THE NATION

Lafollette Demands Dewey Leader, Charges GOP Chairman In Indiana Peddled Race Hate

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WASHINGTON, June 9.—Official leaders of the Republican Party in Indiana, including one of the State's most prominent Dewey supporters, faced sensational charges today of "peddling racial and religious prejudice."

The charges came from one of Indiana's best known Republican Congressmen—Charles M. LaFollette—in a statement demanding the resignation of Republican State Chairman John Lauer and Republican National Committeeman Robert W. Lyons.

Lyons, one of Dewey's leaders in Indiana, was charged by LaFollette with a "past record of making a profit from peddling racial and religious prejudices" as an official of the Ku Klux Klan. Lauer was charged with having "condoned and approved racial and religious intolerance as the policy of the Republican Party in Indiana.

Protests Election

The bitter and sensational battle between the Indiana Republicans was precipitated by the election of Lyons last Friday as national committeeman. The next day LaFollette, who is running for reelection, issued a statement denouncing the selection and announcing he was "opposed to the domination of the Republican Party by anyone who has made a financial profit out of peddling racial or religious intolerance."

LaFollette's statement was based upon the fact that Lyons, now a prosperous lawyer and lobbyist for the chain stores, was once Indiana treasurer for the Ku Klux Klan. Known as a liberal, LaFollette wanted to disassociate himself from that kind of party leadership.

But Monday, Lauer came out in defense of Lyons and issued a statement criticizing LaFollette. Lauer said that while he had never been a member of the Klan "it is hard for me to become excited about one man's intolerance of the other man's opinion, politics, or religion, and it seems much better to me that we emulate two prominent Republicans who are members of the Roman Catholic Church who, day before yesterday, supported Mr. Lyons."

Action 'Inept'

This statement drew LaFollette's hot reply yesterday. He issued a formal statement saying:

"Now Mr. Lauer, as State chairman, in taking up the cudgels for Mr. Lyons has put the stamp of approval upon Mr. Lyons' past record of making a profit from peddling racial and religious prejudices, as the official head of the Republican Party in Indiana.

"This action of Mr. Lauer is either so inept or so venal as to jeopardize the opportunities of the whole Republican ticket in Indiana. It demonstrates his utter incapacity to occupy the position that he holds.

"In the interest of the Republican Party in the State and Nation, and in the interest of the candidates of that Party who must run under such leadership, Mr. Lauer's utter lack of ability is so clearly demonstrated that I call on him to resign."

Pointing out that in his original

Ex-KKK, Quit

statement he had confined his criticism to the selection of Lyons, LaFollette added:

"Mr. Lauer has now condoned and approved racial and religious intolerance as the policy of the Republican Party in Indiana. Because I believe that his action is completely contrary to the thinking rank and file Republicans, I think it is necessary that the Republicans in Indiana meet and demand his immediate resignation. We either have to do this or strike out the plank on un-American activities in our platform, which Mr. Lauer's statement has now made a nullity."

Defending his own statement disassociating himself from Lyons, LaFollette chided Lauer for thinking "for one minute that the Democrats ever intended to let Mr. Lyons' Klan connection lay dormant in this campaign."

In his statement yesterday, LaFollette also charged that some of Lyons' friends, at a meeting this week, had "openly stated that Mr. Lyons was prepared to spend between ten and fifteen thousand dollars in support of my Democratic opponent, Mr. Eichel, in the Eighth District of Indiana."

"I think," he added, "the public, and particularly the people of the Eighth District of Indiana, are entitled to know what is going on in the Eighth District and that I am marked for defeat by the Republican National Committeeman, and that he intends to use his money and his minions to effect that purpose because I do not believe that the Republican Party should put its stamp of approval upon anyone who at any time made a profit from peddling racial and religious hatred."

Demanding Lyons' resignation also, LaFollette added:

"In his desire to foreclose his mortgage on the Republican Party, Mr. Lyons is apparently making demands that would make Shylock green with envy and Portia cry out with pain. I conclude that Mr. Lauer is so inane and inept and Mr. Lyons is so power-drunk, that the interest of the Republican Party and the candidates who have to run as the representatives of that Party, imperatively demands their resignations."

Lyons was elected by the delegates to the Republican National Convention in Chicago. At the same time they deposed as National Committeewoman Grace Reynolds, who had been one of the leading supporters of Wendell Willkie in Indiana.

LaFollette challenged the legality of the meeting at which the elections took place, asserting Lauer had admitted "that he had no authority to call the meeting."