gardiner of Maine started similar programs in their states patterned after the Byrd reforms in Virginia.<sup>103</sup> The second article, signed by Byrd, was on the newstands by June 22, 1932, a week before the convention. Byrd used the occa-

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<sup>102</sup>Byrd to Reed, May 19, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Davenport, "States Righted," Collier's (June 4, 1932), 11, 45, 46.

sion to review his position as stated in previous speeches and warned that the Democratic party must put aside partisan politics and work for the good of the country.<sup>104</sup> The Roanoke Times praised the article as an honest analysis of the situation facing the Democrats and not an overt bid for the nomination. The Roanoke paper thought the tone of Byrd's writing showed once again that he could provide national leadership.<sup>105</sup>

As the national convention approached, the Virginia Byrd Committee closed its Richmond office and balanced the budget. The expenses of the campaign totaled \$9125.00, most of which William T. Reed paid. The largest items in the budget were for printing and mailing.<sup>106</sup> Reed complained to Roy Flannagan that he received more suggestions than money from his friends.<sup>107</sup> Earlier in the campaign, Byrd asked Reed to keep expenses down since he would reimburse Reed for one half of what he contributed, "as this has always been our custom in such matters."<sup>108</sup> Reed contributed \$7400.00 to the campaign

<sup>104</sup>Harry F. Byrd, "Now or Never," Collier's, XC, 1 (July 2, 1932), 9, 48.

<sup>105</sup>Roanoke Times, June 28, 1932.

<sup>106</sup>See appendix C

<sup>107</sup>Reed to Flannagan, May 17, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>108</sup>Byrd to Reed, March 17, 1932, Ibid.

making Byrd's share \$3700.00, if the two followed their usual agreement. The magnitude of this expense in the time of a depression was illustrated by the example of the national Democratic party. The party books listed only seventy-eight contributors from January 1 to December 31, 1932 who contributed more than \$4999.00, and it was a presidential campaign year.<sup>109</sup> Reed and Byrd, wealthy by most standards, still must have been relieved when the Richmond Hotel refused to charge them for the room used as headquarters for six months by the Virginia Byrd Committee.<sup>110</sup>

In a letter to one of Byrd's supporters, Roy Flannagan summarized the activities of the Virginia Byrd Committee. More than two hundred thousand items of campaign literature were sent to more than thirty thousand Democratic leaders across the country. This total included letters from J. Sinclair Brown, Speaker of the Virginia House, to every Democratic assemblyman in the United States, letters from Lieutenant-Governor James H. Price to every Democratic state senator in the country, letters from the Chairman of the

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<sup>109</sup> Louise Overacher, "Campaign Funds in a Depression Year," American Political Science Review, XXVII, 5 (October, 1933), 773.

<sup>110</sup> Flannagan to Reed, June 10, 1932, Reed Papers.

General Assembly Joint Caucus to every Democratic County chairman outside Virginia, and letters from Governor John Garland Pollard to fifteen thousand key men in the business world. The letters mailed in the campaign, which excluded Virginia where Byrd was known, included various items of campaign literature. The Virginia Byrd Committee office maintained direct communications with the press services, Democratic National Committee, Washington news correspondents, and all major magazine editors. The entire effort was accomplished by Flannagan and two salaried employees, without soliciting financial support from the public.<sup>111</sup>

Byrd undoubtedly received much benefit from the publicity generated by the Virginia Byrd Committee. How much his chances for the Democratic nomination increased was a matter of speculation. Many were perplexed at Byrd's reluctance to make a strong bid for the nomination.<sup>112</sup> Most political observers agreed that Smith's decision to accept the nomination, if it came his way, increased the chances for a deadlocked convention.<sup>113</sup> Smith's victory in the

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<sup>111</sup>Flannagan to John Q. Rhodes, May 9, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>Roanoke Times, March 20, 1932.

<sup>113</sup>"Smith Puts the Fight Into the Democratic Campaign," Literary Digest, CX11 (February 20, 1932), 8.

Massachusetts primary further increased the prospects of the convention turning to a compromise candidate.<sup>114</sup> The Byrd publicity campaign kept his name on the list of possible candidates and most discussions of who the Democrats would nominate included his name.<sup>115</sup> Byrd realized the odds against him and Reed was afraid Byrd thought Roosevelt had the nomination won.<sup>116</sup>

Before the Byrd campaign was carried to the national convention, the Virginia State Democratic Convention met to choose delegates to the national convention. Byrd's fortunes were at opposite poles in the two conventions. At the state convention he triumphed as expected, while the national convention was a defeat. Byrd's friends and political allies, however, never faltered in their belief that he was the best candidate for president.

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<sup>114</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, April 30, 1932.

<sup>115</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, May 10, 1932.

<sup>116</sup>Reed to Byrd, April 8, 1932, Reed Papers.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BYRD FORCES AT THE STATE DEMOCRATIC AND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Before the Virginia State Democratic Convention convened, the Democrats in the cities and counties held meetings to select their representatives to the convention. The delegates to the national convention were selected in the state convention. The outcome of the state convention was assured before it met. The local Democratic meetings issued endorsements of Byrd for the presidential nomination along with the list of delegates selected for the state convention.<sup>1</sup> Byrd also received the endorsement of labor at the Virginia Federation of Labor state convention in Alexandria.<sup>2</sup> Henrico County, where Byrd's plan for the state to take over maintenance and construction of highways met

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<sup>1</sup>For a partial listing of endorsements see the Richmond Times Dispatch, May 6, 7, 17, 25, 29, 1932.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., May 3, 1932.

its most serious opposition in 1932, endorsed Byrd unami-  
mously.<sup>3</sup> Fredericksburg Democrats endorsed Byrd and passed  
a resolution, sponsored by C. O'Conner Goolrick, that called  
for a special state convention to repeal prohibition.<sup>4</sup> The  
resolution conflicted with Byrd's prohibition plan and the  
debate over the issue was carried to the state convention.

The only serious Virginia opposition to Byrd's candi-  
dacy developed as the result of a fight in the General Assembly  
over a Hustings Court Judgeship in Roanoke. Judge John M.  
Hart of Roanoke was the subject of controversy for a number of  
years before the matter was carried to the General Assembly.  
The people of Roanoke frequently questioned Hart's decisions  
and they considered his involvement in political fights in-  
consistent with his position as a judge.<sup>5</sup> The root of the  
problem was Judge Hart's opposition to Byrd's political pro-  
gram. The Byrd forces in the General Assembly of 1932 de-  
cided to oppose Judge Hart's reappointment to the bench.  
The Byrd group wanted to replace Hart with J. Lindsay Almond,  
Jr. who was Assistant Commonwealth Attorney in Roanoke.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., May 1, 1932.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., April 23, 1932.

<sup>5</sup>Roanoke Times, January 23, 1932, and Richmond News  
Leader, January 22, 1932.

Hart lost the battle in the General Assembly and Almond, who would one day be Governor of Virginia, became Hustings Court Judge for Roanoke.<sup>6</sup> After his rejection by the General Assembly, Hart started an intense campaign to embarrass Byrd at the state convention by depriving him of as many delegates as possible.<sup>7</sup>

When the ward meetings were held in Roanoke to select delegates to the state convention, Judge Hart was partially successful in his campaign against Byrd. In three of the five wards in Roanoke, resolutions instructing delegates to support Byrd for president were defeated. In the two remaining wards, one passed a resolution commending Byrd but left the delegation uninstructed, and the other instructed its delegation to support Byrd. Former Governor E. Lee Trinkle, Congressman Clifton A. Woodrum, and State Senator Abram Staples, all of whom were Byrd's political allies, were defeated as delegates to the state convention from Roanoke.<sup>8</sup> Trinkle and Staples were later elected as delegates from Roanoke County where the Hart faction had no influence. Congressman Woodrum was elected as a delegate to the state convention from Bedford County.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, January 22, 1932.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., May 12, 1932.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., April 19, 1932.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., May 26, 1932.

Judge Hart managed to disrupt the Byrd forces in Roanoke, but his influence ended there. Byrd received an increasing number of local endorsements after the Roanoke incident. Friends who previously thought it unnecessary to speak out for Byrd came forward to join the active campaign.<sup>10</sup> The end result of the Roanoke squabble was "another black eye" for the local Democratic party.<sup>11</sup> The rest of the Virginia Democrats were undaunted in their support for Byrd, leaving Judge Hart's faction isolated.

A brief dispute flared in Richmond over the selection of delegates to the state convention. Barney Bowman, Chairman of the Richmond Democratic Committee, was accused of trying to hand pick a convention delegation by refusing applications for delegate candidacy from seventy dissident Democrats.<sup>12</sup> The conflict was brought before the Appeals Committee of the Democratic party, which decided to place Bowman's delegate candidates and the seventy dissidents on the ballot in the April, 1932 Democratic primary and let the people resolve the issue.<sup>13</sup> The two factions were equally

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<sup>10</sup> Byrd to Flannagan, June 1, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>11</sup> Roanoke Times, April 20, 1932.

<sup>12</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, February 9, 1932.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., February 28, 1932.

unhappy with the decision of the Appeals Committee so they decided to meet and work out a compromise. A list of names representing both factions was drawn up to avoid the necessity of a primary. Richmond Democrats notified the Electoral Board that they had settled their problem and the delegates would not have to be selected by the people.<sup>14</sup>

Byrd was constantly alert for any sign of opposition to his candidacy. He learned that the Arlington County Democratic Club sent a telegram to Franklin D. Roosevelt endorsing him for president. Since the club had no direct control over delegates, the act was not very serious for Byrd's candidacy. What concerned Byrd more than the telegram was the fact that Wesley McDonald, one of Carter Glass' secretaries, signed it. Byrd feared this would be interpreted as an indication that Carter Glass was for Roosevelt.<sup>15</sup> William T. Reed wrote to Glass and confessed surprise at what had happened.<sup>16</sup> Glass explained the action of the Arlington County Democratic Club as a spontaneous protest against Al Smith's Jefferson Day attack on Roosevelt. He assured Reed that the telegram in-

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., March 10, 1932.

<sup>15</sup> Byrd to Reed, April 29, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>16</sup> Reed to Glass, April 30, 1932.

volved no animosity toward Byrd. Glass also restated his support for Byrd and advised Reed to simply ignore the Arlington Club's action.<sup>17</sup>

The Virginia Democratic State Central Committee met February 20, 1932 and decided to hold the state convention in Richmond on June 9, 1932.<sup>18</sup> The convention was to have 2760 delegates from the cities and counties. Governor John Garland Pollard was to deliver the keynote speech and serve as temporary chairman. Carter Glass would chair the platform committee. Party harmony was predicted and Byrd's endorsement for president was expected to be by acclamation.<sup>19</sup> Reed foresaw the convention as an "hundred percent Byrd affair."<sup>20</sup> Senator Claude Swanson, who was cool toward Byrd's candidacy, was out of the country attending the Geneva Disarmament Conference and would not be present at the state convention.<sup>21</sup>

Shortly before the state convention, Carter Glass, still

<sup>17</sup> Glass to Reed, May 5, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, February 21, 1932.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., June 5, 1932.

<sup>20</sup> Reed to Breckinridge, June 8, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>21</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 6, 1932.

dissatisfied with Byrd's prohibition plan, proposed to Byrd that the Virginia Democratic Platform leave the decision on prohibition to the states. The prohibition plank Glass wanted advocated continued preclusion of the saloon, but allowed the states to remain dry or to end prohibition on an individual basis. The Eighteenth Amendment would have to be changed to permit the states to act.<sup>22</sup> Byrd would not agree to the proposal and wrote Glass that he wanted the Byrd prohibition plan in the state platform. Byrd was convinced that the only fair way to resolve the prohibition issue was to let the people vote on it.<sup>23</sup>

Although the delegates to the state convention were overwhelmingly in favor of Byrd for president, many of them had serious reservations about his prohibition plan. The day before the convention met the wet Democrats held a strategy planning session at the Jefferson Hotel. C. O'Conner Goolrick led the fight for a straight repeal platform plank, and James Barron of Norfolk tried to rally support for the Byrd plan. In a wild meeting where delegates stood on their chairs and shouted for the floor, both sides used the same

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<sup>22</sup> Glass to Byrd, May 23, 1932, Glass Papers.

<sup>23</sup> Byrd to Glass, June 2, 1932, Ibid.

arguments to defend their position. At the end of the meeting no solution was at hand so the Goolrick faction decided to go to the convention floor with a platform plank that called for repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment by the speediest possible method. The Byrd group would not agree to this plank and presented Byrd's plan to the convention for a final decision.<sup>24</sup> Many Democrats feared that if Byrd went to the national convention with his prohibition plan its complexity would hinder his chances for the nomination.<sup>25</sup>

The Virginia State Democratic Convention convened on June 9, 1932. Governor John Garland Pollard delivered the keynote address, in which he favored the Byrd prohibition plan. Pollard, though personally dry, was unwilling to see prohibition continued against the will of the people.<sup>26</sup> The Goolrick faction put their repeal plank before the convention and a voice vote was taken on the two prohibition proposals. Most of those present believed the voice re-

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<sup>24</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, June 9, 1932.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid..

<sup>26</sup>John Garland Pollard, Keynote Address, June 9, 1932, Executive Papers.

response was equal for both proposals, but the permanent convention chairman, Speaker of the House J. Sinclair Brown, ruled the Byrd plan the winner.<sup>27</sup>

The Virginia Democratic Platform called for a balanced federal budget and economy in government, a tariff for revenue only, elimination of speculators from the banking field, states rights, farm relief, humane treatment of labor, and honesty in government. The platform, in a compromise on wording, recommended the Byrd prohibition plan for "careful consideration" by the national convention.<sup>28</sup> The Goolrick wets were strong enough to force this compromise, and the convention did not actually endorse the Byrd prohibition plan.<sup>29</sup> The Richmond Times Dispatch, in an editorial, declared that most of the delegates favored the Goolrick plank and it was a tribute to Harry Byrd's popularity that his plank was approved without causing serious trouble.<sup>30</sup>

Byrd's speech to the convention was basically the same

<sup>27</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 10, 1932.

<sup>28</sup> Minutes of the Virginia State Convention, June 9, 1932, Minute Book of the Democratic State Central Committee, Martin A. Hutchinson Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, 42-43.

<sup>29</sup> Portsmouth Star, June 10, 1932.

<sup>30</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 10, 1932.

in content as his earlier campaign speeches. The only innovation was a call for a national land utilization policy. This was a scheme to aid agriculture, exempt timberland from taxation until the timber was cut, prevent erosion, and create parks and public reserves of land.<sup>31</sup> Following Byrd's speech, the resolution endorsing him for president passed by acclamation, and the unit rule for the delegation was adopted. The delegation to the national convention was to vote for Byrd subject to the "judgment of a majority of the delegation."<sup>32</sup>

Had it not been for loyalty to Byrd, the state convention would have adopted a straight repeal plank. The convention marked the end of fifteen years of dry domination in Virginia politics. The lone person who spoke in favor of prohibition at the state convention was G. Walter Mapp, Byrd's opponent in the 1925 gubernatorial race.<sup>33</sup> Pleased with the results of the state convention regardless of the close margin in the vote on his prohibition plan, Byrd found only five or six delegates to the national convention who were "not strictly

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of the Democratic State Convention, 38-39.

<sup>33</sup> New York Times, June 19, 1932.

loyal" to him.<sup>34</sup> The Virginia delegation to the national convention was certain to support Byrd until he released them.

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the front runner in the unofficial count of delegate strength. Roosevelt announced his candidacy by requesting that F. W. McLean, Secretary of the Democratic State Committee of North Dakota, place his name on the primary ballot in that state.<sup>35</sup> Roosevelt won the first primary in the nation on March 8, 1932, taking New Hampshire's eight convention votes.<sup>36</sup> Roosevelt's strength came from all areas of the country. He won the delegations of Georgia, Maine, and Iowa, states with very little in common.<sup>37</sup>

Byrd was aware of Roosevelt's strength and attempted to chart the positions of the various states for Reed. Byrd credited Roosevelt with 436 convention votes as of March 17, 1932.<sup>38</sup> In addition to the votes certain to be for Roosevelt,

<sup>34</sup> Byrd to Reed, June 11, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>35</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 94.

<sup>36</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, March 9, 1932.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, March 25, 1932, and Farley, Behind the Ballots, 99.

<sup>38</sup> See appendix D.

Byrd felt that 188 convention votes were inclined to Roosevelt. If all of these potential votes went to Roosevelt, his total convention votes would be 624, not enough to win on the first ballot.<sup>39</sup> The newspapers, aware that Roosevelt was gaining strength, were not willing to concede the number of votes to Roosevelt that Byrd calculated.<sup>40</sup> Roosevelt's strength was thought to be 468 votes at the end of May, 1932, according to the Richmond Times Dispatch.<sup>41</sup> When Roosevelt lost primaries to Smith in Massachusetts and Garner in California, a first victory ballot for him became impossible without some states shifting to the Roosevelt camp before the convention.<sup>42</sup>

Concerned that the Byrd campaign lacked sufficient organization to do an effective job at the national convention, Roy Flannagan asked Byrd to assign team captains to arrange communications with key people in the convention. Flannagan saw the need to reach every delegation in the

<sup>39</sup>  
Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>  
Richmond Times Dispatch, March 30, 1932.

<sup>41</sup>  
Ibid., May 22, 1932. Compare Byrd's estimate with the totals in appendix E.

<sup>42</sup>  
Farley, Behind the Ballots, 100.

convention as well as the special interest groups such as bankers, publishers and exporters.<sup>43</sup> Henry Breckinridge also encouraged Byrd to run an organized and efficient campaign at the convention in Chicago.<sup>44</sup> Flannagan set up an individual commitment file for the convention, saw to the shipment of all remaining Byrd campaign literature to Chicago, and arranged to keep track of all "delegations, caucuses, conferences, and drinking bouts."<sup>45</sup> The convention headquarters of the Virginia delegation was at the Stevens Hotel, while Byrd stayed at the Congress Hotel.<sup>46</sup> Admiral Richard E. Byrd joined his brother, Harry, at the convention and, along with Henry Breckinridge and General William "Billy" Mitchell, worked for his brother's nomination.<sup>47</sup>

The question of financial support caused Flannagan as much anxiety as convention campaign tactics. In fact, Flannagan saw financial support as an integral part of convention strategy. He advised Byrd to ask his wealthy friends to

<sup>43</sup> Flannagan to Byrd, May 6, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>44</sup> Byrd to Reed, June 1, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Flannagan to Reed, May 18, 1932, July 14, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Reed to Breckinridge, May 20, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 27, 1932, and New York Times, June 23, 1932.

pledge their financial support for Byrd's presidential campaign. The pledges could then be used to influence the political bosses who controlled 250 votes in the convention and were always impressed by a candidate's financial support.<sup>48</sup> There is no evidence that Byrd followed Flannagan's advice. Such an overt move would have been inconsistent with the nature of Byrd's campaign. An appeal to the bosses would have placed Byrd in their political debt, and he avoided debts in the political area as fervently as he avoided financial debt.

The Democratic National Convention opened in Chicago on June 27, 1932. A number of important contests developed early in the convention that gave indications of Roosevelt's strong position. The seating of Huey Long's Louisiana delegation was opposed by the anti-Roosevelt forces.<sup>49</sup> Louisiana's delegation to the 1928 Democratic convention was seated only after Louisiana agreed to call a state convention to select its next national convention delegation. Long, in defiance of the agreement, came to the 1932 convention with a hand

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<sup>48</sup> Flannagan to Reed, May 12, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>49</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 126.

picked delegation approved by the State Central Committee of Louisiana.<sup>50</sup> Long's action angered many Democrats, but the Roosevelt forces needed Louisiana's votes and they pitched in to see that Long's delegation was seated. Byrd and the Virginia delegation opposed seating Long's delegation. Seating the pro-Roosevelt delegation from Minnesota was also opposed by Virginia.<sup>51</sup> The Roosevelt forces won both contests and the delegations of Louisiana and Minnesota favorable to Roosevelt were seated.

The fight causing the most bitterness in the national convention was the contest over the permanent chairmanship. The Roosevelt forces agreed at the Arrangements Committee meeting held in Chicago in April, 1932 to "commend" Jouett Shouse to the convention as permanent chairman. Byrd arranged the compromise between the Smith and Roosevelt forces at the Arrangements Committee meeting, but the agreement did not last. The Roosevelt forces soon decided to have Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana as permanent chairman.<sup>52</sup> Byrd who thought the Roosevelt forces went back on their word

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<sup>50</sup> Democratic National Convention, Proceedings, 1932 (Chicago, 1932), 53.

<sup>51</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 30, 1932.

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter II.

when they turned to Walsh, supported Shouse for permanent chairmen.<sup>53</sup> The Virginia delegation voted against Walsh for permanent chairman and was once again outvoted by the Roosevelt forces.<sup>54</sup> The Roosevelt strength was adequate but not overwhelming. The vote for Walsh was 626, and Shouse collected 528 votes.<sup>55</sup> These early convention contests were won by Roosevelt, and Virginia voted with the losing side each time.

The battle over abolition of the two-thirds rule threatened to split the Democratic party along North-South lines. Roosevelt wanted to do away with the rule but was very cautious in his efforts to arrange it.<sup>56</sup> Before the Rules Committee meeting at the national convention, Roosevelt forces held a strategy meeting to consider an approach to the two-thirds rule problem. Elimination of the rule in favor of majority nomination would make Roosevelt's nomination on the first ballot almost certain. At the Roosevelt strategy meeting, James Farley lost control of the situation and

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<sup>53</sup> Roanoke Times, June 23, 1932.

<sup>54</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 29, 1932.

<sup>55</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 127.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 109.

Huey Long forced through a resolution that pledged the Roosevelt forces to fight against the two-thirds rule. Roosevelt was unhappy with the abruptness of Long's action but decided to let things go their own way for a while.<sup>57</sup>

The resolution to abandon the two-thirds rule in favor of majority nomination passed the Rules Committee and was sent to the convention floor.<sup>58</sup> The Roosevelt forces soon discovered their power was limited. Southern delegates were opposed to majority nomination because they would lose their power to bloc the nomination of a candidate they thought undesirable. Al Smith accused Roosevelt of trying to change the rules after the game had started. A looming floor fight and the chance of alienating a large bloc of delegates caused Roosevelt to issue a statement to the effect that it would not be fair to change the rules after the delegates were selected to the convention.<sup>59</sup> After Roosevelt's statement reached Chicago, the Rules Committee reversed its decision to change the two-thirds rule, and thereby averted a party-splitting fight. Following an expedient line of reasoning,

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 116-117.

<sup>58</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 28, 1932.

<sup>59</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 118-119.

the Richmond Times Dispatch supported the abolition of the two-thirds rule out of the fear that Al Smith would wreck the convention. The rise of factionalism in the party would also be eliminated according to this paper.<sup>60</sup> The Byrd group looking at the two-thirds rule from a practical viewpoint, feared majority nomination would end the role of the South in Democratic party politics.<sup>61</sup>

The Democrats were in a position to take a strong stand on prohibition. The Republican convention had adopted a platform plank that called for an amendment to the Eighteenth Amendment that would allow the states to individually decide on prohibition.<sup>62</sup> The wet forces at the Democratic convention carried their fight to the floor of the convention which passed a straight repeal plank that excited the entire nation. The strength of the wet forces showed in the 934 3/4 to 213 3/4 vote in favor of the repeal plank.<sup>63</sup> The Virginia delegation voted to suspend the unit rule before voting on the prohibition plank. Eleven Virginia delegates voted

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<sup>60</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 24, June 29, 1932.

<sup>61</sup> Reed to Swanson, June 24, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>62</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 16, 1932.

<sup>63</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 128.

for the repeal plank and thirteen were against it.<sup>64</sup> Other than the straight repeal plank, the Democratic platform conformed to Byrd's views as he expressed them in his speeches.<sup>65</sup> Byrd, if nominated, would find no incumbrances to his candidacy in the Democratic platform.

Before the convention met, two dark horse candidates withdrew their names from the list of possible nominees. Owen D. Young, General Electric Executive and author of the Young Reparations Plan, withdrew his name in May of 1932.<sup>66</sup> As the delegates gathered in Chicago, Senator J. Hamilton Lewis, favorite son of Illinois, released the Illinois delegation and withdrew from the nomination race.<sup>67</sup> The Roosevelt forces hoped to get the Illinois delegates and clinch the nomination. However, the Illinois bosses turned to another favorite son, Melvin Traylor, a Chicago banker, and prevented Roosevelt from gaining the Illinois delegates.<sup>68</sup> When the balloting for the presidential nomination opened a

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<sup>64</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 30, 1932.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Richmond News Leader, May 17, 1932.

<sup>67</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, June 27, 1932.

<sup>68</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 121.

convention deadlock was still a possibility.

Carter Glass placed Byrd in nomination before the convention on Thursday, June 30, 1932. Glass' nomination speech outlined in detail the nation's problems in similar language to Byrd's own speeches, indicating the uniformity of their views. Glass praised Byrd and represented him as highly qualified for the Democratic nomination. Glass told the convention Byrd would provide honest, pay-as-you-go government that would solve the nation's problems.<sup>69</sup> After Glass' nomination speech, Byrd got a twenty minute floor demonstration led by the Richmond Blues Band. Following the demonstration, Henry Breckinridge seconded the nomination.<sup>70</sup> Glass was bothered by noise on the convention floor and thought the radio audience heard more of his speech than the delegates did.<sup>71</sup> Other convention nominations for president included Franklin D. Roosevelt, Al Smith, Melvin Traylor, former Senator James Reed of Missouri, Governor George White of Ohio, and Governor Albert Ritchie of Maryland.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Democratic National Convention, Proceedings, 228-229.

<sup>70</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, July 1, 1932.

<sup>71</sup> Glass to Byrd, July 25, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>72</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, July 1, 1932.

The convention balloting for the presidential nomination started on Thursday after the nominating speeches and went through three ballots before adjourning at 9:15 Friday morning.<sup>73</sup> Roosevelt received 666 $\frac{1}{4}$  votes on the first ballot, and his total rose to 682.79 on the third ballot.<sup>74</sup> Harry Byrd received Virginia's twenty four votes and one vote from Indiana on the first ballot. On the second ballot Byrd got Virginia's twenty-four votes, and on the third ballot he gained .96 of a vote from North Carolina.<sup>75</sup> West Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina, where Byrd had sought delegate support, all went for Roosevelt.<sup>76</sup> After the third ballot, the convention adjourned until Friday evening, July 1, 1932.

The Roosevelt forces, under the leadership of James Farley and Louis M. Howe, were looking for a formula that would give Roosevelt the necessary votes to win the nomination. They made overtures to the Garner forces, offering

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<sup>73</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 143.

<sup>74</sup> See appendix E.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., and Democratic National Convention, Proceedings, 288.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Speaker of the House John N. Garner second place on the Roosevelt ticket if California and Texas would switch to Roosevelt.<sup>77</sup> Byrd was also offered the vice-presidential nomination by the Roosevelt forces under Louis Howe, if he would release the Virginia delegation.<sup>78</sup> The offer to Byrd was made through his brother, Admiral Richard E. Byrd, and was refused.<sup>79</sup> Garner finally decided to release his delegates. The move assured Garner second spot on the Democratic ticket. California was the first state to switch to Roosevelt, virtually clinching the nomination for him.<sup>80</sup>

William Gibbs McAdoo, Garner's campaign manager in California, asked for the floor when the convention reconvened Friday evening. While he was on his way to the speaker's podium, a wild Roosevelt demonstration broke out on the floor of the convention as most of the delegates knew California was going for Roosevelt.<sup>81</sup> Some accounts of this moment say

<sup>77</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 138-147.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>79</sup> James A. Farley, Jim Farley's Story (New York, 1948), 19.

<sup>80</sup> Farley, Behind the Ballots, 147-151.

<sup>81</sup> Richmond Times Dispatch, July 2, 1932.

Byrd released his delegates and others say Senator Claude Swanson stood up without consulting anyone and switched Virginia to the Roosevelt column.<sup>82</sup> A detailed story by the Richmond Times Dispatch correspondent said that M. B. Booker and T. McCall Frazier held the Virginia standard until Byrd could reach them and release his delegates. Virginia delegates then joined in the Roosevelt demonstration before McAdoo reached the speaker's podium to make his announcement.<sup>83</sup> The California switch to Roosevelt started a roll call that ended in Roosevelt's nomination with 945 votes.<sup>84</sup>

Even though Byrd lost the nomination, he was contented with the way the Virginia delegation fared in Chicago. Byrd was pleased with the work that was done on his behalf as second choice of many delegations. He considered the nomination of Roosevelt the result of considerable anti-Smith feeling. As Byrd saw it, the only alternative Virginia had was to switch to Roosevelt on an earlier ballot. Byrd refused to make any deals and felt that he came out of the convention with his principles and self respect unblemished.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Alden Hatch, The Byrds of Virginia (New York, 1969), 445.

<sup>83</sup>Richmond Times Dispatch, July 2, 1932.

<sup>84</sup>See appendix E.

<sup>85</sup>Byrd to Reed, July 21, 1932, Reed Papers.

Byrd did receive some criticism from various sources in Virginia for siding with the Smith-Raskob group on the major questions other than prohibition before the convention.<sup>86</sup> The consensus of opinion was that the rumors of a Byrd-Smith-Raskob combination were groundless and would have no effect on Byrd's standing in Virginia politics.<sup>87</sup> Byrd ran a clean campaign without siding with any party faction. As a result, his prestige in the Democratic party was undiminished.

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<sup>86</sup>Byrd to Reed, July 7, 1932, Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Reed to Byrd, July 8, 1932, Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

It is customary when writing about politicians to label them as conservatives, liberals, progressives, or whatever nomenclature that seems to fit the subject. This writer has tried to avoid fixing a label to Byrd, not because no labels fit but more because all labels seem appropriate. At one time or another, Byrd could be called liberal, reactionary, socialistic, or what is more commonly applied to him, conservative. The usual escape from such a dilemma is to call one's subject a pragmatic politician who considers each issue on its own merits and has no fixed philosophical bias. This would be a great comfort to the author but, in Byrd's case, it must be avoided. Byrd was pragmatic and he considered issues on their own merits, but there is a philosophical foundation to what he advocated in his announcements and speeches.

Byrd always freely admitted his belief that the principles of Jefferson were "eternal and essential to the

preservation of popular government in this country."<sup>1</sup> If one accepts this statement the need for labels is ended. The adherence to the ideas Jefferson held on government accounts for Byrd's insistence on a small, economical government that would interfere as little as possible with the lives of people. It also explains his firm conviction that the role of the people in government must never be diminished lest special interest groups take over and use the machinery of government for their own ends. Byrd's campaign statements conform generally to these principles.

Byrd came through the 1932 pre-convention campaign without sacrificing any of his principles. The campaign and his role in the party increased his political prestige, and he was the recognized leader of Virginia politics. Roosevelt, never one to miss an opportunity to get votes, wrote Byrd shortly after the Chicago Convention expressing pleasure that he did not have to "worry in any way about Virginia" under Byrd's leadership.<sup>2</sup> Roosevelt was correct in his judgment for Virginia gave him the largest vote the state had ever given any presidential candidate in its history.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Byrd, Jefferson Day Address, April 13, 1932, Reed Papers.

<sup>2</sup>Roosevelt to Byrd, July 21, 1932, F.D.R., His Personal Letters, IV, 287.

<sup>3</sup>William Hemphill, Marvin Schlegel, and Sadie Engelberg, Cavalier Commonwealth (New York, 1957), 428.

Such a large Democratic victory after Smith's defeat in Virginia in 1928 was due in part to Byrd's control of the politics of the state. He showed the state that the Cannon forces were not the undisputed arbiters of state politics, and that good government and sensible reform were essential to the state's well being. The wisdom of Byrd's policies at the state level brought Virginia once again into the Democratic column in 1932. The fact was that due to the political genius of the man and the value of his programs, the people of Virginia trusted Byrd's leadership.<sup>4</sup> The leverage of this trust was a powerful political force that confounded the best plans and efforts of Byrd's political enemies, giving him an enduring position of leadership.

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<sup>4</sup>Roanoke Times, May 1, 1932.

## APPENDIX A

RESULTS OF RASKOB'S LIQUOR POLL MAILED NOVEMBER 25, 1931<sup>1</sup>PER CENT OF THOSE REPLYING TO THE POLL IN FAVOR OF VARIOUS PROPOSALS

| State            | Number of<br>1928 con-<br>tributions<br>per 100,000<br>Democratic<br>Votes | Per cent<br>favoring<br>short Demo-<br>cratic Plat-<br>form in 1932 | Per cent<br>favoring<br>submission<br>of Eigh-<br>teenth Amend-<br>ment to the<br>people | Percent<br>in favor<br>of people<br>voting on<br>all future<br>Amendments |
|------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Virginia         | 541  | 94%   | 93%  | 94%   |
| Maryland         | 283  | 95  | 95   | 97  |
| v North Carolina | 89   | 87  | 88   | 90  |

  

| State          | Per cent<br>in favor<br>of sub-<br>mitting a<br>home rule<br>amendment<br>to the<br>people | Per cent<br>in favor<br>of sub-<br>mitting<br>a repeal<br>amend-<br>ment to<br>the people | Per cent<br>preferr-<br>ing home<br>rule to<br>repeal | Per cent who<br>thought the<br>Democratic<br>platform<br>could success-<br>fully ignore<br>prohibition | Per cent in<br>favor of sub-<br>mitting either<br>a home rule or<br>repeal amend-<br>ment to the<br>people |
|----------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| Virginia       | 82%  | 67%   | 57%   | 30%  | 92%  |
| Maryland       | 86   | 86  | 51  | 11   | 97   |
| North Carolina | 82   | 70  | 53  | 31   | 86   |

<sup>1</sup> Report on the results of Raskob's Liquor Poll, January 15, 1932, John Garland Pollard, Executive Papers, Virginia State Library.

## APPENDIX B

## Literary Digest Polls on Prohibition

I First Report of Literary Digest Poll<sup>1</sup>

| State          | Responses favoring retention<br>of 18th Amendment | Responses favoring<br>repeal |
|----------------|---|------------------------------|
| Georgia        | 1,664   | 3,588                        |
| Illinois       | 493   | 2,961                        |
| Indiana        | 1,909   | 3,540                        |
| Maryland       | 2,208   | 10,616                       |
| New York       | 32,338  | 224,877                      |
| North Carolina | 4,999   | 7,142                        |
| Ohio           | 6,005   | 15,064                       |
| Virginia       | 1,669   | 4,477                        |

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<sup>1</sup>Literary Digest, CXII (February 20, 1932), 5.

## APPENDIX B Continued

II Literary Digest Special Poll on Prohibition<sup>2</sup>

|            | Bankers            |                        | Clergy             |                        |
|------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
|            | For 18th Amendment | Against 18th Amendment | For 18th Amendment | Against 18th Amendment |
| Virginia   | 768                | 1,066                  | 707                | 158                    |
| Nationwide | 26,608             | 51,252                 | 23,924             | 19,684                 |

|            | Lawyers            |                        | Doctors            |                        |
|------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
|            | For 18th Amendment | Against 18th Amendment | For 18th Amendment | Against 18th Amendment |
| Virginia   | 245                | 888                    | 239                | 789                    |
| Nationwide | 12,736             | 39,825                 | 14,770             | 45,459                 |

III Final Literary Digest Poll<sup>3</sup>

|            | For 18th Amendment | Against 18th Amendment |
|------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Virginia   | 27,721             | 47,617                 |
| Nationwide | 1,236,660          | 3,431,877              |

<sup>2</sup>Literary Digest, CXIII (April 23, 1932), 9.

<sup>3</sup>Literary Digest, CXIII (April 30, 1932), 7.

## APPENDIX C

Financial Statement of Virginia Byrd Committee<sup>1</sup>

|                     |  |             |
|---------------------|--|-------------|
| Expenditures        |  |             |
| Mailing and Postage |  | \$ 3,072.38 |
| Office expenses     |  | 871.84      |
| Salaries            |  | 958.60      |
| Printing            |  | 3,654.30    |
| Clippings           |  | 380.00      |
| Photographs         |  | 187.41      |
| Amount to balance   |  | .47         |
| Total               |  | \$ 9,125.00 |

|  |                     |             |
|--|---------------------|-------------|
| Credits                                      |                     |             |
| January 26, 1932, Check from William T. Reed |                     | \$ 700.00   |
| February 12, 1932                            | " " " " "           | 1,000.00    |
| March 5, 1932,                               | " " " " "           | 800.00      |
| March 24, 1932,                              | " " Frederick Scott | 1,225.00    |
| March 24, 1932,                              | " " Louis Epps      | 100.00      |
| April 16, 1932,                              | " " William T. Reed | 1,000.00    |
| April 30, 1932,                              | " " James Barron    | 250.00      |
| May 11, 1932,                                | " " William T. Reed | 1,000.00    |
| May 19, 1932,                                | " " " " "           | 1,000.00    |
| May 21, 1932,                                | " " R. C. Watts     | 150.00      |
| June 11, 1932                                | " " William T. Reed | 2,150.00    |
| Total  |                     | \$ 9,125.00 |

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<sup>1</sup>  
Financial Statement of Virginia Byrd Committee,  
June 19, 1932, Reed Papers.

## APPENDIX D

Byrd Estimate of Democratic National Convention  
Delegate Distribution March 17, 1932<sup>1</sup>

## I States certainly against Roosevelt

| State         | Vote                                   |
|---------------|--|
| Massachusetts | 36                                     |
| Rhode Island  | 10                                     |
| Connecticut   | 16                                     |
| Maryland      | 16                                     |
| Illinois      | 58                                     |
| Louisiana     | 20 (Depended on the whim of Huey Long) |
| New Jersey    | 32                                     |
| Ohio          | 52                                     |
| Virginia      | 24                                     |
| Oklahoma      | 22                                     |
| Texas         | 46                                     |
|               | <u>332</u> - Total                     |

## II States certainly for Roosevelt

| State         | Vote | State                   | Vote               |
|---------------|------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Arizona       | 6    | New Mexico              | 6                  |
| Arkansas      | 18   | New York                | 94                 |
| Colorado      | 12   | North Dakota            | 10                 |
| Florida       | 14   | Oregon                  | 10                 |
| Georgia       | 28   | Indiana                 | 30                 |
| Idaho         | 8    | South Dakota            | 10                 |
| Minnesota     | 24   | Tennessee               | 24                 |
| Mississippi   | 20   | Vermont                 | 8                  |
| Montana       | 8    | Washington              | 16                 |
| Nebraska      | 16   | West Virginia           | 16                 |
| Nevada        | 6    | Wyoming                 | 6                  |
| New Hampshire | 8    | Territorial Possessions | 38                 |
|               |      |                         | <u>436</u> - Total |

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<sup>1</sup>Byrd to Reed, March 17, 1932, Reed Papers.

## APPENDIX D

## III Votes in Doubt

| State          | Vote       |   |
|----------------|------------|---|
| Alabama        | 24         | inclined to Roosevelt                               |
| California     | 44         | primary result in doubt                             |
| Delaware       | 6          | uncertain - State Chairman for F.D.R.               |
| Iowa           | 26         | unknown   |
| Kentucky       | 26         | Byrd has chance but thinks F.D.R. will win          |
| Maine          | 12         | unknown   |
| Michigan       | 38         | trend toward Roosevelt                              |
| Missouri       | 36         | favorite son Senator Reed is ill - may go to F.D.R. |
| North Carolina | 26         | strong sentiment for Roosevelt                      |
| Pennsylvania   | 76         | primary later - F.D.R. will get some votes          |
| South Carolina | 18         | inclined to Roosevelt                               |
| Utah           | 8          | unknown   |
| Wisconsin      | 26         | may be against Roosevelt                            |
| Kansas         | 20         | inclined toward Roosevelt                           |
|                | <u>386</u> | Total   |

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<sup>1</sup>Byrd to Reed, March 17, 1932, Reed Papers.

## APPENDIX E

Convention Balloting<sup>1</sup> (770 needed for nomination)

## First ballot

|               |                                |                            |                            |                          |                             |               |
|---------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Votes<br>1154 | Roosevelt<br>666 $\frac{1}{4}$ | Smith<br>201 $\frac{3}{4}$ | Garner<br>90 $\frac{1}{4}$ | Byrd<br>25               | Traylor<br>42 $\frac{1}{2}$ | Ritchie<br>21 |
|               | Reed<br>24                     | White<br>52                | Murray<br>23               | Baker<br>8 $\frac{1}{2}$ |                             |               |

## Second ballot

|               |                                |                            |                            |              |                             |                             |
|---------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Votes<br>1154 | Roosevelt<br>677 $\frac{3}{4}$ | Smith<br>194 $\frac{1}{4}$ | Garner<br>90 $\frac{1}{4}$ | Byrd<br>24   | Traylor<br>40 $\frac{1}{4}$ | Ritchie<br>23 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
|               | Reed<br>18                     | White<br>50 $\frac{1}{2}$  | Baker<br>8                 | Rogers<br>22 |                             |                             |

## Third ballot

|               |                          |                            |                             |               |                             |                             |
|---------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Votes<br>1154 | Roosevelt<br>682.79      | Smith<br>190 $\frac{1}{4}$ | Garner<br>101 $\frac{1}{4}$ | Byrd<br>24.96 | Traylor<br>40 $\frac{1}{4}$ | Ritchie<br>23 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
|               | Reed<br>27 $\frac{1}{2}$ | White<br>52 $\frac{1}{2}$  | Baker<br>8 $\frac{1}{2}$    |               |                             |                             |

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<sup>1</sup>Democratic National Convention, Proceedings, 1932 (Chicago, 1932)  
288, 302, 316, 325.

## APPENDIX E (Continued)

## Fourth ballot

|       |           |       |         |       |       |     |
|-------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-----|
| Votes | Roosevelt | Smith | Ritchie | White | Baker | Cox |
| 1154  | 945       | 190½  | 3½      | 3     | 5½    | 1   |

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The leisurely reader will enjoy this survey of the lives of prominent members of the Byrd family from Colonial times to the present. The scholar will be frustrated by the lack of detail and the paucity of footnotes.

Hicks, John D., Republican Ascendancy, 1921-1933. New York : Harper and Brothers, 1960.

Hicks surveys the cultural and political history of the twenties.

Key, V.O., Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation. New York : Alfred Knopf, 1950.

This book is considered by many to be the best survey of twentieth century Southern politics.

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr., The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919-1933. Boston : Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957.

Schlesinger deals with the events leading up to Roosevelt's nomination and election in 1932.

Tindall, George B., The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945. Volume X of A History of the South, edited by W. H. Stephenson and E.M. Coulter, 10 volumes, Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1967.

This survey of the period indicated in the title takes particular notice of the changes in the Southern life.

United States Congress, Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961. Washington : Government Printing Office, 1961.

Wecter, Dixon, The Age of the Great Depression, 1929-1941. New York : The Macmillan Company, 1948.

Wecter gives an in depth view of life in the United States during the depression.

## Magazines and Scholarly Journals

Barclay, Thomas S., "The Bureau of Publicity of the Democratic National Committee, 1930-1932," American Political Science Review, XXVII, 1 (February, 1933).

The article is a short history of the Bureau's activity just prior to Roosevelt's election.

Burt, Struthers, "Democracy and the Broken South," Literary Digest, CCXXVII, 4 (April, 1929).

The impact of the 1928 election on the Democratic South is examined.

Byrd, Harry F., "Now or Never" Collier's, XC, 1 (July 2, 1932).

The author gives his estimate of the task facing the Democratic party in 1932.

Davenport, Walter, "States Righted : How a Sincere Man Set a New Fashion in Government," Collier's, LXXXIX, 23 (June 4, 1932).

Byrd's record as Governor of Virginia provides the material for this article. The article is very favorable to Byrd.

"Democratic Light Horses," New Republic, LXX (February 17, 1932).

The article surveys the field of possible Democratic presidential candidates in 1932.

"Editorials," in the Southern Planter, XCII, 5 (March 1, 1932), and XCIII, 9 (May 1, 1932).

This magazine consistently opposed Byrd's political programs.

Hall, Alvin L., "Virginia Back in the Fold : The Gubernatorial Campaign and Election of 1929," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXXIII, 3 (July, 1965).

Hall takes the view that the state elections of 1929 indicated Virginia's return to the Democratic party after 1928.

Kent, Frank R., "The 1932 Presidential Sweepstakes," Scribner's Magazine, LXXXIX, 6 (June, 1931).

The potential candidates and issues for 1932 get most of Kent's attention in this article.

McManus, Robert C., "Raskob", North American Review, CCXXI, 1 (January, 1931).

McManus relates Raskob's party activities as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

"Newspaper Poll," Literary Digest, CXII (January 16, 1932).

The poll determined who was most often mentioned for the Democratic nomination for 1932 in areas served by the newspapers.

Overacher, Louise, "Campaign Funds in a Depression Year," American Political Science Review, XXVII, 5 (October, 1933).

The article looks at the sources and amounts of campaign funds in 1932.

"Raskob's Bomb," Literary Digest, CVIII (March 21, 1931).

The prohibition plank Raskob proposed for the 1932 Democratic platform is the subject of this article.

Raskob's Liquor Questionnaire," Literary Digest, CXI (December 12, 1931).

The article examines the political implications of Raskob's liquor poll.

"Smith Puts the Fight Into the Democratic Campaign," Literary Digest, CXII (February 20, 1932).

The political results of Smith's announcement that he would accept the 1932 Democratic nomination if offered are examined in this article.

Williams, Wayne C., "A Dry Democrat Looks Forward," Christian Century, XLVIII, 39 (September 30, 1931).

Williams believed that most Southern Democrats were too committed to prohibition to advocate or vote for repeal.

#### Newspapers

Most Virginia newspapers gave one hundred percent support to Byrd's presidential candidacy. Those who thought Byrd had no chance for the nomination suggested alternative candidates but they would not come out and oppose him. The Richmond News Leader supported Byrd but proposed Newton D.

Baker, if Byrd could not get the nomination, and the paper was certain he could not. At times, various other papers opposed specific Byrd programs, however, the general trend in the Virginia press favored Byrd. The New York Times was used, in conjunction with Virginia newspapers, to place the Byrd candidacy in a national perspective.

Lynchburg News, 1932.

New York Times, 1931-1932.

Portsmouth Star, 1932.

Richmond News Leader, 1932.

Richmond Times Dispatch, 1931-1932.

Roanoke Times, 1932.