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1828, 1832, 1844, 1900, 1912, 1920, and 1932. Strong cases can be made for at least three of them. At the same time, most of the conclusions reached by the five scholars command respect. Keys to the logic of what is crucial are just such words and phrases as "defining," "shaping," "far-reaching," "enduring," "decades to come," and "here to stay."

Lexington, Ky. Holman Hamilton


Professor La Forte has taken progressive Republicans in Kansas as his theme. These Republicans emerged in the "boss-busting" party factionalism at the turn of the century, dominated state Republicanism for a time, and then abdicated party control as they followed Theodore Roosevelt into the Bull Moose episode, after which they made their "trip back" to party regularity, although no longer as leaders. La Forte has used—with discretion, objectivity, irony, and sophistication—a range of documentary collections for local and state figures and for national personalities. William Allen White, for example, plays a large role in the narrative, but his recollections as recorded in his "highly imaginative autobiography" do not determine the author's analyses.

For historians, political progressivism has not appeared to be as logical, as consistent, or as clearly defined as it did to those who participated in it and who provided the sources from which the scholar derives his narrative and draws his interpretations. Students of progressivism at the state level have produced one set of generalizations, while interpreters of progressivism at the national level have produced other not entirely harmonious ones. Setting up one set of these generalizations and knocking it down with "facts" has been a professional pastime to some extent, and La Forte engages in it. He finds, for example, that Kansas progressive Republicans were akin to the prototype established by George E. Mowry, but interestingly enough he finds that regular Republicans and Democratic party leaders in Kansas also fit the prototype. Unlike Hoyt L. Warner's urban findings in
Ohio, La Forte sees Kansas progressive Republicans as receiving their greatest support in the least urbanized part of the state. In agreement with nearly everyone, La Forte shows his progressives to be definitely middle class in composition and self serving in objectives. Republican progressives in Kansas had and made no appeal to the working people of eastern Kansas cities because they could not enact the sort of workmen's compensation or employers' liability legislation wanted there. The small town morality which espoused prohibition also alienated urban voters. Progressivism emerged in Kansas at a time of increasing prosperity; it was not, thus, an economic protest movement as populism had been. The older progressives had opposed populism in Kansas, but younger progressives were motivated by "power, prestige, and pelf" (p. 2) more than any ideological commitment. There was a clear line of connection between populism and progressivism, however, in that both derived from an established reform tradition which predated either.

Economic legislation was the greatest passion of the progressive Republicans in Kansas, but, in La Forte's view, their achievements were not nearly as significant as they believed them to be. Railroad regulation, more equitable tax laws and a state tax commission, home rule for cities, lobbyist registration, votes for women, direct election of senators, an enthusiasm for (but nonenactment of) initiative and referendum, prohibition and anticigarette legislation, a general Sabbatarian disposition but sense enough not to carry it too far—these are among their enthusiasms and accomplishments.

The book chronicles the personalities of the Kansas Republican progressives and shows their manipulative talents rather than discussing their ideological objectives. Generally speaking, they were conservatives, and they believed their own campaign speeches in which "integrity and wise policies" were recommended to the voters. They did not alter the usual tenor of Kansas politics. All in all, La Forte has produced a book which will stand up well in its substantial scholarship and in its clarity of presentation; it will, moreover, hold its own as other scholars hereafter interpret and generalize about the progressive movement, or movements.

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