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Exit General Johnson?

General Hugh Johnson

DURING his boyhood at Fort Scott, Kansas, Hugh S. Johnson ate, slept, and learned to spell to the discordant accompaniment of bugle calls, whinnying cavalry horses, and bawling top sergeants. It was natural, therefore, that as a young man he should turn first to West Point and then to a career in the army. During thirteen years of routine service along the Mexican border, he earned the monniker "Tuffy," yet he was sentimental enough to produce *Williams of West Point* and *Williams on Service,* two boys' books chockfull of chivalry, courage, and last-minute touchdowns.

Though Johnson was a member of the Pershing Expedition which dashed over the border after that terror of the cactus country, Villa, he was not a member of Pershing's A.E.F. Instead of going to France, he remained in Washington to donate his energy and executive ability to Bernard M. Baruch's War Industries Board, which was organizing business under emergency war codes. He busied himself, too, with drawing up the monumental selective draft act of 1917.

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Johnson

The Armistice signed, Brigadier General Johnson retired from the army to enter business, and to remain anonymous for thirteen years. Then came in quick succession the depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the New Deal. Johnson hurried to Washington with a tremendous idea involving all three. By June, 1933, there was a National Industrial Recovery Act, and an administrator named Johnson whose job it was to sell to Industry the idea of fair-trade-practice codes reminiscent of those of war-time. The nickname "Tuffy" was revived, this time to describe the tireless executive ready to crack down on chiselers at the drop of a hat.

The press called Hugh Johnson "President No. 2." The sobriquet was apt, not only because of the General's sweeping power over workers and industrialists under NRA, but because Franklin Roosevelt himself considered "Tuffy" the ablest general on his staff.

When he returned to private life, and to his typewriter, in October, 1934, Johnson continued to support his former chief. He championed the Democratic cause in his widely syndicated newspaper column throughout the 1936 campaign. But when the President made his sensational demands last spring for enlargement of the Supreme Court, executive reorganization, the ever-normal granary, etc., ex-"President No. 2" turned frigid.

By last week the two old friends seemed as close to a formal break as two men can be. For, in a Constitution Day speech replete with sulphurous Johnsonian adjectives, the General had rasped:

"Under the seduction of ballyhoo, bribery, and charm, we are moving away from the democracy imagined by the Constitution and straight toward as rigid a dictatorship as there is on earth."

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