



# The Twenty-First Ballot: A Political Party Struggle in Minnesota

*David Lebedoff*

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*The Twenty-First Ballot* was first published in 1969. Minnesota Archive Editions uses digital technology to make long-unavailable books once again accessible, and are published unaltered from the original University of Minnesota Press editions.

This account of a bitter struggle with in the Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) party in Minnesota is an interesting story in its own right, and, viewed from a wider perspective, is a valuable documentary on the American political process.

The author recounts the events leading up to and climaxing in the party's deep split over the nomination of a candidate for the 1966 gubernatorial election. The nomination was accomplished only after twenty ballots were taken at the party's convention. The twenty first ballot of the book's title derives from a campaign slogan which urged that the voters, not the party, would make the final decision.

The intraparty battle was waged between a faction which backed the nomination of the incumbent governor, Karl F. Rolvaag, for a second term and a group favoring the nomination of the incumbent lieutenant governor, A. M. "Sandy" Keith, as the gubernatorial candidate. Basic to the struggle was the conviction among supporters of Mr. Keith that a new 'image' was needed to win the election of a party's obligation to an incumbent. Mr. Keith was nominated. However, Mr. Rolvaag challenged the nomination by entering the primary election. He defeated the party nominee and won a place on the general election ballot, only to be defeated, in the end, by his Republican opponent.

The book is illustrated with eight pages of news photographs of the principals and events of the story.

The details of this unusual sequence of events reveal much about the workings of party politics at the important state level. The book will, therefore, be of interest not only to the general readers but to students and teachers in political science courses.

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